

SUNDAY 22nd NOV 20

Welcome & announcements

Call to Worship Psalm 19 vs 7-9 & 14

Praise 'The Joy of the Lord'

Prayer

Video 'BCM Parental Support'

Old Testament Reading Exodus 19:16-20:3

Children's thought

Offering

New Testament Reading Matthew 11:25-30

Sermon

Prayers

Hymn HP 739 May the mind of Christ My Saviour

Blessing

Call to worship - Psalm 19

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,

making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are
radiant, giving light to the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the LORD is
pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Praise - the Joy of the LORD

Though the tears may fall my song will rise
My song will rise to You
Though my heart may fail my song will rise
My song will rise to You
While there's breath in my lungs
I will praise you Lord

In the dead of night I'll lift my eyes
I'll lift my eyes to You
Though the waters rise I'll lift my eyes
I'll lift my eyes to You
While there's hope in this heart
I will praise You Lord

*Chorus- The joy of the Lord is my strength X2
In the darkness I'll dance, In the shadows I'll sing
The joy of the Lord is my strength*

When I cannot see You with my eyes
Let faith arise to You
When I cannot feel Your hand in mine

Let faith arise to You
God of mercy and love
I will praise You Lord

How You shine with glory Lord of light
I feel alive with You
In Your presence now I come alive
I am alive with You
There is strength when I say
I will praise You Lord

*Chorus- The joy of the Lord is my strength X2
In the darkness I'll dance, In the shadows I'll sing
The joy of the Lord is my strength*

When sorrow comes my way
You are the shield around me
Always You remain
My courage in the fight
I hear You call my name
Jesus I am coming
Walking on the waves
Reaching for Your light

CHORUS X2

Opening Prayer Great & wondrous God.....God whose ways are perfect.. God who is righteous & holy & good in every way... Lord we lift our eyes to you this day.... And we declare this morning; that whether we come today with things going well...or whether we come holding back the tears.... that still our songs of worship & love will rise to You... For You shine with glory, Lord of

Light...& in your presence we feel alive.... so this morning we declare that the joy of the Lord is our strength...that You Lord are our ROCK & our Redeemer... our saviour & protector...

And so now Glorious God....we take a moment to confess to You that we are not always the people that You desire us to be... In the silence we confess our sins to God , asking for His fresh mercy through Jesus..... And we hear the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ that ... *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace Eph 1:7*

Video - BCM Parental Support

Old Testament Reading- Exodus 19:16-20:3

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there was thunder & lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, & a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, & they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, & the whole mountain trembled violently. ¹⁹ As the sound of the trumpet grew louder & louder, Moses spoke & the voice of God answered him.

²⁰ The Lord descended to the top of Mount Sinai & called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up ²¹ & the Lord said to him, "Go down & warn the people so they do not force their

way through to see the Lord & many of them perish. ²² Even the priests, who approach the Lord, must consecrate themselves, or the Lord will break out against them."

²³ Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because you yourself warned us, 'Put limits around the mountain & set it apart as holy.'" ²⁴ The Lord replied, "Go down & bring Aaron up with you. But the priests & the people must not force their way through to come up to the Lord, or he will break out against them." ²⁵ So Moses went down to the people & told them. And God spoke all these words: ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.. ³ "You shall have no other gods before me....

Children's Thought

Good morning... hands up anybody who walked to Church today...? Anybody...ride their bike to Church...? Well I presume that the rest of us drove to Church today.... And wasn't it good to be able to get in the car & have the freedom to drive from home to Church... without worrying too much about it... I like to drive but one place I never wanted to drive was India... because there was just too much traffic...too many holes in the roads... AND WORST of ALL TOO MANY PEOPLE who didn't seem to worry one bit about the RULES of the ROAD...**SLIDES**

BUT following the RULES of the ROAD is very important... **SLIDE** things like DRIVING on the left..... Stopping at Red lights... giving way to pedestrians.... Signalling before turning...

IMAGINE what would happen if motorists just ignored those rules... How dangerous & how frightening would that be.. In fact the RULES of the Road...don't just keep us safe... they also actually help us ENJOY driving... they allow us the freedom to use the roads....

I guess that some people might think that following Jesus... is ALL about Religious RULES & regulations... things stop us doing what we want... But this morning as we hear about the people of God coming to Mount Sinai & receiving the 10 commandments **SLIDE**...we remember that Gods Law , His Commandments are about protecting & providing freedom for us & others to live well lets pray- Lord we thank you for showing us the way to a better more full life... life with you.... help us always remember that You love us & want the best for us & others. Amen

New Testament Reading Matthew 11:25-30

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven & earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise & learned, & revealed them to little children. ²⁶ Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

²⁷ "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, & no one knows the Father except the Son & those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary & burdened, & I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you & learn from me, for I am

gentle & humble in heart, & you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy & my burden is light."

SERMON

There we were eagerly gathering round as the lid of the shiny new box was opened... with excited faces we couldn't wait to see what the new game looked like...what colour was the gameboard, what did the counters look like & what about the dice & the cards & was there play money involved **SLIDE** Yes I remember as an older child getting quite excited when we got a new game... & how excited me & my friends would be as we unpacked the board...& pulled out the cards, counters & dice... only to find under them all that paper sheet or booklet... that none of us REALLY WANTED to READ... The RULES... the very thought of it made most of us bored... & it was usually at that point that someone would say those words...**Let's just play**....forget the rules.. we will work it out as we go along...it will be fine... But then sometimes there was another one in the group who would insist that we need to take our time & read the rules.. to focus on them, so that everything was clear & we didn't do anything wrong.

FORGET the RULES... let's just play the game... Or the opposite... lets Study the Rules.. & make sure there are NO GREY areas, no matters of dispute... 2 VERY different approaches to playing a game... 2 VERY Different approaches to this game called life **SLIDE** . perhaps the most common...Forget the rules....I will do things my way... it's more fun... Rebellion... Or the opposite... let's concentrate on the Rules... let's examine, interpret & maybe even expand on them a bit if it means that everyone is clear & we can sort out the RULE keepers...from the Rule breakers..

This morning we venture back to the people of Israel as they journey through the wilderness after God had rescued them from Egypt.. & in today's passage we heard how they come to an important moment in their journey... for in their travels they come to a sort of valley with a large mountain at the end ... they had come to Sinai...the place where God had chosen to meet with them in a specially powerful way... The place where God would speak to them the His 10 WORDS, the commandments, His Rules.

This morning ... I don't want us to focus so much on the exact nature of the Commandments, although I would encourage you when you go home to have a fresh read of them in Exodus Chapter 20.... No this morning I just want to concentrate on a the way the RULES were given & indeed how we should approach them today... Firstly lets start with something that I hope came through clearly in our reading... just how powerful, awesome & yes intimidating God's presence was as God descended on Mount Sinai to speak to Moses & the people.. Yes God's presence made the whole mountain tremble vs18 & I guess the Israelites shook with nerves even more. This was God as the author to the Hebrews describes as a **consuming fire** Heb 12:29 **SLIDE**

This is God who in all His holiness commands Moses 3 times not to let the people get too close to the mountain... 3 Times when God repeats himself...its important to pay attention.. So the point is this... these 10 words aren't to be forgotten or left like a discarded rule book at the bottom of our box of life... They are crucial **SLIDE** for these commands focus on God's charge to people to be RIGHT with HIM... by putting Him first & following Him completely... & then followed by commands that focus on keeping right with other human beings... by not stealing

their property or coveting what they have, honouring your parents etc... So these are Words that point to life.. or to use by no means perfect illustration again... they help us not only get the best out of this game called life... protecting us & other players... but they also firstly MAKE us TAKE NOTICE of the ONE who designed & built the game... the One who brought the entire game ...not to mention us into being....

So no these aren't just words or rules for another time or a different context.... these are words that are central to enjoying & living life now as they were then... As Jesus himself says in Matthew 5:17-19 **SLIDE** *I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God's laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

So to those who say...let's just play the game... lets just live life.. our way... the message is clear.... You ignore or bend God's Law at your peril...

But listen... I would guess that for many of us this morning our tendency hasn't been to say...**Forget the rules...** it hasn't been to Rebellion ...rather maybe it's been to the other attitude to the Rule book.. . to focus on them & try & work them out & use them in a way that perhaps forgets their purpose to an extent Perhaps we have found ourselves at times using the Rules to make us feel better about ourselves... Well I'm glad that I've

never taken anything that didn't belong to me... I'm glad that I don't go to the shopping centre on a Sunday... And although we might never say it ...Using the Rules to judge others.... well you will never guess what so & so has done...

Yes perhaps our attitude to the Rules has been more Religious than RELATIONAL.. perhaps we have thought that we can WIN the game if only we keep enough of those rules & all the other players fall out.... But of course we can't.... for not only can't we keep all these rules perfectly.... (And if you doubt that then remember the one about coveting or even better the command to always put God first & never have any idols in our hearts....) yes not only can't we keep all these RULES perfectly...but also the more we try to use our own efforts to do so..the more we can become hard & hypocritical...& Jesus most stinging rebukes were RESERVED for the religious leaders in his day who did just that... **SLIDE** Matt 23:2-4 *"The scribes & the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you & follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, & lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them."*

Yes let's be clear that nether Rebellion nor Religion are the right ways of dealing with what God says to people through His Law... So if neither of these paths work....where can we find the right way... what or who can provide REST for our souls...? So we come to our new testament passage.... so we come to the wonder of the gospel... that the One who brought this game of life into being... that the great original designer... would decide to come Himself and enter the game....Yes Jesus as our verses from Matthew 11

told us KNOWS the FATHER in a way that no other interpreter of the RULES does.. *No one knows the Son except the Father, & no one knows the Father except the Son & those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.* Yes Jesus came to fulfil the Law because He was the Word incarnate... So not only did Jesus know the RULES better than anyone... But He was with His Father & the Holy Spirit the origin of those Rules... **SLIDE**

And so He alone...could say with complete sincerity & assurance; *"Come to me, all you who are weary & burdened, & I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you & learn from me, for I am gentle & humble in heart, & you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy & my burden is light."*

SLIDE That image of the YOKE, of course comes from an old farm context where 2 or more animals would be yoked together to pull a plough or something like that... But that image of the YOKE around your neck was also one that the Jewish people used of the LAW... So when Jesus calls people to himself... to His yoke.. He isn't saying come to do & do what you want... the rest He talks about here isn't one of lazy living... But it's an invitation to all those who were & are fed up with striving to be good enough & finding that they keep falling down on some part... it was to all those then & now who have found legalistic religion or even trying to live your own way... a burden far heavier than they ever imagined... To people like that Jesus says COME... be yoked with me... let me carry that heaviest of loads... those failures , those troubling attitudes..those sins.. let me carry them to the CROSS for you ... & then walk with me... follow me... Let me write by my Spirit the Law on your heart... Lets play the game together...

Let take a few moments in silence now as we each have that opportunity to respond to what God might be saying to us...

Prayer- Heavenly Father... forgive us if we have neglected Your Law & the purpose behind it... our relationship with You & others... Forgive us too if we have concentrated on the Rules & forgotten the relationship... help us in these moment of quiet to come to You afresh & know Your Rest...

Prayers for Others

Lord we pray for Your World.... A world beset with many problems... Wars... Poverty... Inequality... Racism... & Disease.. Especially at the moment Covid 19... Lord we ask You to move to bring help & healing & hope to those who need it most & we ask that we as Your people would live as people of love & grace ...

Your kingdom come...

Lord , we pray too for Your Church... remembering those who are persecuted in other lands... those who are in lockdown now & ourselves as we won't be able to meet physically for the next 2 weeks... Lord in these challenging times keep us faithful.. & give us a strong Hope in You... Your kingdom come...

And now Lord we pray for All those who need our prayers this day... For all those in every land who are ill with Covid 19 or any other disease or illness.... For those families who are in turmoil because of a loved ones sickness ... For those who are bereaved...

And we remember especially those who have requested our prayer through our prayer chain..For. **Leo, Timothy, Daniel,**

Adam, Paul, Jean, Bernie, Ronnie & Maggie, Sarah, Lucy, Mark, Trevor , George , Susanne, Liz, Raymond & Connie, Patti, Nicky, Valerie, Yvonne & Christine, Gary , Carol ,Margaret & Phylis...Rachel & her new baby, Maureen, Kate & Nan ...And we Jean Mchaffie as she awaits surgery, Gerry at home alone & baby Arianna ...

And we sum up our prayers by saying the Lords Prayer together..

Our Father...

HP 739 May the mind of Christ My Saviour

1. May the mind of Christ, my Saviour,
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling
All I do and say.
2. May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His power.
3. May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.
4. May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self abasing,
This is victory.

5. May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

The Blessing

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ & the Love of God & the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all forevermore. Amen

Come to me all who are weary & I will give you rest...

Come to me... invitation... God who is interested in everything in our lives... Go to God when times are tough..... thats ok
BUT more than what God can do for us... what God can give us is
HAVING a RE:LATIONSHIP WITH GOD...

Jesus speaks here of a figurative bondage of unprofitable labor under an inadequate understanding of God's law (23:4; Acts 15:10; Gal 5:1; compare Sirach 40:1; *Did.* 6; *1 Clement* 16). Other teachers in Jesus' day and afterward spoke of accepting the "yoke of God's kingdom," or God's rule, by submitting to the yoke of the law rather than merely human rule. Like a good sage, Jesus

invites disciples to learn from him. Yet Jesus did not interpret the law, including the law of rest (Mt 12:1-14), the same way his contemporaries did; his *yoke* was lighter. In contrast to his opponents (23:4), Jesus interprets the laws according to their original purpose, to which he is privy (5:17-48; 11:27; 12:8)-for example, interpreting sabbath laws in terms of devotion to God rather than universal rules (12:7) and divorce law in terms of devotion to one's faithful wife rather than a loophole to reject her (19:4-8).

By speaking of God's law as his own, Jesus implicitly claims authority from the Father greater than that of Moses himself (11:27); other Jewish texts would have spoken only of "God's" yoke here (Smith 1951:153), or of the yoke of Torah (Davies and Allison 1991:289). Jesus models his words directly after the invitation of Ben Sira in Sirach 51:23-27, but here it is Wisdom herself who speaks (compare Sirach 24:19-21). Obeying God will bring his people *rest for [their] souls* (Jer 6:16 MT).

They will find Jesus' yoke *light* because he is a Master who will care for them (Mt 11:29). Jesus' yoke is not lighter because he demands less (5:20), but because he bears more of the load with us (23:4). In contrast to unconcerned religious teachers who prided themselves on their own position, like some religious leaders today (23:4-7, 29), Jesus was going to lay down his life for the sheep (20:25-28).

When as a young Christian I first began to know what Jesus was like, I decided that no one could know what he was like and not fall madly in love with him; my new motive for obedience was not to disappoint the One who loved me as no one else had. When we learn of Jesus (see also Eph 4:20-21), we find the very Lord of the universe to be *humble*, preferring to dwell with the humble, the "little ones." If Jesus is meek, the people in whose lives he rules cannot be proud or self-centered either, for the kingdom belongs to the meek (5:3, 5).