

THE CAMEL-ALLEN CHURCHES
WORSHIP AT HOME
SUNDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2020



Opening Acclamation & prayer

Wherever we are we worship...

As the family of God in our Father's presence: we offer him praise and thanksgiving, we hear and receive his holy word, we bring before him the needs of the world, we ask his forgiveness of our sins, and seek his grace, that through his Son Jesus Christ we may give ourselves to his service.

Hymn:

To thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise
in hymns of adoration,
to thee bring sacrifice of praise

with shouts of exultation.
Bright robes of gold the fields adorn,
the hills with joy are ringing,
the valleys stand so thick with corn
that even they are singing.

We bear the burden of the day,
and often toil seems dreary;
but labour ends with sunset ray,
and rest comes for the weary.
May we, the angel reaping o'er,
stand at the last accepted,
Christ's golden sheaves, for evermore
to garners bright elected.

O blessèd is that land of God
where saints abide forever,
where golden fields spread fair and broad,
where flows the crystal river;
the strains of all its holy throng
with ours today are blending;
thrice blessèd is that harvest song
which never hath an ending.

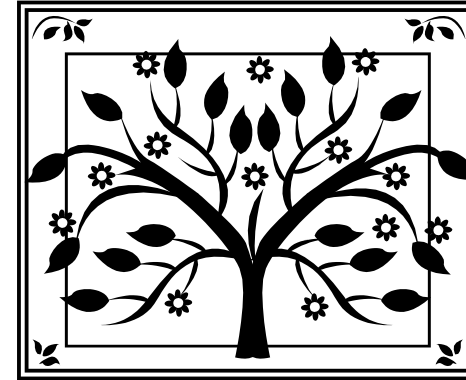
Confession

Let us bring to mind our sin, our failure to value the love of others
and our failure to love as Christ has loved us.

Your love gives us life:
we fail to live as your children.
Lord, have mercy
Lord, have mercy.

You call us to do good:
we seek our own good.
Christ, have mercy
Christ, have mercy.

You hear us when we cry for help:
we ignore the cries of others.
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy.



Receiving God's forgiveness...

May the God of love and power,
forgive *us* and free *us* from our sins
heal and strengthen *us* by his Spirit,
and raise *us* to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen

Collect

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers
of your people who call upon you;
and grant that they may both perceive and know
what things they ought to do,
and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Reading Philippians 1:21-30

²¹For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again. ²⁷Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—
³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Hymn

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Christ is in you
The hope of glory, in our hearts
He lives! He lives! his breath is in you
Arise a mighty army, we arise*

Now is the time for us
To march upon the land
Into our hands
He will give the ground we claim
He rides in majesty
To lead us into victory
The world shall see
That Christ is Lord
God is at work in us
His purpose to perform
Building a kingdom
Of power not of words
Where things impossible
By faith shall be made possible
Let's give the glory
To Him now.
Though we are weak, His grace
Is everything we need
We're made of clay
But this treasure is within
He turns our weaknesses
Into His opportunities
So that the glory
Goes to Him

Graham Kendrick

Gospel Reading Matthew 20:1-16

¹For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; ⁴and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" ⁷They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." ⁹When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." ¹³But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'



Reflection

In the past few weeks, we have been exploring Paul's letter to the Romans. Our set Epistle now shifts to Paul's letter to the Philippians.

After the Roman civil wars which resulted in the end of the Republic and the establishment of the Empire, Philippi's loyalty was rewarded by Augustus with the same status as an Italian city. The inhabitants took pride in their Roman citizenship.

Paul came to Philippi in about 50 A.D and established the first European church there. About 10 years later, while in prison in Rome awaiting trial for his life, Paul wrote this letter, exhorting the Philippians to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. What did Paul mean by this?

The sense of Paul's Greek is that the Philippians should "live as citizens", but of the Gospel, not the city. Instead of conforming themselves to the secular values of their privileged Graeco-Roman city, they should conform themselves to the principles of the Gospel. This core message is as true for Christians today as it was for the Philippians in the first century. We don't cease to be citizens of the UK, but we are to live our lives as citizens of the Kingdom of God.

In many ways the church at Philippi began as a model of what Paul was trying to achieve in his church communities. Generally speaking, it was Paul's practice to go first to the synagogue in a new town. Inevitably, in that time and culture, that would mean addressing men. But, at Philippi, Paul first addressed a group of women. His first convert was a business-woman, Lydia: the Philippian church was established in her house. The Book of Acts records two other early conversions: a Gentile jailer and, the most counter-cultural conversion of all, a slave girl. As a young, female slave, she would

have been at the very bottom of the social pecking order, with no rights, even over her own body. A middle-class woman, a working man and a slave girl, then, were the solid foundation of the church at Philippi.

Paul's letter reminds the expanded church not to live in accordance with the norms of the privileged, male dominated, Graeco-Roman society in Philippi: the Christians were to follow a wholly new and different way of life. As citizens of the Gospel, they were no longer to observe artificial social distinctions: no longer, Paul preached, were there to be Jew and non-Jew, male and female, slave and free. All distinctions of race, gender and social status were to be wiped away: for all are of equal value and worth in the Kingdom of God.

Paul also emphasised that the Philippians were to stand firm as of "one mind and spirit". For Paul, it was paramount that the Church should be a united community of equal brothers and sisters, each contributing their own personal and spiritual gifts in order to build up the whole: if we fail to do this, those outside the church will simply see us as hypocrites and never come inside.

Citizenship involves, on the one hand, the enjoyment of rights and privileges, but, on the other, obligations and duties. The Philippians enjoyed rights and privileges under Roman law, but their obligations were to observe Rome's cultural norms and to pay obeisance to the Emperor. Paul's message to the Philippians, and to us, is that, as citizens of the Gospel of Christ, we enjoy the privilege of being assured that we will inherit the Kingdom: but we come also under an obligation - to conduct our lives in accordance with the Gospel message. That means, as a sound starting point, obeying Jesus's two great commandments: to love God with all your heart, soul, mind

and strength, and to love your neighbour, whoever and whatever he or she may be, as yourself.

Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**



Prayers

Gracious God...

....It's September and change is in the air. Children are back in school, students getting ready for further study, teachers and lecturers returning to work mode. We pray for the young people who are anxious, more so this year, with new people, places, ways of

learning; give them confidence in themselves and the systems in which they work. And for those who recognise you as Lord, be their rock and guide.

...As autumn draws on and the risks of Covid19 increasing again, we pray for the scientists, advisors, governments, health professionals, all with a duty of care to others in their work; and for each one of us with a responsibility to care for those around as for ourselves.

...We pray your blessing on all Church ministers. This week we lift to you those taking the next steps in their Spiritual journeys as they are ordained Deacon or Priest. We pray especially for Jeffrey and his wife Sue at this time. May all go on to serve you through deed and word, and all they do be for the furtherance of your kingdom.

...We each have a bundle of concerns - mistakes made, tasks unfinished, decisions to be taken, people on our hearts. We bring these bundles to you, asking for your kindness and wisdom. Help us to give proper attention to these things, and open them for your touch of lively wisdom and grace; we pray for those who are, and for what is most chiefly on our hearts at this present time....

...God of September, Lord of the year, lead us through the remainder of this month with faith, hope and love.
In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn: Alleluia! sing to Jesus,
his the sceptre, his the throne:
Alleluia! His the triumph,
his the victory alone.
Hear the songs of peaceful Zion
thunder like a mighty flood:
Jesus out of every nation
has redeemed us by his blood

Alleluia! not as orphans
are we left in sorrow now:
Alleluia! he is near us;
faith believes, nor questions how.
Though the cloud from sight received him
when the forty days were o'er,
shall our hearts forget his promise,
'I am with you ever more'?

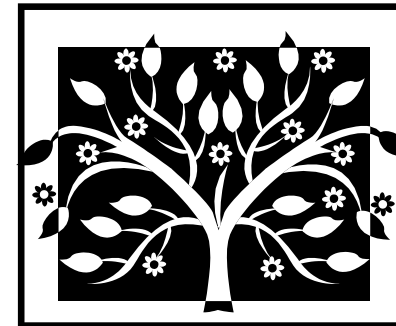
Alleluia! bread of heaven,
here on earth our food, our stay:
Alleluia! here the sinful
flee to thee from day to day.
Intercessor, friend of sinners,
earth's redeemer, plead for me,
where the songs of all the sinless
sweep across the crystal sea.

Alleluia! Alleluia!,
Glory be to God on high;
To the Father and the Saviour,
Who has gained the victory;
Glory to the Holy Spirit,
Fount of love and sanctity.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
To the triune Majesty.

Blessing

May God the Father from whom every family
In earth and heaven receives its name
strengthen us with his Spirit in our inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith;

And the blessing of God Almighty:
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Be amongst us and remain with us always. **Amen**



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