**SUNDAY WORSHIP 6TH SEPTEMBER 2020**

 **COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 1: Thanksgiving and Prayer**



**A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS**

‘Colossians’ is St Paul’s letter to ‘God’s holy people,’ ie the ‘Saints,’ that is the Christians/the Church in the place called Colossae. Colossae is in what was then called Asia Minor and now called Turkey; in the valley of the River Lycus, near Laodicea, about 100 miles East of Ephesus

Paul hadn’t met the Christians in Colossae. The Church there had been founded by Epaphras, who probably himself had heard the Gospel from Paul in Ephesus around AD 53-56. Though there were many Jews in the region, most of the earliest Christians in Colossae were Gentiles

Paul wrote to strengthen them, & to warn them against going astray in what they believed about God/Jesus and in how they behaved.

He was in prison when he wrote, probably in Rome in about AD 61-62 and he clearly wrote to a specific group of people in a specific place at a specific time – he did with all his letters that are now in the NT of our Bibles!

But what he says can still speak to others (such as the Laodicaean Christians, see Col. 4.16, in Paul’s day) and to us because the issues facing the Colossians and dealt with by Paul aren’t so different from those that face us today.

*READ THIS SECTION BEFORE WORSHIP BEGINS:*

Welcome to our time of worshipping together, but in different places and in different ways, including Catherine and I and the other worship leaders leading the worship from within the church building for the first time since March.

We suggest that you have a Bible by your side for your use.

And, as usual, we suggest that those of you who are watching at home, live on Facebook, have the links to today’s songs already open and set to play so that you can sing them as a continuous part of our worship. For those who are in the church building, the songs will be played as soon as the live Facebook broadcast has ended – even though singing still isn’t allowed in Church, it will still be good to worship together as we listen to the songs.

*………………..*

*WELCOME & INTRODUCTION:*

* Let us take this moment to stop whatever else we are doing and thinking about. This is God’s time. Sit comfortably. Picture Jesus with you, sitting alongside you and be still with Him. Know He truly loves and cares for you and He can be trusted.
* Now picture our church family all joining you to worship God in this moment in their own homes. Know that we are worshipping together, even though we can’t see each other.
* Remember that we are one in the Lord.
* If you aren’t following the service on FB, we suggest that, if you are alone, you say the prayers and readings aloud. If you are with others, choose someone to lead and the rest of you join in with the words in bold. On FB, simply join in the words in bold.

Church Family, we come together either on Facebook or in church or as reading this service alone at home, to praise and worship God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Today we start on new sermon series that is based on Paul’s letter to the Colossians, especially how it can speak to us in our present new world and circumstances. (There is a brief introduction to Colossians on the sheet with the worship songs on it)

The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all **And also with you!**

*Call to Worship:*

You are the God who formed us,
**We praise your glorious name**.
You are the God who loves us,
**We praise your glorious name**.
You are the God who forgives us,
**We praise your glorious name.**
You are the God who saves us,
**We praise your glorious name.**
You are the God who calls us,
**We praise your glorious name.**
You are the God who empowers us,
**We praise your glorious name.**
You are the God who sends us,
**We praise your glorious name**

*(Either here or before the final Blessing, Catherine reads a story)*

*Prayers of Penitence*

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden, to ask for his forgiveness and peace. So let us call to mind before God our sins and our shortcomings and confess them to him. Let us remember that God loves us and longs to forgive us.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you, through our own fault, in thought word and deed, and in what we have left undone. We are heartily sorry, and repent of all our sins. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

May God our Father have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*The Prayer of the Day:*

Almighty God, you search us and know us: may we rely on you in strength and rest on you in weakness, now and in all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*The Bible Reading:* **Colossians 1: 1-14**

*The Sermon (from Chris) –*

* Paul’s letter is addressed to the *Saints* in Colossae. A saint is a Christian. You and I are saints. Remember: WE ARE SAINTS! Not because of what we’ve done, but because of what God’s done for us and made us to be in Jesus. We sin, of course – but we are still saints!
* Paul says that he thanks God when he prays for the Colossian Christians. And I thank God for all of you when I pray for you all (which I do often!)
* He speaks of the Colossians having ‘faith in Christ Jesus’ and ‘love for all God’s people,’ ‘faith and love that spring from hope stored up’ for them in heaven. Faith, hope and love. Sounds familiar? See 1 Corinthians 13!
* He speaks of them having received God’s *grace*
* They are, he says – qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints in light; rescued from the dominion of darkness (Satan); and brought into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son, Jesus. We have been redeemed and have been forgiven all of our sins.
* That’s what God’s grace does. Wow!
* And we have been given that grace, that free gift, too, if we are willing to receive it.
* We – you and me – too are qualified now to share in the inheritance of the saints in light; we too are rescued from the dominion of darkness; we too have been brought into the kingdom, the rule, the reign of God’s beloved Son, Jesus! All by God’s grace and mercy to us; all by the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. Wow! What a wonderful gift of God to us. Praise Him!
* But that’s just the starting point! Paul goes on to pray for the Colossians.
* He prays that they might be filled by God with the following: the knowledge of God’s will for them (what He wants for them and of them); wisdom and understanding by the Holy Spirit; and through these things, that they may be strengthened with all power by God’s glorious might.

He wants these things for them in order that they might: live a life worthy of the Lord; bear much fruit in every good work; have great endurance and patience; and give joyful thanks to the Father.

* And, of course, we here at LHC – including our online friends - need all those things at this time, too, both as individual followers of Jesus (saints!) and as the family of God. We too need the knowledge of God’s will for us; we need wisdom & understanding by the Spirit; we need to be strengthened with all power from on High; and we need all of this so that we too can live a life worthy of the Lord, bearing much spiritual fruit in every good work, having great endurance and patience and giving joyful thanks to God our heavenly Father at all times.
* But what does that look like in our present times?
* It’s been the strangest of times this year, and the world still is very far from normal. Yes, things have opened up to a degree, but there are still many restrictions on our own personal lives and on our Church life.
* So how can we be faithful right now?
* Against the apparent odds, if we look at the mess around us with worldly eyes, we can trust that Jesus is in control and can use our every circumstance for good – and then have peace in that knowledge.
* We can hold tight to our hope in heaven – heaven that is ours right now because God is with us.
* And we can exercise love every day – for God and for our neighbours.
* It’s vital that we persevere in seeking to lives worthy of and pleasing to God, that bear spiritual fruit for him, in his name being glorified, his Kingdom furthered and his will done.
* BUT to be able to do this in our much-changed world, we need WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING from the Spirit. We need the Spirit to lead the way because our landscape is unfamiliar to us. We need to ask the Spirit for great patience and endurance, so that we can hold on to God and seek God’s will for us into the new future.
* Yes, it may well be a new future that God has planned for us all, rather than a return to the old normal – and we need to give God space to show us how the new future might look, especially as it’s all too easy for us simply to think that, as and when the restrictions ease enough to allow us to, we should simply restart all the things we used to do before the lockdown kicked in.
* What if God wants to do something different? What if God is bringing in a new and different time? The world is different from how it was before, and the Church may have to be different and do things differently from how it did before. We know that our capability to keep up our old timetable of activities was reducing constantly. What if God has taken the pressure of the old things away and is inviting us somewhere new?
* Already the way we worship together is quite different from how it was at the start of the year and, even if we wanted to go back to the old normal, it would be unlikely to be possible for some months to come. In our changed world, some of us are willing and able to gather in the Church building, others are not. And in any case, there wouldn’t be room for everyone to return to church each Sunday. Many folk have got used to worshipping at home, either by participating via Facebook or using our worship sheets and it actually still feels right for the moment – indeed today is my own first Sunday back in church for almost six months.
* And we deliberately aren’t rushing to resume any other activities, either in Church or in people’s homes, other than Basics Bank, which as an essential service has been running right through – even though we may soon be at the point when we could restart some things, or could allow the hirers of our building to start again.
* The question that we must be asking again is ‘What does God want here of me – of us – next? It may well be right to resume some activities, but not all. We’re back to the need for great wisdom and discernment. What is permitted? What is safe? What is right before the Lord?
* During the full lockdown period, we found that almost everything had been stripped away from us. But what remained was the most important things: our relationship with Him. We have never stopped being able to still pray, worship, read the Bible – and we must!
* In saying all of this, I am not on my own: there are those in the wider Church who are sensing that local Churches should not rush back into doing all the things they used to do; that Christians need to be patient and wait upon God for quite a while longer, to seek to discern what it is that He is *really* saying to us, who He is *really* calling us to be; what He is *really* calling us to do.
* BECAUSE – just maybe - HE WANTS TO USE US IN NEW WAYS TO BEAR FRUIT FOR HIM. Just maybe He wants us to be more effective for Him than we used to be.
* The central message of our faith is about NEW LIFE – RESURRECTION – but AFTER THE DEATH AND THE BURIAL of old things and old ways, sometimes even of things some or many of us have loved and valued. But none of them are Him!
* And until God reveals His will for us for the new season, let us know the fruit of the Spirit that is patience – and keep up the joyous practice of spending time with Him each day – because that is where He is most likely to meet us.
* In Isaiah 11, the prophet speaks of the coming Messiah, upon whom the Spirit will rest, ‘the Spirit of wisdom of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.’ Let us pry individually and together for God’s blessing of these things on us. I pray that now:
* Lord, I pray that You would put upon us Your Spirit, that You would give us wisdom and understanding, to know and to do Your will; counsel – good and Godly guidance – and strength and courage; a true knowledge of You and a true fear of You, so that we may work out how You are calling us to live and what You are calling us to do as His people in this place and this time. Amen.

*The Affirmation of Faith:*

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; he was buried; he was raised to life on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles: this we have received and this we believe. Amen.**

*The Prayers: A responsive prayer of intercession*

Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine.**

God of all creation, you hold the depths of the earth in your hands.
You are closer to us than the air we breathe.
Fill our souls with your wonderful love and light.
Give us strength and courage to reflect that love and light in the world.
Let us never shrink back from who we are in you or hide our light inside ourselves. Renew in us a sense of joy,
painting the dark shadows around us with your light, your love and your salvation.
Hear us today as we pray for a world too often darkened by hatred, evil, power and greed.

Within our darkest night,    **Let your light shine**.

God of power and might, your broken world cries out from the depths,
a world dominated by the darkness of war, terror, pain and suffering.
We think of the on-going and deepening conflict in [Syria and the middle East].
We share the pain and anguish of those who have had to flee from their homes,
countries and livelihoods, who risk their lives,
desperate for a new start free from fear and war.
May they see your light, feel your strength and power
and know the truth of your promise
that we shall not be overcome by the dark shadows of life
or the darkness of human nature.

Within our darkest night,  **Let your light shine.**

God of compassion and grace, we share with you our love and concern
for people in a dark place today.
We have on our hearts the friends and loved ones of the victims of violence and hatred.
We pray that they will find your strength
in the compassion and love of those around them.
We pray for tolerance in our society.
We pray for all Muslims suffering from Anti-Islamic hate crimes.
Let your light shine through the darkness of all their pain and their suffering.

Within our darkest night,  **Let your light shine.**

God of life, we ask for your healing power
on those who are enduring pain and illness.
We name them now quietly in our hearts……….
We share the grief of people close to us, who’ve recently lost loved ones.
We name them too, quietly in our hearts…….
We remember that as we weep with the grieving,
we embrace the joy of Your presence within and around us and them.
We know your everlasting light shines with us,
in moments of great sadness and great joy.

Within our darkest night,  **Let your light shine.**

God of love and hope,
Renew in us a deeper sense of who we are in you.
Help us to be aware of your presence each and every day.
Make us instruments of love and praise.
May our words, actions and lives be living examples
of your forgiving, healing, life-giving love.
**Amen.**

*And now we pray together the Lord’s Prayer:*

**Our Father, who art in heaven ….**

*And our Church Prayer, from the Hillsong United Worship Song, ‘Oceans:’*

Spirit lead us where our trust is without borders
Let us walk upon the waters
Wherever You would call us. Take us deeper than our feet could ever wander
And our faith will be made stronger
In the presence of our Saviour. Amen

And the Blessing, from Colossians 2.6-7:

As you received Christ Jesus as Lord

**So we will continue to live in Him**

Be rooted and built up in Him

**We will be strengthened in the faith as we were taught**

Overflow with thankfulness to God,

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be among us now and for ever. **Amen**

We invite you to end your worship today by either singing or reading aloud the worship songs whose lyrics we’ve included after the words of this service.

 **WORSHIP SONGS**

**WORSHIP SONGS**

**On this page, we have the words for the songs that we will be singing live on Facebook at 10am.**

## Jesus Name Above All Names

[Naida Hearn](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALeKk0108rmF2QXuLUUbQ1fSIJPdgL5sfg:1599050822577&q=Naida+Hearn&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLSz9U3MCwvyyvLXsTK7ZeYmZKo4JGaWJQHAOrdETQcAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiTk4fCwMrrAhVsTxUIHaHWBx8QMTAAegQIBxAD)

Jesus, name above all names
Beautiful Saviour, Glorious Lord
Emmanuel, God is with us
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word
Jesus, name above all names
Beautiful Saviour, Glorious Lord
Emmanuel, God is with us
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word

Repeat

Source: [Musixmatch](https://www.musixmatch.com/)

Songwriters: Naida Hearn

Jesus Name Above All Names lyrics © Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publ.

Give Thanks

[Don Moen](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALeKk03Oi7KmF7u0WsMP3kcTkacjQqg6UA:1599050887506&q=Don+Moen&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLUz9U3sDSpyM1exMrhkp-n4JufmgcAhNfTXxgAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj5p4LhwMrrAhX1pHEKHQmwACYQMTAAegQIAxAD)

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son

And now let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us"

And now let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us"

REPEAT WHOLE SONG.

Give thanks

Source: [LyricFind](https://www.lyricfind.com/)

Songwriters: Henry Smith

Be Still And Know That I Am God

[Cedarmont Kids](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=ALeKk03nBdp3TicWi5ja0KiMqRYyRQsWWA:1599051014725&q=Cedarmont+Kids&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAONgVuLSz9U3MMwrtEzPXcTK55yakliUm59XouCdmVIMAL_1vCUfAAAA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjJ7dadwcrrAhWRonEKHdW2DtQQMTAAegQIAxAD)

Be still and know
That I am God
Be still and know
That I am God
Be still and know
That I am God

I am the Lord
That healeth thee
I am the Lord
That healeth thee
I am the Lord
That healeth thee

In thee, O Lord
I put my trust
In thee, O Lord
I put my trust
In thee, O Lord
I put my trust

Source: [Musixmatch](https://www.musixmatch.com/)

Songwriters: Traditional

**A PRAYER TO PREPARE OURSELVES FOR WORSHIP**

*I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”* [**Psalm 122:1**](https://www.esv.org/Psalm%20122%3A1/)

 Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the privilege of coming together to worship You—for the joy of gathering with sisters and brothers to boast in Christ, worship by the Spirit, and receive your Word. Forgive us when we presume on this honour and come to You less than prepared. Help us always to give you the worship of which You alone are worthy, as our Triune God.

We pray for all who will join us today. Lord, fill all of our hearts with a fresh sighting of the beauty of Jesus and give us a keen awareness of the riches of the gospel..

We pray for ourselves, as we prepare to lead today’s worship. We pray that, as Chris preaches, You will give him focus and freedom, passion and pacing, and faithfulness to the text and joy in Christ. And by your Spirit, Father, open us to your Word today and your Word to us. May the gospel come with convicting and humbling power, and with gladdening and transforming grace.

We thank you for the guests and visitors who will gather with us today. May they experience your welcoming heart, the magnificence of your glory, and the riches of your grace.

And as we leave the service today—with Your benediction and blessing, free us to serve you this week with gladness, in everything we think, say, and do.

**Amen we pray, in Jesus’ merciful and mighty name.**

**WORSHIP SONGS**

**These are the words for the songs that we invite you to join in online after the worship:**

**River of God**

Down the mountain the river flows
And it brings refreshing where ever it goes.
Through the valleys and over the fields
The river is rushing and the river is here.

Chorus:

*The river of God, sets our feet a dancing
The river of God, fills our hearts with cheer
The river of God, fills our mouths with laughter
And we rejoice for the river is here.*

The river of God is teeming with life
All who touch it can be revived
Those who linger on this river shore
Will come back thirsting for more of the Lord

Repeat chorus

(Instrumental)

Up to the mountain we love to go
To find the presence of the Lord
Along the banks of the river we run
We dance with laughter giving praise to the son

Repeat chorus

(Instrumental)

Down the mountain, the river flows
And it brings refreshing where ever it goes
Through the valleys and over the fields
The river is rushing and the river is here.

Repeat chorus

(Source: [Musixmatch](https://www.musixmatch.com/) Songwriters: Tarver Phillip F

The Rivers of God lyrics © Kingdom Glory, Praise Hill Publishing Company Group)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TZ3wTS0GU8>

**……………………**

 **WORSHIP SONGS**

**Bless the Lord O my soul**

 By [Matt Redman](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCY1Bd6cS9XyDfAVJbEgwGSQ)

Chorus
*Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before, O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name*

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning
[It's time to sing Your song again](https://genius.com/Matt-redman-10000-reasons-bless-the-lord-lyrics#note-2725179)
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes

Repeat chorus

[You're rich in love and You're slow to anger](https://genius.com/Matt-redman-10000-reasons-bless-the-lord-lyrics#note-4771330)
Your name is great and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

Repeat chorus

Interlude

And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still, my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore
Forevermore

Repeat chorus x 2

I'll worship Your holy name
Lord, I'll worship Your holy name

Sing like never before, O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name
Jesus, I will, worship Your holy name
Worship Your holy name

(Written by Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin

UMG (on behalf of SixSteps (SIX)); LatinAutor, BMI - Broadcast Music Inc., Adorando Brazil, ASCAP, LatinAutor - UMPG, EMI Music Publishing, Capitol CMG Publishing, and 23 Music Rights Societies)

[**https://youtu.be/DXDGE\_lRI0E**](https://youtu.be/DXDGE_lRI0E)

**………………………..**

**Words of all songs printed under CCLI no 16884**