

WELCOME AND NOTICES

Quiz night – Tuesday 15 June, 7.30pm Mike Gibbs is our quizmaster.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds
(James 1:2)

OPENING PRAYER:

Glory to you, God our Father:
You raised Jesus from the grave, bringing us victory over death and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ:
for us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, Holy Spirit:
**you lead us into truth,
breathe new life into us
and guide us in the way of Jesus our Saviour.
Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.**

CONFSSION

In humility, let us confess our sins.
**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be;
that we may act justly,
love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
To all who turn to him he says: 'Your sins are forgiven.'
He also says, 'Follow me.'
Let us receive his forgiveness and answer his call. **Amen.**

SONG: There is a hope

<https://youtu.be/gMTG4xaBxi8>

**There is a hope that burns within my heart,
That gives me strength for every passing day;
A glimpse of glory now revealed in meagre part,
Yet drives all doubt away:
I stand in Christ, with sins forgiv'n;
And Christ in me, the hope of heav'n!
My highest calling and my deepest joy,
to make his will my home.**

**There is a hope that lifts my weary head,
A consolation strong against despair,
That when the world has plunged me in its deepest pit, I find the Saviour there!
Through present sufferings, future's fear,
He whispers, 'Courage!' in my ear.
For I am safe in everlasting arms,
And they will lead me home.**

**There is a hope that stands the test of time,
That lifts my eyes beyond the beckoning grave,
To see a matchless beauty of a day divine
When I behold his face!
When sufferings cease and sorrows die,
And every longing satisfied,
Then joy unspeakable will flood my soul,
For I am truly home.**

BIBLE READINGS: Isaiah 6:1-5

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵ "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

Matthew 5:1-4

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,² and he began to teach them.

He said:³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION: A BETTER LIFE (2) Suffering

Mike began our series looking at the beatitudes last week. Today we come to the second of the beatitudes: Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. We know that ‘blessed’ has sometimes been translated ‘happy.’ So, our beatitude this morning could almost say ‘Happy are those who are unhappy.’ Are you happy if you are mourning? When we lose a loved one, is Jesus talking about us, people who mourn because of a loved one dying? We may be happy for them if they endured terrible suffering, and we’d say something like “At least their suffering is over.” But blessed can also mean ‘approved of God.’ Being chosen under God’s sovereign anointing by his Holy Spirit. So why would Jesus say you are blessed if you mourn?

The word that translates as mourn means grief or sorrow of heart that is usually expressed by tears. But if we weep, are we anointed? Well, yes. If we are poor in spirit in the sense Jesus means and Mike expressed last week. Mourning is an extension of brokenness. The second beatitude fills out the first and takes brokenness a step further. It’s not unlike Isaiah’s experience when he encountered the glory of the LORD. “Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty” (Isaiah 6:5). Isaiah was blessed to have this vision, although through it he became aware of his own sinfulness in the presence of God. So, in a sense, Isaiah was blessed although he mourned.

Did you know that there are two kinds of suffering: there is suffering that does us good and suffering that does us no good. Ineffectual suffering is moaning instead of mourning. But we are blessed when we suffer if it has the desired effect, when it makes a positive difference to your life. Let me give you an example.

This season was the best season for West Ham United. We came sixth in the Premier League. Back in the 1985-6 season, West Ham were top for much of the season. I was living next door to the ground and that’s all we talked about, how West Ham were going to win the league. Then one of my team members, Elaine, challenged me and said that if I talked about Jesus as much as I talked about football, then maybe I would see God at work in my life. She then challenged me to have nothing to do with football for a fortnight. But she didn’t realise that it was the last two weeks of the football season and we were going to win the league for the first time ever! However, I took up her challenge and had nothing to do with football for two weeks. At the end of the fortnight, West Ham lost the lead and Liverpool won the league. But I gained from that time, which was real suffering for me. I never saw football in the same way again.

Blessed are those who mourn because mourning creates an entry point in your heart through which God might get your attention. When all is well we can be difficult to reach, but when suffering comes and we turn to mourning, maybe we will sink to our knees and seek God and learn from him. That’s why mourning is a blessing.

Are you in a trial right now? Could it be that God is tapping you on the shoulder through negative circumstances just to get your attention? If so, would you not thank him for this? James writes, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2). Through suffering you develop fruit of the Spirit such as perseverance and patience and steadfastness. Although I hated Elaine’s challenge, I thank her for it now. We are blessed when we mourn, when we

suffer, because it is the gateway to greater blessing.

The mourning that God puts you through isn't for nothing. Jesus said "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." The word for comfort here is the same word for the Holy Spirit – parakletos, translated into different words in English including the Comforter (KJV), Counsellor (NIV), Helper (ESV), Advocate (NEB). Jesus said the Holy Spirit would come alongside to uphold us. When Jesus promised that mourners would be comforted, it was future tense, they will be comforted. Comfort will come down the road at some point. Every time of suffering has its time and its purpose. While it lasts we think it will go on forever. But it will end. James says "Let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:4 ESV). In other words, don't try to rush through the suffering otherwise you will not get the full benefits of the suffering. But in the meantime remember that help is on the way. In Luke's gospel this beatitude is put like this: "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh" (Luke 6:21). Proverbs 17:22 says 'Laughter is good medicine.' The Holy Spirit gives the "Oil of gladness instead of mourning" (Isaiah 61:3).

Finally, if the suffering is effectual, it leads to an increased anointing. It leads to greater faith and a greater sense of the presence of God. It leads to a closer walk with God. The greater the anointing, the greater the suffering. The greater the suffering, the greater the anointing. That's why you are blessed when God brings mourning into your life. Don't despise it. Dignify it. It is more precious than gold.

SONG: Consider it joy
https://youtu.be/qN_k-OPbEjs

**Though trials will come
Don't fear, don't run
Lift up your eyes
Hold fast, be strong
Have faith, keep on believing
Lift up your eyes**

**For God is at work in us
Moulding and shaping us
Out of his love for us
Making us more like Jesus**

*Consider it joy, pure joy
When troubles come
Many trials will make you strong
Consider it joy, pure joy
And stand your ground
Then at last you'll wear a crown*

**Though trials will come
Won't fear, won't run
We'll lift up our eyes
Hold fast, be strong
Have faith, keep on believing
We'll lift up our eyes
For God is at work in us
Moulding and shaping us
Out of his love for us
Making us more like Jesus**

*Joy, pure joy
Consider it joy, pure joy
Joy, pure joy
Consider it joy, pure joy*

**Patiently trusting him
Ready for anything
'Til we're complete in him
In everything more like Jesus**

*Consider it joy, pure joy
When troubles come
Many trials will make you strong
Consider it joy, pure joy
And stand your ground
Then at last you'll wear a crown
Then at last you'll wear a crown
Then at last you'll wear a crown*

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION
Blessed are those who mourn
For they shall be comforted**

We pray for those who mourn the loss of employment during the pandemic. We pray

especially for young people and the hospitality sector who have borne the brunt of this loss.

**Blessed are those who mourn
For they shall be comforted**

We pray for those who mourn the loss of habitat for the creatures of the world. We pray that the G20 and COP26 may make bold and long-term decisions that help sustain the planet. We pray for scientists, politicians and ordinary people who love your world and all within it, that together we may work for the benefit of all creation.

**Blessed are those who mourn
For they shall be comforted**

We pray for those who mourn the loss of health, whether because of covid or the many other health-related illnesses. We pray for medical staff treating those who are ill, and pray for those in the medical profession who are burned out. We pray for David Davies in hospital that he would get the treatment he needs, and for Carolyn, that she would receive the care she needs too.

**Blessed are those who mourn
For they shall be comforted**

We pray for those who mourn the loss of friendship, who haven't been able to see friends or family and give a hug for so long. We thank you for our friends and family and for all they mean to us.

**Blessed are those who mourn
For they shall be comforted**

Finally, we pray for those who mourn the loss of loved ones. In their loss may they discover the hope you bring, and may they turn to you and find the life you offer.

**Blessed are those who mourn
For they shall be comforted**

All these things we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE PEACE

We are the body of Christ.

In the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body. Therefore, let us keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

HOLY COMMUNION

Jesus was often a guest and shared many meals with all kinds of people. Today we are the guests of the risen Lord Jesus. He is with us. He invites us to share bread and wine with him. He invites us to remember the story of his death and resurrection.

On the night before he died, Jesus shared a meal with his closest friends. The gospel writer tells us what happened that evening. 'While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread. He gave thanks and broke it. He handed it to his disciples and said, "Take it. This is my body." Then he took the cup. He gave thanks and handed it to them. All of them drank from it. "This is my blood of the new covenant," he said to them. "It is poured out for many."

The Lord is here
His Spirit is with us.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
It is right to give thanks and praise.

In the beginning, Father, your Spirit swept across the face of the waters, bringing order out of chaos. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. Though we turned away from you, you remained faithful to us. In due time you sent your only Son Jesus to be the Saviour of the world. At Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan he was anointed by your Spirit. You told us that he was your beloved Son. In the power of the Spirit he proclaimed good news to the poor, freedom for captives, recovery of sight for the blind, and the time of your favour.

Sharing our human nature, he died on the cross for us. By the power of your Spirit you raised him from the dead. At Pentecost you sent your Spirit, empowering your people to serve you in the world in Jesus' name.

And so we declare...

Christ has died!

Christ is risen!

Christ will come again!

Father, pour out your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be to us the body and blood of Christ. Unite us with him and with one another in mission to all the world; and bring us with the whole creation to your heavenly kingdom. This we pray through Jesus Christ our risen and ascended Saviour, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the love of God our Father, to whom we give praise and glory now and forever.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As his body here on earth, let us say together the prayer that Jesus gave us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ. **Though we are many, we are one body because we all share in one bread.**

Receive this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, and feed on the Lamb of God with reverence and faith.

THE GIVING OF THE BREAD

The body of Christ broken for you. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of power, may the boldness of your Spirit transform us, may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us, and may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to serve you and worship you now and always. Amen.

SONG: FOREVER JESUS

<https://youtu.be/9zZSsBDxCvo>

**My hymn of praise shall be forever Jesus,
My firm foundation in shifting sands;
My strength and hope through many fears and failures,
The disappointments of the past –
His constant love has held me fast.**

*So for all my days I will sing my praise
To the King forever Jesus.*

*Though the storms may rage He is strong to save,
He's the King forever Jesus!*

**My song of joy shall be forever Jesus
Who bore the suffering, who made a way;
His life a gift, His death a precious ransom
That wipes the sinner's guilt away,
And turns our night to glorious day!**

So for all my days...

**My final breath shall be forever Jesus
When shadows lengthen before my eyes;
My Lord and Friend, companion through the valley
When dearest ones are left behind,
His hand will lead me to the light.**

So for all my days...

**When I meet His gaze
I will sing my praise
To the King forever Jesus.
All my sorrows past, I am home at last
With my King forever Jesus!**

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING

God of mercy and love, may we know your comfort in our mourning, and rejoice in your gift that brings us closer to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

And now may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and with all whom you love, now and for evermore.
Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.