



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 14th April 2024

compiled by Barbara Dalton - Local Preacher in training

Call to worship

Come, all who have made mistakes.
Come, all who have said or done things they regret.
Come, all who have failed to do what was right.
Come, all who want to start afresh.
Come to the God who offers hope, healing, and forgiveness.

Song:

Come let us bow down in worship
Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.
Come let us bow down in worship,
For He is our God and we are his people,
For He is our God the people of His pasture, the flock under his care,
Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord.

Steffany Gretzinger (b. 1984)

Gathering Prayer

God of grace, you know our weaknesses,
and how we let you, ourselves and others down
by the things we say and do, or fail to do.
As we come to worship, open our hearts and minds,
to learn from our mistakes,
to know more of your ways,
and live and love as Christ loves us. **Amen**

A poem based on Psalm 4

Lord, hear me as I pray, as you have called me to,
To bring my hopes, desires and fears, as offerings to you,
A humble soul, that opens up and gives its all to you,
In daylight and as night time falls, in awe of all you do,
At night I rest upon my bed and give the thanks you're due,
I count my blessings from the day and offer praise to you.
I do not need what others want, enough I have with you.
As daylight fades, I fall asleep, held close and safe by you.

Chris Hancock

Reading: 1 John 3:1-7

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Reflection

The letter is a call to work out in daily life the implications of what we claim to believe. John exhorts his readers to make sure that the way they live is a parallel with what has been achieved for them through Jesus.

The author tells fellow Christians that they are children of God! That's who we really are. But that's also why the world doesn't recognise us or take us seriously, because it has no idea who he is or what he's up to. But friends that's exactly who we are, children of God. And that's only the beginning. Who knows how we will end up! What we know is that when Christ is openly revealed, we'll see him and in seeing him, become like him. Until then we must strive to be pure, just as God is pure.

The two most difficult things to get straight in life are love and God. More often than not, the mess people make of their lives can be traced to failure or stupidity or meanness in one or both of these areas. The basic and biblical Christian conviction is that the two subjects are intricately related. If we want to deal with God the right way, we have to learn to love the right way. If we want to love the right way, we have to deal with God the right way. God and love can't be separated. John's three letters provide wonderfully explicit direction in how this works. In Jesus, God and love are linked accurately, intricately and indissolubly. The letter is a call to work out in daily life the implications of what we claim to believe.

While recently working the till in a charity shop where I volunteer at with a colleague, a man said to us, 'Do you go to Church?' I replied, 'Yes, I do' and he dismissed me and said, 'I know you do. I can see Jesus in you. What about you?' he said to my colleague. She replied, 'No' and he told her she needs to go; then paid for his goods and went. We were both in shock. It is not often someone tells me they see Jesus in me. This opened up a conversation with the colleague that I would never have had. A demonstration of loving the right way can lead to all sorts of conversations. Perhaps you could think of a time you had a similar conversation.

1 John is never an easy text to read. It makes use of symbolism and contrast to paint a picture of the world in which those who belong to John's community are quite sharply distinguished from outsiders. Verse 6 is particularly difficult, "nobody who abides in him sins". The only possible meaning of this verse is that those who sin – which everyone does! continues to abide in Jesus. There appears to be a voluntary or even an involuntary, serving in this case.

The easiest way to deal with 1 John is to look for the ultimate sense of hopefulness and not become bogged down in symbolic detail. In this case the future hope is not difficult to spot. "What we do know is this when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is". The doctrine of the resurrection has no significant meaning unless it has significant meaning to us.

Try this short prayer along with the actions, perhaps do it a couple of times to feel the effect:

See Christ in all things. (*shade eyes as though looking into the distance*)

Hear Christ through all things. (*cup hands around ears*)

Know Christ during all things. (*look around*)

Feel Christ amidst all things. (*touch each hand with the other*)

Understand Christ from all things. (*put fingers to each temple*)

Amen

Song: Amazing Grace

1] Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch; like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

2] 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

3] The Lord hath promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

4] When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

John Newton (1725-1807)

Intercession Prayers

Let us bring before God:

those who have never known the transformative power of love:

We pray to you, O Lord.

those who live in fear of what others may do to them:

We pray to you, O Lord.

those who have the strength to stand up to that which is wrong:

We pray to you, O Lord.

those who have the courage and the opportunity to speak out against injustice:

We pray to you, O Lord.

those who give of themselves to help those in need:

We pray to you, O Lord.

those who work to make this world a better place:

We pray to you, O Lord.

those known to us who need our prayers at this time:

We pray to you, O Lord. Amen

Closing Prayer

If you are alone or upset,

remember this:

we are called God's children.

If you think about doing wrong,

remember this:

we are called God's children.

If you are worried or anxious:

remember this:

we are called God's children.

When the world recognises Jesus,

it will recognise God's children.

Hold on to this hope,

and live with him. **Amen**