

KSAT Worship Service for Sunday – 4th October 2020

THEME – “Knowing Christ”

Welcome – to the KSAT service, prepared this week by David Askew – thank you, David. May God bless us all today as we worship Him.

Call to worship – *Psalm 95 vs 1-7*

¹ *Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.*

² *Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.*

³ *For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods.*

⁴ *In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.*

⁵ *The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.*

⁶ *Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;*

⁷ *for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture the flock under his care.*

Hymns(Medley) – MP727verses 1&3, and MP 691 (x2) <https://youtu.be/l11ltnG0sQ0>

We are gathering together unto Him,
We are gathering together unto Him;
Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be;
We are gathering together unto Him;

We are singing together unto Him,
We are singing together unto Him;
Unto Him shall the singing of the people be;
We are singing together unto Him.

This is the day, this is the day
that the Lord has made,
that the Lord has made.
We will rejoice, we will rejoice
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that the Lord has made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that the Lord has made.

Opening prayer

I worship You, Almighty God; there is none like You
I worship You, Oh Prince of Peace; that is what I love to do
I give You praise, for You are my righteousness
I worship You, Almighty, God; there is none like You.

Gracious God, our loving Heavenly Father, it is good that we can worship You today. We come from various backgrounds with different demands upon our time – work and family commitments. We want to give You our praise because You are a great and wonderful God, worthy of all honour and glory. We see Your majesty displayed so clearly all around us. We read in our Bibles of Your love for us and all that Jesus has done for us, and we say ‘thank You’.

When we think about Your holiness, we do become aware of our sinfulness. We acknowledge that sometimes our devotion to You is not what it should be, our relationship with You is sometimes shallow. We thank You for Your promise of forgiveness when we come to You in repentance and faith.

Holy God, source and giver of all life, open our hearts and minds to receive afresh Your living word revealed in Jesus, Your Son, our Lord. You have given us new life and hope through the trustworthy promises of Jesus. Help us to live in confident expectation that Your grace will be sufficient for our needs. Empower and strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit to witness and serve in Your world through our words and actions. May the joy of believing so shine in and through us that we glorify and praise You in all things.**Amen.**

Hymn MP27– As the deer pants for the water https://youtu.be/YY0t6_V1OqQ

As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after You
You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship You.

*You alone are my strength, my shield; to You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship You.*

You're my friend and You are my brother, even though You are a King
I love You more than any other, so much more than anything.

Reading – Philippians 3 vs 4-14

⁴ *though I myself have reasons for such confidence.*

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more:

⁵ *circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.*

⁷ *But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰ I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*

¹² *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.*

Reading – 1 Corinthians 9 vs 24-27

²⁴ *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last for ever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*

Hymn MP 359– Jesus calls us, <https://youtu.be/Y5lxbPK8Ow4>

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult of our life's wild restless sea;
Day by day His voice still calls us saying, 'Christian, follow me.'

As of old Saint Andrew heard it by the Galilean lake,
Turned from home and work and kindred, leaving all for Jesus' sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store,
From each idol that would keep us, saying, 'Christian, love me more.'

In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease,
Jesus calls, in cares and pleasures, 'Christian, love me more than these.'

Jesus calls us: by Your mercies, Saviour, may we hear Your call,
Give our hearts in glad obedience, serve and love You best of all.

Reflection

I must admit that I was quite pleased when I saw that one of the readings for today was from Philippians 3. It is one of my favourite passages in the whole Bible. Unlike most of the other letters that St Paul wrote, there is no rebuke. It is a letter full of encouragement and hope. It is also very challenging.

In chapter 1 vs 3-4 he writes: *'I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy'*. St Paul reminds them of Christ's humility as an example they should follow, and that through God's grace they can shine like stars in the universe.

But when we get to chapter 3, something crops up that he has to warn the Philippian Christians about. It centres on the very basis of how we are made right with God, how we come into a right relationship with Him. Some of the Jewish Christians were saying that Gentiles had to be circumcised, and had to obey the law – which of course was wrong, and was something that Paul had to address. To do this, Paul refers to his own experience, pointing out that if anyone could put their confidence in their own background, it was him. In verses 5-6 he lists several things in which he could put his confidence. His nationality, his family background, his circumcision, his religious fervour, his works. Once he would have put his confidence in these things. But no longer.

So, listen to what he says in vs 7-9: *'⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.'*

For Paul and everyone else, this is what really matters. This is what we can put our confidence in – having a relationship with God, through Christ; forgiven by, included in, and joined to Christ. All the other stuff – our zeal, our church attendance, and our baptism – we do because we want to follow Christ. They are part of being His disciples.

But it doesn't end there. Paul goes on to say in verse 10: *I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death.* I find it incredible that God calls us into a relationship with Himself. Jesus said in John 15: *'I call you my friends'*. I find it humbling that God would want to be my friend. Not just acquaintances, but friends – a meaningful, quality relationship. The word 'know' Paul uses in verse 10 is the same word used for the relationship between a husband and wife – it is as intimate as that. He then goes on to say *'.....to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings'*. What does he mean by that? God wants us to know the power of His resurrection, not just as a past event in history, but as something dynamic and up to date in our lives. Through His death and resurrection Jesus defeated the power that sin and death have over us. By God's Spirit we can say no when we are tempted.

What about the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings? This was certainly true for St Paul, and it is true that today many Christians suffer terribly, simply because they profess the name of Jesus. Jesus asks us to take up our cross and follow Him. If we do this, there will be times when there is a cost to pay. We should count it a privilege if it is a way that we can somehow share in Christ's sufferings.

So what else does Paul say? Verse 12: *'Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.'* Has God taken hold of you? The word Paul uses for take hold is interesting. It means to apprehend, the word used when a policeman would arrest us. I don't know about you, but I want to take hold of that for which Christ has taken hold of me. As Christians we should never be afraid of God's will for us. It is the best thing that can ever happen to us.

The final image that Paul portrays in this passage is that we are like runners competing in a race. We forget what is behind and we strain towards what is ahead. We wouldn't get very far if we were always looking round. We press on towards the goal to win the prize, for God has called us heavenwards in Christ Jesus. When we think of the dedication that athletes like Mo Farah or Steve Redgrave show to win a prize that will fade, how much greater incentive is there for us to run our race well when we have a prize that will last forever!

Hymn MP 799– All I once held dear <https://youtu.be/O4lgusP8Z8w>

All I once held dear, built my life upon; all this world reveres, and wars to own
All I once thought gain I have counted loss, spent and worthless now, compared to this
Knowing you, Jesus, knowing You, there is no greater thing
You're my all, You're the best, You're my joy, my righteousness and I love You, Lord
Now my heart's desire is to know You more, to be found in You and known as Yours
To possess by faith what I could not earn, all-surpassing gift of righteousness
Oh, to know the power of Your risen life and to know You in Your sufferings
To become like You in your death, my Lord, so with You to live and never die.

Prayers of intercession

Some prayers for our world:

Heavenly Father, we pray for our world. The world in which Jesus lived. A world that You love and want us to love, and for which Jesus died. Be present, Lord, in this broken world, to bind up its wounds. Reach out to all who are hurting and to all who are anxious about the future. Bring Your love, grace, healing and peace into their lives.

We pray for our leaders, that they would acknowledge You and seek to honour You in their own lives and in the way they lead our nation. Give to them the wisdom that they so desperately need at this difficult time.

We pray for those caught up in the conflict of war. Wherever there is darkness, shine your light. May it never be extinguished.

We pray for any we know who are suffering among our friends, neighbours or families. Bring your healing grace and peace into their lives.

We pray for the church in this area. We thank you for each other and for the encouragement that we receive from each other. May we spur one another on, and through our life together may the wonder of your truth and love be known in this community.

These prayers we ask in Jesus' name and for His sake.

Amen.

Hymn – MP428 Lord for the years <https://youtu.be/JNCuPjAZHZM>

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us in our way,
Sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided: Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us, speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
Teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us: Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation, spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
For young and old, for commonwealth and nation, Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, of our world where men disown and doubt You, loveless in strength and comfortless in pain,
Hungry and helpless, lost indeed without You; Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord, of ourselves, in living power remake us, self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
Past put behind us, for the future take us; Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

The Grace