

30th August 2020 10 am Good News!

Service led by Denise Coomber, personal reflection by Jeremy Bryans,
Talk by Andrew Attwood, intercessions by Karen and Marcus Jackson

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Notices

[Denise Coomber:]

Morning everybody and welcome to this morning's 10 o'clock worship service. We're glad that you're with us.

As ever, there are some notices. Most of the notices are in the news sheet which I've emailed out to you. If you're not on our distribution list and you would like to be, then please drop me an email at admin@stjohn16.co.uk. The news update is also on the website. So there are a few that I'd like to draw your attention to.

The first one is: today's 6pm is not at 6pm, it's at 6:30, and it's a Taizé service online, and the information on how you access that is in the news update. But if you can't see it, then let me know and I'll tell you how to get into it.

And also 12 noon on Wednesday is our Resourcing Bible Study.

The 8am communion service is going to start again on September 6th, and we're asking that people who have used it in the past are the only ones that go to it at the moment, so that we can work out how to handle the right numbers.

And also Wednesday community is going to start again at 10:30 on Wednesdays, obviously, and on the 30th of September.

Now it's my great pleasure to read out some 'pretend banns', and Luke and Ruth are getting a Bishop's Licence but they have asked that we read these out as well. So I publish the banns of marriage of Luke, Nathan Jared Coomber of this parish, and Ruth Emily Perkins of Lound, Nottinghamshire. This is for the second time of asking. And there's no point in me asking if you know of any reason why they shouldn't marry because they're going to get a bishops licence. But anyway, I've read it out. Let's pray for them.

Father, thank You for the gift of marriage. We pray for Luke and Ruth as they prepare to make promises to each other. Bless them as they make this big step in their lives. And we pray that You will be with them, both in the preparations and in their lives together. Amen.

Two other notices. Firstly, Angie is still recovering in hospital. And if you do have any messages for her or for Pete then please do send them along.

And sadly Mark Barnard passed away on Thursday evening with Diana and Andrea by his side, so I thought it'd be good if we prayed for both those people.

Father, we thank You for Angie and pray that You'll continue to heal her. We pray for wisdom from the medical staff and patience and peace in the family. Be with them all at this difficult time and let them know that You are in control, and You hold time within Your hands and see it all from beginning to end.

We pray for Mark's family. Please keep and carry these precious people in their sadness and loss. Cover them with Your great wings of love, give their weary hearts rest and their minds sound sleep. Lord, lift their eyes so that they may catch a glimpse of eternity and be comforted by the promise of Heaven.

We ask all this in Jesus' precious Name. Amen.

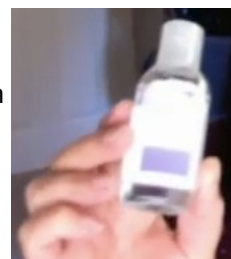
Introduction to the service

So that's the notices over. This week's theme is supposed to be 'Good News'. So how do I go from that very sad news to this Good News? Well, I thought I'd start by reading the Collect for today¹. Very Anglican of me, I know. It says,

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Now I've put on the children's activities things about Good News. Quite a lot of the news in the paper is a bit gloomy. But how do we react to good news? You may have seen these all over the place: hand sanitizers. And it says on here, "kills 99.9% of bacteria". Now, our lives are like that: we might think we're really good, we can do good things, we can help people. But we're only 99.9% good. And God's standard is 100%. So there is that bit that isn't good enough. So how is that Good News? Last week we heard about how God is the God of justice, and this week we're going to hear the Good News about how He does judge, but He also loves us so much that He wants us to be his friends.



Now in the past I've given this out on the children's activities, it's a little salt shaker thing which helps us to go through the Good News with our children, so it's got salvation, grace, eternal life and faith on that. And inside there's lots of Bible verses to remind us how much God loves us. One of them² is,



For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

So Mark is now in the presence of Jesus, so that's Good News for him. And 2 Corinthians 4:18 reminds us

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

So there is Good News! God loves us, God wants to have a relationship with us. So I'm going to introduce you now to... there's going to be a video clip, explaining the Good News in a simple way and then Jeremy is going to explain a little bit about what that means to him, and then we'll go straight into a song, which is telling us about the Lamb of God who gave His life for us so that we can be free.

Video: God's Story: the Good News

So part of God's Story is about the Gospel, or "the Good News," and it goes like this:

1 Twelfth Sunday after Trinity, second collect

2 John 3:16

In the beginning, God made everything: the Sun, the Moon, stars, planets, the entire galaxy! And Earth was part of that creation. God made mountains and oceans and forests and deserts, and animals that crawled on the ground and flew in the air and swam in the water.

Then He made people, Adam and Eve, to live in a garden called Eden, and God called everything He had made good. There was just one rule: Adam and Eve could eat anything they wanted except for the fruit from this one tree. But a snake tricked Adam and Eve into disobeying that one rule. Because of that, sickness, sadness, and all kinds of bad things came into God's perfect creation. All because people made wrong choices.



Part of how God punished Adam and Eve was by not allowing them in the perfect Garden any more. And if that were the end of the story, that would be bad news for us. That would mean all the wrong stuff in the world would never be made right.

But God still loved people – and He had Good News for them! He was going to send a Rescuer. So they waited. And waited. And waited. Then one day, the Rescuer was born, as a baby, named Jesus! Christmas is when we celebrate the Good News of Jesus being born.

But it's not just that He was born – it's what He did later that was the best news of all. He took the punishment for all the wrong choices that anyone has ever made – anywhere! See, all of us have continued to make wrong choices, just like Adam and Eve did. And just like Adam and Eve, we deserve to be punished for our wrong choices. But here's the thing. Jesus, the Rescuer, never made a single bad choice. Kids, think about a time you made a bad choice, maybe telling a lie, or taking something that wasn't yours, or hurting another person with something you did or said. Can you believe that whatever that was – Jesus never made a choice like that, and even though He never made a bad choice, He still took the punishment for our wrong choices?



And then Jesus did something even more completely unexpected: He came back to life! Really. You can read about it in the Bible, in the stories written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We call those books 'gospels', which is just an old fancy word for – you guessed it – the Good News of Jesus coming to Earth, dying for our wrong choices, and coming back to life. That's what we celebrate on Easter but not just because coming back to life is totally amazing. By coming back to life, Jesus was showing that God can make anything new. There's nothing God can't do. He's more powerful than any sadness, shame, wrong choice, disease, disaster, and even death. And that's the best, most amazing Good News of all.



It's so amazing, Jesus' friends told everyone they could find about the Good News. And those people told other people. And those people told other people, and on and on... and that's still happening today. In fact, you just heard the Good News and the Bible says, that's another way to say God rescues us. And that Rescue includes you, your friends, your family, and anyone else in the whole world!

And that's the story of the Good News. So in case you missed it, here's the quick version: God made a perfect world. People made mistakes and the world isn't perfect any more. God promised His family a Rescuer. The Rescuer's name is Jesus. Jesus died to take the punishment we deserve. But He didn't stay dead! Jesus came back to life. Because Jesus can make anything new. And that's a part of God's Story.

What the Cross Means to Me

[Jeremy Bryans:]

When I think of the fact that Christ died for us all, the thing that comes to my mind most quickly is the completeness, that's the completeness of His death: He, in His death and resurrection, provided everything that we need for our salvation. He's fulfilled it all, he's paid the price for sin, every spiritual battle has already been won, there and then – the Victory is in the Cross! We win by going back to the Cross and looking to the Cross, looking to Jesus.

He's provided life for us to live, and He's done this for all! This is available to everybody, anyone who comes to Him, anyone who responds to Him, who responds to His voice.

Salvation is available and it's just wonderful. He has done everything that He possibly could for everyone that there has ever has been.

And all this, because He loved us, because He loved us, just incredible.

Song – Worthy is the Lamb

Verse 1:

Thank you for the cross Lord
Thank you for the price You paid
Bearing all my sin and shame
In love You came
And gave amazing grace

Verse 2:

Thank you for this love Lord
Thank you for the nail pierced hands
Washed me in Your cleansing flow
Now all I know
Your forgiveness and embrace

Chorus:

Worthy is the Lamb
Seated on the throne
Crown You now with many crowns
You reign victorious

High and lifted up
Jesus, Son of God
The Darling of Heaven crucified
Worthy is the Lamb
Worthy is the Lamb

(repeat all)

[Denise Coomber:]

Thank you, Father, that You gave Jesus. Thank You, Jesus, that You came, and Lord I pray that You'll help us to draw closer to You and accept this free gift of eternal life. Amen.

Readings

Now we're going to have the reading. There's several readings. The first one is from **Mark, chapter 1, verse 1**. It says,

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

Mark 1 verses 14-15:

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

¹⁵ 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'

And 1 Corinthians 15 verses 1-5:

¹ Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

Talk

So before Andrew comes to speak to us, let's just pray for him.

Father, thank You for Andrew. We pray that He will speak the words you want him to speak, words that will draw us closer to you. In Jesus' Name.
Amen.

[Andrew Attwood:]

Amen. Thank you, Denise. Thank you for all the different contributions, thank you for Jeremy's personal video there as well. It's great to have a number of videos from people at the minute, just capturing what kind of things the Cross means to them, what Jesus' death means to them - it's wonderful.

This morning, I'm going to be doing a little bit of exposition from different parts of the Bible, explaining in clarity what the actual Gospel message is. This is obviously a follow-on from what we talked about last week. Last week was the dark side if you like, the need of the Gospel and how lost the human race is, God's expectations, and the problem that is faced by being people who are sinful. This morning we're going to be talking about the extraordinary and amazing Good News of Jesus Christ.

It's pertinent to be talking about it at this time because it is actually a message under threat at the moment. We may not all be exposed to it very much but there are various voices around nationally, even in our country, who are raising questions sometimes about what they think the core message of the Christian faith is. And so today I wanted to contend for what the Gospel is described as in Scripture. In fact I'm going to begin with a quote from Jude - it's one chapter long in the New Testament - a letter entitled Jude, and it says this in verse 3. It says,

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.

Even in the earliest days of the Christian faith there were people challenging the message of the Christian faith. I just want to share slide one now. Something that Paul wrote, even when he was talking to the Galatian church. He says this in Galatians 1, he says,

⁶ I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel - ⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!



Paul was passionate about making sure that the Galatians, the Galatian Christians, had the right message. And he was aware that people were kind of moving in and distorting, or in his words perverting, what they had received from him and he says "Goodness me! They have no idea how dangerous it is to do that. A curse be on them – separation from God." You see, Paul knew that the Gospel was Good News and it was very particular Good News.

Let me just give you a little bit of a window into the word itself, 'Good News', or 'Gospel': both of these things mean the same. They come from a Greek word, 'euangelion' (εὐαγγέλιόν). Euangelion is basically a heralding of good news. Imagine a battle happening, where a city has sent out its forces to combat the enemy. And then a message comes back from the front line – a herald runs from the field of battle back to the city and says, "Good news! We won! Good news, we won!" So the Gospel message of Jesus is a herald message from the field of victory. And so it is that we can say, the Good News of Jesus Christ is the best news in the universe – quite literally in the whole universe.

Now one of the things that people have sometimes queried is, is the Gospel one or two or three different versions? Some people have even set the message of Jesus Himself against some of the other messages or descriptions you find in the New Testament letters for example. You know, particularly saying "Well, Jesus said this, but Paul said that." I want to explain to you today the Gospel according to Jesus and how that flows into what we hear the likes of Paul and others say later. So Denise has already read to us from Mark's gospel. All of the four accounts are called gospels, but Mark in particular introduces itself with these words,

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

In its simplest form, the Gospel is Jesus Himself. The Good News is, Jesus Christ is coming into the world as fulfilment of everything that God promised through Israel, is the Gospel message in completeness. With this second slide I just want to explain to you what he said, so that you can get a sense of what Jesus said on His first preaching, if you like, His first opening into the public sphere.

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

¹⁵ 'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'



Now, fair enough, at this particular phase of Jesus ministry He's not talking about the Cross. He's not talking about rising from the dead, He's talking about the coming of the Kingdom. What did He mean and what does He mean? In many respects the coming together of the timing of God was brought into complete fulfilment when Jesus appeared. And so that is the coming of the Kingdom of God, or in Matthew's version the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven to Earth, bringing Heaven to Earth, just like we pray in the Lord's Prayer.

And Jesus says from the outset, "Repent!" What does He want them to repent from? Repent means "change your mind." Everything that you thought before is now different, because the King has come. The coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus is effectively the coming of the King. God in the past had had to be removed, to some extent, from the people, from humanity, because of fallenness, because of brokenness, because of sinfulness, because a holy God really cannot be in close proximity to a broken and wilful people. That's why He set up the sacrificial system and the Old Testament, so that at least He could be with Israel because of the sacrifices. But when Jesus comes, it's almost like the volume is turned up and God is saying, "I will now come in person. And I will bring the Kingdom in a way that is going to require a different kind of sacrifice later. But you

just get to taste the fruit of it from the outset, and repent and believe the Good News." God's Kingdom was invading the Earth, the presence of the King was establishing His gracious rule. Wherever He went, He was bringing God's rule in His healings, in His words of forgiveness, in His gathering of community, in His drawing together of those who are marginalised. This is Good News in practice, complete change, complete revolution.

But why does the message develop on then simply from Jesus being a wonderful guy and gathering people together? Is that the whole of it? Well, no. You see, Jesus Himself knew that He was coming not only to be Good News, He was coming to fulfil the bigger story.

Let me just do a brief interlude. I talked last week about the problem of sin and separation from God. This is most clearly described in the story of Israel and their pattern of exile. Israel throughout the story, the whole of the Old Testament, was God and humanity's representatives. God had chosen them, and everything that happened to Israel was, if you like, in a microcosm a picture of what God was thinking of doing with the whole human race. In Exodus, God rescues them from the powers of darkness, from Pharaoh. But even when they're rescued and they're given the law, the people of Israel are not safe - they're not saved. In fact, ironically, the law itself begins to speak against them. They failed to follow God's ways, and they themselves, the ones who were meant to be a light in the world, were sent into exile more than once. Most famously they go into exile to Babylon, expelled because of sin.

It's almost like the story of Israel recapitulates, tells again, the story of Eden. You saw it in the video clip we had earlier there, where there was the story of Adam and Eve, the forebears of the human race. They broke covenant with God, and what happened? They had to leave. They had to be expelled from the garden. Likewise Israel, they were God's people with God's temple in Jerusalem, but when they sinned, they had to leave. This idea of exile is a picture that still plays out today. Exile is the human condition: we're separated from the one who made us. Jeremiah 25 ³ says this:

⁸ "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words,

...

¹¹ This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Even Daniel [9:24, NIVUK] later on in the Old Testament picks it up:

... for your people and your holy city [are] to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness...

And then He starts to point forward [continuing Daniel 9:24]

to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.

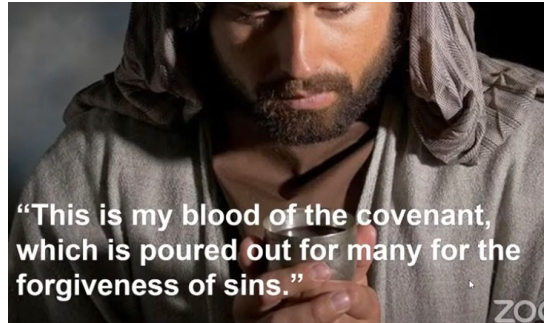
The people of Israel knew that they would have to leave and couldn't come back until forgiveness of sins was properly established. I would go on to say that even when they were back in the land under the Romans at the time of Jesus, it was still a kind of exile. Though they were present now in the Promised Land they were not free: like Adam and Eve sent out of the garden, they were still trapped, they were still under control, they were still not set free, because the forgiveness of sins had not yet come to fruition.

But God had a plan to save and rescue. And so throughout the Gospel accounts we begin to hear from the lips of Jesus the details of how this was going to work out. Think of Jesus' name. The name of Jesus, according to Matthew chapter 1 verse 21 is 'God saves'. Imagine that: every time Jesus heard His own name, He would hear "God saves", He knew that was what He was going to do. As He begins His public ministry, He speaks into individual situations like when the

paralytic is lowered down through the hole in the roof. And He says, "Your sins are forgiven." He believed, and He practised authority to forgive sins. He was able to pronounce freedom from sin Himself.

Now, some may say, Well, if He could do it then, why did He need to bother going to the Cross? He was doing the forgiving in anticipation of future payment. What He was doing up front was like a down-payment that He would enact fully, when He finally made it to Calvary.

Let me share slide 3 now. In Mark 10 verse 45, you find all kinds of references where Jesus harkens back to Isaiah 53. He says, "I came to give my life as a ransom for many." I would really encourage you, many of you to read Isaiah, 53, but all the way through, even to this, the Last Supper: Jesus' own words are depicting what needs to happen to bring this Good News into sharp focus, and you see Him holding up the cup, saying [Matthew 26:28],



"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

He earlier said in John's Gospel chapter 10 [verse 11], "I am the good shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep." These are all Jesus' self-understanding words, describing what needs to happen. He knew He couldn't simply say the words "you are forgiven." He would have to deliver forgiveness, by something He would have to do, something that only He could do.

One of the things that really moves me when I read through the Gospel accounts, is the way in which the gospel authors try to teach you themes, almost subliminally, almost by incident. You may remember Matthew 27:15-26, the story around Jesus' arrest, where He and Barabbas are stood beside each other. This is fascinating. You have Barabbas, a known criminal, someone who is guilty, someone who is already locked up, but now stood up alongside Jesus, and Pilate is speaking to the crowd, it says in Matthew 27 ⁴ this,

²¹ The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?"

They said, "Barabbas!"

²² Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

There we have it written into the narrative of the story. We have what we would call substitution, we have the rabbis, we have Jesus, and the guilty one goes free, and the innocent one is sent into judgement, He's sent into condemnation, He's sent towards execution. Ironically, even Caiaphas knew it. In John 11 ⁵ Caiaphas the high priest says this, "You know nothing at all!" He's speaking to His people, wrangling over what to do with Jesus and he says

"You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."

He didn't know that he was prophesying. He didn't know that he was prophesying exactly what Jesus was intending to do. He thought he was just getting rid of Him. But the way in which the gospel authors put these stories together, is to show you substitution, our new Kingly representative is going to be in our place.

4 Verses 21 to 22 New King James Version [NKJV]

5 Verses 49 to 50, [NKJV]

I just wanted to dwell on another particular aspect that you find in the Gospel messages that really reveal the heart of how poignant and powerful Jesus' death really is and I want to talk about Jesus as King, represented as King in the Gospel accounts. Luke 23:36-38 [NKJV] says this.

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

³⁸ And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Why do the gospel authors make such a big deal about Jesus being King? You may remember the dialogue between Jesus and Pilate, and Pilate is saying, "Are you a king? Are you a king?" It's there, over and over again, you find it even more painfully described, when they put a crown on Jesus' head. And it's a crown of thorns. Why this emphasis on Him being King? You may remember that the kings of Israel were representatives of the whole people. Whatever happened to the king happened to the people, even though Jesus knew that Israel had failed in its mission, even though Jesus knew that Israel was under the judgement of God, what did He as King do? He stepped in and said, "Let it be done to me, instead of them. Let it be done to me as King in their place, as their representative." I don't know about you, but this is the kind of King I want.

Just picture again for a moment the Cross of Jesus Christ. Picture this extraordinary scene:

The Son of God, utterly perfect, the King of the universe.

And now we have darkness and light come together, justice and mercy kissing.

In His flesh sin is condemned. And because of His love, He absorbs the consequences of sin.

This isn't just a story. This is the Jesus we follow. This is the Jesus we know.

And His earthly throne is a Cross. It's extraordinary.

I'm really moved when I move on to the resurrection stories. And I see that Jesus is continuing to explain the Gospel message to slow-to-understand disciples. Luke 24:44-48 [NIVUK] says this - He's walking along with them and He says,

⁴⁴ He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.'

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, 'This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

So there we have it: without a shadow of a doubt the Gospel message of Jesus is a Gospel for the forgiveness of sins. He said it, He described it, He was a ransom for many. His blood was a new covenant for the forgiveness of sins. He was a substitute, that's the way the gospel authors describe it. So the Gospel of Jesus is very clear, and remarkably and wonderfully it fits exactly with how the apostles describe it. Denise earlier read to us 1 Corinthians 15, the first five verses. And I'm going to read that to you again now and see how closely this matches what Jesus did and said.

¹ Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

It's fascinating to think how early the earliest Christians had a creed, if you like, had a statement of faith that described the heart of what the Christian message was all about. In this passage Paul says "this is our first importance." I don't know about you, but we sometimes get our priorities jumbled. You know, the idea of the tyranny of the urgent, where the latest problem is the paramount one, where distractions come and you find yourself looking at whatever is demanding your attention. Paul says, "The Gospel is of first importance." He even says in another letter, in Galatians, he didn't receive the Gospel from men, he received it from God. And we know when: we know his encounter with Jesus in the story of Acts when Paul was, if you like, converted into a belief in Jesus Christ, he received the Gospel from God. And it was believed by the earliest Christians.

So, 1 Corinthians 1:18 [NIVUK] Paul says,

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

It is the power of God. Even as I'm speaking this message to you this morning, I'm heralding Good News. One of the things that Paul learned as he preached, as he spoke, he would speak to different people, and people were being saved as they heard, while he was sharing. The message of the Gospel it had power in it, simply because it was the truth about what Jesus had done.

So one of the things that I would want to finish with by saying is this: the Gospel is the Return of the King. The Gospel is the Return of the King. Some of you are Tolkien fans: you will know all about the Lord of the Rings. You know that the final book is called *The Return of the King*, of the good king, the true king: the king of true lineage comes back. And we are His heralds.

Let me read to you again Philippians 2:7-11 [NIVUK]. It says this:

⁷ rather, (speaking of Jesus)

he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death –
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

He's King. And He's won. He's King and He's won the victory. He's paid the price for sin, and He's overcome death. He is the Ultimate Warrior, He is the ultimate Victor, nothing can hold Him, nothing can stop Him, everything in now has been turned around, He holds the keys of death and hell.

I talked about God's judgement last week, and I just want to describe this to you, the judgement of God has been pulled earlier to rest on Jesus Christ on the

Cross. Now for those of you who are listening, some of you will have embraced this before. Some of you may have not acknowledged it at all, sort-of may have thought, "do I need to believe this?" I need to say to you today: to believe this message transforms *everything*.

If you believe in your heart, and you focus on the Cross, and you trust what Jesus has done for you, this places you in an entirely new position with God. So when people around me say "Ah, well, there are different versions of the Gospel. You know it's mostly about love, it's mostly about kindness." No it isn't! It is mostly about Christ dying for us and rising for us. This is the saving message of the Gospel. If we depart from that, if we add to that, if we change that, we're distorting what God has given us.

So we contend for the true Gospel, we contend for it. Let me have my final slide up. I want to invite you to be heralds alongside me now.

I want to ask you, are you prepared to be messengers? Are you prepared to be messengers and heralds where you can tell people, "Do you know what? it's the end of exile. You don't need to be exiled from God any more." Maybe we need to be a bit braver, and say, "The forgiveness of sins is actually available to you."



I talk to people. They know deep down that they're not right. They know deep down that they're broken. It's a wonderful privilege to say to them, "There is a way, there is someone who's paid for this."

So with that in mind, let's pray. Let's pray. Let's just have a moment of quiet, to let the Good News of the Gospel settle in our hearts again.

Holy Spirit, would You make us acutely sensitive to the truth of what Jesus has done. Open our eyes to see the effectiveness of His sacrifice on the Cross. Help us recognise that it wasn't a meaningless symbolic gesture, but it actually worked. The death of Jesus Christ reconciles us to God because He takes upon Himself, the wrongdoing and sin of the world.

Perhaps in your own heart, give thanks to God for what He's done.

I pray, Lord Jesus, that once again You would apply to everyone listening the power of the Gospel, showing us that we are washed clean, because we believe.

No longer do we need to self-justify. We are saved because we trust in You.

And I want to pray, Lord Jesus, finally, that You would cause us to be people who are faithful to the Gospel. If we hear of other messages or other voices, trying to distort or sideline or silence the Gospel, cause us to contend for the faith, cause us to contend for this wonderful Good News, and cause us to be brave, so that we might speak up, in an age that sometimes is going to resist Your truth.

We ask this in Jesus name.
Amen.

Intercessions

We're now going to have intercessions Marcus and Karen will lead us.
Thank you.

[Karen Jackson:]
Now, let us pray.

Father, we thank You for the Good News that You have brought to us. In fact, we thank You that it's just fabulous news by today's standards, it's mega, it's cool news, and it's amazing news. We want to thank You that You sent Your Son Jesus into the middle of a less-than-perfect world. You loved us

and died for our sins, the things that we aren't proud of and things that we may not like or are ashamed of, or things that pull us away from You. And we praise You, Lord, that Your Son rose from the dead and came alive again, and our sins are forgiven. You are merciful to us. And Jesus is here with us by Your Holy Spirit. So we want to thank You for the truth of Your Word. We thank You that our faith isn't built on flimsy evidence. Thank You that it's based on You and Your Son Jesus, Your Gospel, Your words, Your truth, Your life and Your love and for that we're really grateful. So we thank You Lord.

[Marcus Jackson:]

We do bring before You today particularly our family and friends. We pray that we would be able to increasingly live in the light of Your Gospel.

We pray particularly for those that we know that have been unwell and that need Your special healing touch. And just in a moment of quiet now we just bring before You those people that we know personally.

[pause]

[Karen:]

Father we thank You now for our church: we thank You for Kenilworth. We thank You for the body of believers, this fellowship that we enjoy here in Kenilworth. And we pray for our hearts, for Kenilworth. We pray that we might increasingly be able to live according to the light and the love and strength of Your Gospel, and we may be able to share Your Gospel increasingly and to others in Kenilworth, and Your heart of service and Your heart of love and Your heart of truth, to the people and the churches, and the fellowship community in Kenilworth.

[Marcus:]

Father God, we pray as well for our nation: we pray particularly today for the leaders of our nation, leaders in government, and in places like local leadership and councils,

We pray also, particularly now, for our schools, as they return back next week, most of them. We pray for teachers and all staff as well as the children. We pray that they be kept safe, and we just pray for a big adjustment getting back into the routine of school.

[Karen:]

Father, we thank You that You listen to us and You hear us, You hear our cries, You hear our hearts and we pray that the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts will be pleasing and a blessing in Your sight, because You are our Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer.
Amen.

Blessing

[Denise:]

Just before we go, let's have a blessing together.

So to Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a Kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father, to Him be glory and power forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I've commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.⁶

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Song: Man of Sorrows

Now let's listen to a song called *Man of Sorrows*, which tells us a little bit about how Jesus saved us from our sins.

1. Man of sorrows Lamb of God
By His own betrayed
The sin of man and wrath of God
Has been on Jesus laid

2. Silent as He stood accused
Beaten mocked and scorned
Bowing to the Father's will
He took a crown of thorns

Chorus:

Oh that rugged cross
My salvation
Where Your love poured out over me
Now my soul cries out
Hallelujah
Praise and honour unto Thee

3. Sent of heaven God's own Son
To purchase and redeem
And reconcile the very ones
Who nailed Him to that tree

Chorus

Bridge:

Now my debt is paid, it is paid in full
By the precious blood that my Jesus spilled
Now the curse of sin has no hold on me
Whom the Son sets free oh is free indeed

Chorus

See the stone is rolled away
Behold the empty tomb
Hallelujah God be praised
He's risen from the grave

Chorus

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

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God's Story – the Gospel – by Crossroads Kids' Club.net – crossroadskidsclub.net
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nleiAfrp2kY>

Transcript of the video taken from that link.

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