

SUNDAY 30th August 2020

Welcome & Announcements (Caroleen)

Call to worship & opening prayer

Praise group Video '*Everyone needs compassion*'

Old Testament Reading Exodus 3:1-4

Video 'God speaks'

Offering

New Testament Reading Acts 16:6-10

Sermon

Prayers (Connor & Colin)

Hymn 'Guide me O Thou Great Jehovah' (Sun 8/9/19)

Blessing

Announcements - ONLINE MacMillan Coffee Morning Friday 18th September 10.30-11.30am. Sit down with a tea/coffee & a scone in your own comfortable armchair & join us using the ZOOM link below to hear more of the work of MacMillan & have some fun. Then simply write a cheque out to Regent St Methodist Church & put it in an envelope saying **For MacMillan** and bring it to Church or get in touch with us so we can collect it.

Topic: Macmillan Coffee Morning; Time: Sep 18, 2020 10:30 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84683084948?pwd=RERiaWpQWHlyTVQxNjFI T3VaTWhidz09>

Meeting ID: 846 8308 4948 Passcode: Cake

Call to worship & opening prayer

Psalm 103 ¹ Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
² **Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits** ³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Praise the Lord, all His works, everywhere in His dominion
Praise the Lord O my soul.

Prayer

Lord God, today we come to praise You. We come remembering Your nature & character... remembering all Your benefits ..for... You are thee God who forgives all our sins when we trust in Jesus... You are the Lord who ultimately heals all our diseases & rescues us from pits of hopelessness, fear & sin... Lord God in Your graciousness You crown us with love & compassion & satisfy our desires with good things... So wonderful king we worship You now...

But as we remember all your benefits so we are also faced with our failings... we confess our sins of unbelief... selfishness.... greed & complacency to God asking for fresh forgiveness through Jesus....

Praise the Lord my soul & forget not all his benefits.. who forgives all your sins... Lord we thank you that in Jesus our sins are forgiven... Help us not to continue to worship You , lead us in our service & lives we pray. Amen.

We are now going to listen to the praise group & sing along in our hearts to '***Everyone needs compassion***'

Everyone needs compassion
A love that's never failing...Let mercy fall on me
Everyone needs forgiveness
The kindness of a Saviour....The hope of nations

[Chorus:] Saviour, he can move the mountains
My God is mighty to save, He is mighty to save
Forever Author of Salvation
He rose and conquered the grave
Jesus conquered the grave

So take me as you find me
All my fears and failures...Fill my life again
I give my life to follow
Everything that I believe in...Now I surrender

[Chorus]

Shine your light and let the whole world see
We're singing for the glory of the risen king Jesus *[2x]*

[Chorus x2]

Shine your light and let the whole world see
We're singing for the glory of the risen king Jesus *[6x]*

Old Testament Reading Exodus 3:1-4

3 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2** There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. **3** So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

New Testament Reading Acts 16:6-10

6 Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. **7** When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit

of Jesus would not allow them to.⁸ So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.⁹ During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."¹⁰ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Sermon **SLIDE 1** Her name is Val & she runs the Christian bookshop & local foodbank in Lisnaskea any of you with Fermanagh connections may know of her... Well Val & I would often chat when I was in getting some books & so one day she told me how she had felt prompted to take a box of food to a certain woman a couple days before... Now the strange thing was that Val knew that this lady was reasonably well off ..she wasn't someone who looked as if they might need a box of groceries.. & so Val couldn't really understand why she had this feeling...this urge from somewhere within to bring her food I'm being silly Val thought.. She's going find this insulting... she might even get angry with me.. She won't need this food... **BUT this inner urge didn't go away & so Val reluctantly found herself walking up this lady's path & ringing her bell...** Only to find that this respectable comfortable woman... had recently fallen into difficult times, she had lost her job or something of that nature.. & so instead of a very awkward conversation Val found herself sharing the practical help of Jesus with someone in need... And so as Val finished her story & I left her shop... I found myself

quietly praying that God would forgive me for all those times that I might not have listened to His promptings.. & that He would help me pay more attention to His voice...!

This morning as we continue through a very uncertain period, a time when all has changed drastically & each week seems to throw up something new. I believe that God is inviting us to stop for a moment come aside & listen to His voice & be led by Him.**S2**

Our bible passages this morning feature 2 well known biblical characters... **Slide 3** Firstly Moses, Moses who was born to an Israelite slave in Egypt, Moses who only escaped death when his mother placed him a basket & hid him in the reeds in the river Nile.. Moses who was found by Pharaoh's daughter & grew up safe & privileged but also increasingly aware of how his own people were oppressed. Moses who when he was 40 years old took the law into his own hands & killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew.. Moses who fled in panic when Pharaoh discovered what he had done ...Moses who at the beginning of our passage had settled down...in the remote parched land of Midian.. part of Arabia. Moses who was now an 80 year old shepherd...someone who no doubt thought that his chance to do some good & change the world was over. All he had to worry about now was looking after the sheep... But it is as he looks after the sheep in the wilderness of Sinai, that suddenly Moses sees a bush that is burning (**slide 4**) burning but not being consumed by the flames & so scripture tells us simply that Moses thought, "I will go over & see this strange sight, why the bush does not burn up."

And so Moses walks into the close presence of the Lord.... I am always amazed on reading this passage... how God uses Moses own inquisitiveness to draw Him close... How Moses is given a visible sign that was powerful yet also restricted enough so that it draws him over rather than making him run for his life... Yes God knew what would get Moses attention & despite Moses' many protests arguing otherwise... God knew He had the right person for the job. Moses had spent 40 years sheltered & privileged in Egypt then 40 years being humbled & hardened in the desert... then God called...FOR God can call out to us at any time... & indeed in a whole variety of ways...

NOW I believe that the MAIN WAY that God chooses to speak to people is through the BIBLE. SLIDE 5. That's why it's vitally important that we prayerfully read God's word... that we develop good habits of regularly reading scripture... for the bible is 'God breathed' **2 Tim 3:16** it's the main way that God will teach, rebuke, correct & train us... (SLIDE6) If we daily prayerfully sit under His word then we will hear His voice... We might not always like what He says to us... But we will hear His voice... So scripture is of course where we start & it's also where we end... for anything else we think God might be saying to us needs to be brought to scripture to see if it's agrees with it.. & if it doesn't agree with God's word then we can discard it.

The bible is our foundation... But let's not exclude the possibility that God might speak to us in other ways... That He might throw something across our path that draws us aside into a special

encounter with Him... And whether we are 8 or 80 let's believe that God has something to say to us personally... that He notices us enough to go out of His way & do something more powerfully life changing than even a burning bush... Yes let's notice those moments when God calls us afresh to see the cross of Christ.. those times perhaps when we are least expecting it ...times when we have resigned ourselves to thinking that nothing is ever going to change with us... Let's stop talking & listen more.(SLIDE7) lets notice those unusual feelings of compassion that suddenly stir within us for a person or a situation... Let's not just dismiss that phrase in our head or that memory of someone that just seems to pop into our minds... Maybe God is asking me..you to pray for that situation or that person... maybe He is even asking us to not stop with prayer... but He has something for us to do... no matter what age we are.

Have you ever played that game where you try to find a pea under a cup...SLIDE8 You know the one... where someone who has amazingly fast hands moves 3 cups around at super speed & you are focussed on the cup you think contains the pea or whatever... You feel sure that it's the left one only to find after 2 wrong guesses that it's actually the one in the middle... Sometimes we can be so sure we are doing the right thing... we are moving forward with our good plans that surely must be what God wants.. Then we discover... No ... we have chosen the wrong way...

Our 2nd bible character is the apostle Paul... & our passage comes from a crucial moment in his 2nd missionary journey. Paul & his

companions Silas & Timothy were travelling through what we now call Turkey as Paul sought to revisit the places where he had planted churches on his 1st missionary journey. However after that Paul wanted to take the gospel message to new lands... to break new ground. So as we heard in our passage... *Paul & his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia & Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷ When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸ So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.* **Slide7**

This is one of those times when I wish that scripture said a bit more... I wish that we were told how the Holy Spirit kept Paul from preaching the word in Asia & how the Spirit of Jesus (which is another name for the Holy Spirit) would not allow them into Bithynia. I wish we had more detail but we don't ...what we do know is that God was actively guiding these missionaries... firstly before they arrived in Asia Paul seems to have known that this was not the way... & then as the missionary team continued north & aimed instead for Bithynia ..just as they arrived on the border in some way the Holy Spirit again said NO ...Leaving Paul & the team with really only 2 options.. to go back the way they came or go on west to the coast at Troas. But even though Paul had seen 2 doors of opportunity close he was nevertheless still absolutely sure that God wanted him to take the good news about Jesus to new people.... So it's not surprising that the Paul chose the road to TROAS & it was there that he was given a vision of a man

from across the sea in Macedonia begging him to come over & help them.. God had closed doors but was now opening up the door for the Christian message to enter Europe ...

In proverbs 16:9 we hear '***In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.***' **SLIDE 8** Yes I might not know exactly how God guided Paul here... but we do know that Paul listened ...he had set his plans... he was moving forward... BUT he was also attentive & flexible enough that he changed those plans under God's leading...

Paul would later write in his letter to the Romans 'Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God...' (Rom 8:14) Yes in today's uncertainty we as Christians must still pray & seek to plan. Like Paul we must remain absolutely certain about some things.. like God's love for all people... His call to every Christian to trust Jesus & follow Him.. & to share that with others... We don't need to be guided to love God...love one another & others.. That part of God's leading will never change...

Slide 9 BUT at the same time we must be open to those daily nudges whispers & even the occasional burning bush where God calls us perhaps away from the path we thought we would walk... towards a new door... Lets now take a few moments in prayer now as we listen to what God has to say to us personally And we also ask Him to guide & lead us here for our Church... lets pray.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS- We will use the response ***Lord have mercy...***

Lord God we bring to You our world still caught in the grips of this awful epidemic. God who calls & guides please direct our scientists & political leaders... may a vaccine be not only found but made available soon.

We pray together... ***Lord have mercy..***

God of grace we also pray for our Church & all Churches.. Help those in leadership & clearly direct us all we pray; Help us also be receptive to Your nudges & whispers both personally & as a body.

We pray together... ***Lord have mercy..***

So now we pray for those who have sought our prayers beginning by thanking God for answered prayer seen in the lives of many we have been praying for... today we especially give thanks to God for His mercy & protection for baby Rosie who we have been praying for these past months... & we also thanks God for His continued help for Timothy Harte & Sarah... Lord please continue to protect & preserve these precious lives.

We pray together... ***.....Lord have mercy.....***

So we continue praying for those who need our prayers today...

For Tina Donaldson... seriously ill.....

For Daniel Kidson continuing with cancer treatment before an operation in September....

For Paul McDowell with cancer....

For Jean Woods enduring severe back pain...

For Jerry...

For George McKee...

For all those connected to our Church family who are still recovering from illness or surgery...

We pray together ***.....Lord have mercy.....***

1. Guide me, O Thou great *Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand.
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more; X2
2. Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliv'rer, strong Deliv'rer,
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield; X2
3. When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's Destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee; X2

Blessing - *Lord guide us through this barren time.. Holding us in thy powerful hand... till our anxious fears subside... Strong deliverer strong deliverer Be thou still our strength & shield. & we finish by sharing the grace together. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ & the Love of God & the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all forevermore. amen*

