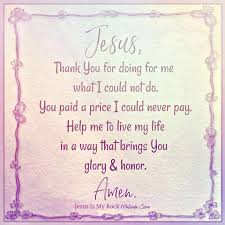
**SUNDAY WORSHIP 27th SEPTEMBER 2020**

**COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 2: 6-23**

**Freedom through Christ Alone**



**Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord**

**Continue to live in Him,**

**Rooted and built up in Him**

**Strengthened in the faith as you were taught**

**And overflowing with thankfulness (Colossians 2.6-7)**

*READ THIS SECTION BEFORE WORSHIP BEGINS:*

Welcome to our time of worshipping together, but in different places and in different ways, including the worship leaders leading the worship from within the church building.

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 continue on our 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. Today we come to Colossians 2.6-23, ‘Freedom through Christ alone.’

*The Greeting*

The Lord be with you. **And also with you!**

*Call to Worship:*

Rejoice in the Lord always;

**Again, I will say rejoice.**

Let your gentleness be known to everyone.

**The Lord is near.**

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving

**Let your requests be made know to God.**

And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding

**Will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus**

(Phil 4:4-7)

*We pray the Opening Prayer together:*

**Heavenly Father in our time together now, help us to celebrate your love, learn from your truth, trust in your grace and grow strong in your service through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

*On FB and in Church, Catherine reads a story to ‘set the scene.’*

*Prayers of Penitence*

In God’s Holy presence let us examine the words of our mouths, the deeds of our bodies and the desires of our minds confessing our sins to Him …

When we are quick to criticize others but slow to praise them

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy.**

When we bear grudges and find it hard to forgive

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy.**

When we think we are right, and impose our views on others

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy.**

When we let evil go unchallenged, and are afraid to speak the truth

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy.**

When we are preoccupied with ourselves and give little attention to others

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy.**

When we trust in material things, more than in God’s unfailing love

Lord, have mercy **Lord, have mercy.**

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

*We say together the Prayer of the Day:*

**Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence; give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; 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.**

*The Bible Reading:* **Colossians 2: 6-23**

*The Sermon (from Chris) –*

* During this year, 2020, just about everything in our life has changed! We would never have thought even at Christmas last year that things would be so different by now!
* Changes in the life of the world; of our country; in our own personal lives; in our Church life. We spent months in total lock down!
* Just about everything that we knew and loved about our life as a Church came to an abrupt stop. Even now, many of those things haven’t started again, can’t start again, won’t start again. Things that might previously have given us pleasure, meaning, purpose even, through attending them or leading them.
* In addition, our ability to meet with and spend time with family and friends has been severely restricted in these past few months – and still is!
* In a way, we have to say that it has been God who has stripped all these things away from us. Perhaps he has been breaking our dependence on them, to drive us back to depending purely and simply on Jesus.
* It’s so easy to find ‘life’ of a sort in all the things that we used to do as a Church, all the things we used to come along to, all the people we used to meet with frequently, rather than finding real Life ‘In Christ alone,’ even though we sing songs like, ‘In Christ alone,’ ‘Christ alone, cornerstone,’ and ‘All my hope on God is founded’ frequently and heartily!
* We love to gather together, for worship, for fellowship, for Church activities, maybe because we feel lonely and crave the company of other people. We love chatting with other people; we love knitting and nattering; we love doing seated exercises with others; we who are men love having breakfast with other men; those of you who are women love having afternoon tea with other ladies; we love singing worship songs simply because singing makes us feel good; we long for the refreshments after the Sunday service, sometimes perhaps even more than the service itself!
* And all those things have been taken away from us this past six months. Yes, we do have some of them back – but in forms that are almost unrecognizable from how they were before! And you might be still finding Church life hard because it is so different from how it was before.
* And perhaps you are feeling disorientated; confused; lost; lonely; let down, at least in some degree.
* But I believe that God has been using this Pandemic time to force us back to Jesus and to Jesus only.
* Just think for a moment: What is the real heart of the Christian faith? Of your Christian faith?
* It isn’t any Church activity, however good and pleasant and valuable it might be in itself.
* It isn’t any friendship or family relationship.
* It isn’t any particular physical place
* Paul talks in our reading about all these things being but ‘a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.’ So, if you’re really honest, what’s *your* reality? Is it Church and Church activities, people or places – or is it Jesus?
* The heart of our faith must be Jesus and Jesus only, as the one who died on the cross to save us, and rose again and is living and reigning in heaven at God’s right hand. On the Cross, Jesus won the victory over the spiritual powers and authorities. On the Cross, He took the guilt of our sin and secured our forgiveness. By His death on Cross, what looked like Jesus being defeated – killed – actually secured our victory! And He is the living Lord, with whom we can have a living, personal relationship if we accept that we have sinned, that he died in our place, and invite him into pour lives. And that’s what is vital.
* *All* we need is Christ the King. Paul’s simple message in our passage is: Accept Jesus, hold fast to Him, and you will then have everything you need. We are already complete in Christ. We don’t need anything else.
* Don’t look to the way we do things at LHC, or to rules and regulations, or to particular spiritual experiences (such as Spring Harvest), or to the way we used to do our worship, or to your family or to your friends or to anything else to give you any life and meaning that is really true and lasting life. Look to Jesus and to Jesus only.
* Yes, of course, we need to be part of the Church and its activities – but we must not make them more important than Jesus Himself! We have to allow them to lead us to Jesus and to root us in Him, not to be things that are vital and significant for us just in themselves. They have to be things we can do without and still be ‘in Christ,’ because we have realised that we do have and have had to do without them! All earthly things – and people – are frail, temporary, unreliable, so we mustn’t put our hope, our trust in them.
* But we have not been without Christ!! And we never are. Jesus has not gone away, even if our Church activities have, or are now totally different.
* Paul reminds us at the start of our reading today: ‘Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, overflowing with thankfulness.’
* So I say to you (and to myself!): having received Jesus as Lord, continue to live your life in Jesus alone. Be rooted in Him only (like a tree in the ground); be built up in Him only (like a building) only; be strengthened in Him ONLY. In this season, get to know Him like you’ve never known Him before. Prioritise looking to Jesus and being intimate with Jesus – alone!
* And overflow with thankfulness. It is very easy and natural – and not wrong – to complain to God about how things have been for us, how hard it has been for us – and still is. But it is more important to be thankful to God. There are always things we can thank God for; if we can, we even start to thank God for the tough things! Above all, we need to thank God for Jesus Himself, who He is, what He’s done for us, what He promises us.
* I want to urge you, as Paul urged the Colossians: Have a single-minded devotion to Jesus; be ruled by Jesus in all things. For all of us, however long we have been in Christ, what we most deeply need is not anything other than the King – Jesus – himself. We all always need more of Him. He’s what it’s all about!
* For me, what this means – I have discovered these past months – is that I need to spend more time each day praying and more time each day reading and meditating on the words of the Bible – reflecting deeply on the words of Scripture and allowing Jesus to make Himself known to me through those words as I read and ponder them.
* By praying I don’t just mean saying more prayers! I mean spending more time just being ‘in His presence,’ yes, making requests to God some of the time, saying thank you to God some of the time, saying sorry to God some of the time, but AS WELL trying to be still with Him, enjoying being with Him, seeking to listen to Him, allowing Him to speak to me - through the words of the Scriptures that I have been reading, through what thoughts come into my head, sometimes even by Him actually speaking clearly to me or giving me a clear picture in my mind’s eye. I quite often make use of the meditations by Dappy Keys that form the heart of our ‘time for God’ times to help me to be still in God’s presence.
* The word I received while Catherine and I were on holiday in August was, ‘Do less; pray more.’ I’ve said it already in sermons recently, but I say it again as a word for all of us. ‘Do less; pray more.’ Seek to spend more time consciously and directly in His presence each day.
* For me, it also means ‘Practising the Presence of God’ as often as I can through each day: as often as I can recalling Him, having a word with Him, being aware of His presence with me, wherever I am, whatever I’m doing.
* Sometimes, for me it means using the ‘Jesus Prayer’ – praying, ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God,’ as I breathe in, and, ‘Have mercy on me,’ as I breathe out: with every single breath I take!
* For me, it means listening to worship CDs when I’m driving on my own in the car, when I’m doing the ironing, or the dusting, or whatever. It could mean having a Christian radio station on throughout the day.
* That’s what ‘single-minded devotion to Jesus’ looks like, at least in part. If you do it, then He will become – more and more – the one in whom we really do stand complete; the one who really does give us all that we need.
* Expose yourself more and more to Him. There’s a ‘Law of Exposure’ that says we are formed by what we expose ourselves to by looking & hearing.
* Then, if and when all those ‘earthly’ things become possible again, we will be able to see them for what they are and be able to use them for what they should be used for, and not seek to find significance and meaning and life in ‘earthly’ things and people. Because earthly things and people cannot give us true and lasting meaning and significance and life, because they will all – sooner or later – fail, let us down, hurt us even.
* But – thanks be to God – God is the eternal one who offers us eternal life, if we would but say yes to Him, and who will never fail us or let us down.
* ‘As you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, so continue to live your life in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, overflowing with thankfulness.’

*The Affirmation of Faith:*

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though He was divine, he did not cling to equality with God, but made himself nothing. Taking the form of a slave, he was born in human likeness. He humbled himself, and was obedient to death – even the death of the cross. Therefore, God has raised him on high, and given him the name above very name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

*Intercessions*

When I say *Lord God* please respond *hear our prayer*

Lord God **Hear our prayer**

Our Father in heaven we give you thanks for the church and for all that we receive through its fellowship, worship and teaching; be that in this building or on Facebook or via the service sheets. We pray for each other and for our fellow Christians in other places. Renew us by the Holy Spirit that we may grow as disciples of Christ.

Lord God **Hear our prayer**

We give you thanks for this nation and those in authority who serve the people with integrity and dedication. We lift to you those in government as they continue to make difficult decisions regarding the fight against the corona virus and economic circumstances. We thank you for and pray your blessing and protection upon those that work for the NHS and in caring roles

Lord God **Hear our prayer**

We lift to you people anywhere suffering from disaster, war or oppression. Bring justice to all and the opportunity to make the most of their lives.

Lord God **Hear our prayer**

We give thanks for our community and all those who help us and bring joy to our lives in any way. We give thanks for the health we have, and the skills of those who attend to us when we are in need. Bring healing and encouragement to those suffering from ill health, depression, loneliness or frailty.

Lord God **Hear our prayer**

We give thanks for those whose memory we treasure. Grant us with them and with all the saints the joy of eternal life.

In Christ our Lord. **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:*

Since you have been raised with Christ,

**Set your hearts on things above,**

Where Christ is,

**Seated at the right hand of God.**

Set your minds on things above,

**And not on earthly things.**

For you died,

**And your life is now hidden with Christ in God.**

When Christ, who is your life, appears,

**Then you also will appear with him in glory**

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

Let’s go in peace to love and serve the Lord

**In the name of Christ! 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**

**These songs are for use at the end of the 10.30am Sunday broadcast worship**

**Give thanks with a grateful heart**

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"

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

Give thanks with a grateful heart (with a grateful heart)  
Give thanks to the Holy One (to the Holy One)  
Give… <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk_7wUR2Wdg>

**Rejoice in the Lord Always**

|  |
| --- |
| Rejoice in the Lord always; And again I say, rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always; And again I say, rejoice.  Rejoice, rejoice  And again, I say rejoice.  Rejoice, rejoice  And again, I say rejoice. |
| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Rs1SeuBgU0> |  |

**Bless the Lord O my Soul**

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  
Whatever may pass  
And whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing  
When the evening comes

You're rich in love  
And You're slow to anger  
Your name is great  
And Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness  
I will keep on singing

Ten thousand reasons  
For…

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXDGE_lRI0E>

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

**WORSHIP SONGS**

**These songs are for use at the service of preparation at 10am on Sunday morning**

**LIVING LORD**

Lord Jesus Christ

You have come to us

You are one with us,

Mary's Son.

Cleansing our souls from all their sin.

Pouring Your love and goodness in.

Jesus our love for you we sing,

Living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ

Now and every day

Teach us how to pray,

Son of God.

You have commanded us to do

This in remembrance Lord of you

Into our lives your power breaks through,

Living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ

You have come to us

Born as one with us,

Mary's Son.

Led out to die on Calvary,

Risen from death to set us free,

Living Lord Jesus help us see

You are Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ

I would come to you

Live my life for you,

Son of God.

All your commands I know are true,

Your many gifts will make me new,

Into my life your power breaks through,

Living Lord.

(Words and Music by Patrick Appleford (1925-2018))

**BLESSED ASSURANCE**

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
   Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
   Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
   Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.
   * *Refrain:*  
     This is my story, this is my song,  
     Praising my Saviour all the day long;  
     This is my story, this is my song,  
     Praising my Saviour all the day long.
2. Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
   Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
   Angels, descending, bring from above  
   Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.
3. Perfect submission, all is at rest,  
   I in my Saviour am happy and blest,  
   Watching and waiting, looking above,  
   Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Word by Fanny Crosby

**KING OF KINGS, MAJESTY**

King of kings, Majesty  
God of Heaven living in me  
Gentle Saviour, closest friend  
Strong Deliverer, beginning and end  
All within me falls at Your throne

Your Majesty, I can but bow  
I lay my all before You now  
In royal robes I don't deserve  
I live to serve Your Majesty

Earth and Heaven worship You  
Love eternal, Faithful and True  
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls  
Brought this sinner near to Your throne  
All within me cries out in praise.

Your majesty, I can but bow  
I lay my all before You now  
In royal robes I don't deserve  
I live to serve Your Majesty

Your majesty, I can but bow  
I lay my all before You now  
In royal robes I don't deserve  
I live to serve Your Majesty

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

Songwriters: Jarrod Cooper