

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 14 June 2020

Call to Worship & Opening Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 304

Jesus is the name we honour;

Jesus is the name we praise.

Majestic name above all other names;
the highest heaven and earth proclaim
that Jesus is our God.

*We will glorify, we will lift him high,
we will give him honour and praise.*

*We will glorify, we will lift him high,
we will give him honour and praise.*

Phil Lawson Johnston

Hymn: Praise! 178

Great is the gospel of our glorious God,
where mercy met the anger of God's rod;
a penalty was paid and pardon bought
and sinners lost at last to him were brought:

*O let the praises of my heart be thine,
for Christ has died that I may call him mine,
that I may sing with those who dwell above,
adoring, praising Jesus, King of love.*

W Vernon Higham

2 Jesus is the name we worship;
Jesus is the name we trust.
He is the King above all other kings;
let all creation stand and sing
that Jesus is our God.

3 Jesus is the Father's splendour;
Jesus is the Father's joy.
He will return to reign in majesty
and every eye at last shall see
that Jesus is our God.

2 Great is the mystery of godliness,
great is the work of God's own holiness;
it moves my soul and causes me to long
for greater joys than to the earth belong:

3 The Spirit vindicated Christ our Lord,
and angels sang with joy and sweet accord;
the nations heard, a dark world flamed with
light—
when Jesus rose in glory and in might:

Book Review

Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 808

Jesus, my strength, my hope,
on you I cast my care,
with humble confidence look up
and know you hear my prayer.
On you alone I wait
till I can all things do;
on you, almighty to create,
almighty to renew.

2 Give me a godly fear,
a quick-discerning eye,
that looks to you when sin is near
and sees the tempter fly;
a spirit well-prepared
and armed with zealous care,
for ever standing on its guard
and keeping watch in prayer.

3 Give me a true regard,
a single, steady aim,
unmoved by threatening or reward,
for you and your great name;
a jealous, just concern
for your immortal praise;
a pure desire that all may learn
and glorify your grace.

4 I rest upon your word;
the promise is for me;
my strength and my salvation, Lord,
from you alone shall be:
but let me still abide,
nor from my hope remove,
till you my steadfast spirit guide
into your perfect love.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Reading: Philippians 3:1-11, ESV

Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you. ² Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. ³ For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— ⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for 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; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order 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 comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Sermon: Philippians 3:1-3 – True or False

“For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.” (v3)

“Finally, my brothers...” (Hang on, he still has two chapters to go...)

Kent Hughes, says the same sentence could be translated as, “Well then, my brothers, rejoice” or “Moreover my brothers, rejoice”.

Similar to 1:18 “What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice.”

And “Even if I am to be poured out as drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.” 2 v 17-18

Also: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.” 4v4

Verse 2 is an angry verse: “Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.” Is this out of place?

Anger is ok in its correct context: “Know this, my beloved brothers, let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger...” (James 1:19), encourages people to listen first, and be slow to speak lest their anger overtake them and they fall into sin.

“Be angry”, he says in Ephesians 4, but notice how quickly he adds: “but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.”

Anger is justified in relation to the preservation of the truth. Alec Motyer writes: “The truth of the gospel must be known, preached and defended and its opposite recognised, rejected and opposed.”

What Paul writes in 3:1 is a bridge, or a hinge, between what he has written, in the first half of the letter, and what he will write in the remainder.

Paul has shown us that Jesus has been glorified as God, Saviour, Example and Lord. That being the case, Paul says, “rejoice in the Lord”.

Paul is about to show us that Christ is his people’s pride, greatest possession, ambition, pattern and the crucified and coming Saviour. Rejoicing in the one who has done for us what we could never do for ourselves ought to be a no-brainer.

The first and greatest threat to our joy in the Lord is when we allow anything to become as important or as much a source of joy as him.

The first secret of a truly happy and joyous life is to rejoice in the Lord. If we rejoice in the Lord – whatever our circumstances – we know that we are practicing true religion and that we don’t need to add anything to our salvation.

1. Beware False Religion

“Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh.”

The Judaizers, were Jewish Christians (supposedly Christians) who insisted that in order for Gentiles to be true followers of Christ, they had to submit to all the laws of Moses, especially with outward signs, such as circumcision.

But Paul had already spoken regarding this: “Therefore, my judgement is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled and from blood” (Acts 15:19-20).

And he challenged them to continue in this way: “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:8-9).

3 ironic, sarcastic insults to the Judaizers who sought to pull them away from the true gospel:

- “Look out for the dogs” – don’t worry, not domestic pets, more like scavenging coyotes – the Judaizers thought of those who didn’t keep all the law as being dogs. But Paul says those who

claimed to be making God happy by keep the law, were actually adding to the gospel and not accepting Christ's work as sufficient for their salvation.

- "Look out for evildoers" – in calling the Judaizers, "evildoers" (their name for people who didn't keep the law), Paul is saying that rather than being "law doers", they were actually evildoers as they sought salvation on their terms.
- "Look out for those who mutilate the flesh" – Peter O'Brien says: "Circumcision, their greatest source of pride, is interpreted by the apostle as mutilation – a sure sign they have no part in God's people at all."

Paul is crystal clear – false religion, (where we add to Christ's work) in whatever form is not only sinful, it is damaging and is to be avoided at all costs. To do that, we must continue to find our joy in the Lord Jesus and rejoice in him alone.

2. Pursue True Religion

Circumcision was a sign, given by God, originally to Abraham and then onto Israel as a mark of their special relationship with God. They were his chosen people – his covenant people and they bore this sign on their bodies as a result.

God first made a covenant with Noah, promising never to flood the world again.

Also, Abram, when God makes it clear that his covenant with his people rests on a sacrifice – a sacrifice that God himself appoints (Genesis 15)

It reaches its fullness through Moses and the exodus from Egypt, as we see that the people were redeemed by the blood of a lamb, painted on the door frame.

The Old Testament prophets spoke frequently about the promises of God for a new covenant, which would be the glorious future of God's people, as they foresaw the dwelling of God coming to be amongst his people; an everlasting covenant.

Through the Lord Jesus Christ that these prophecies were ultimately fulfilled. 1 Corinthians 11:23-25, "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood."

Through his death and resurrection, Christ was ushering in the new covenant

"For we are the circumcision" (3), he is claiming for himself and the Philippians the privilege of being the true heirs of the long-promised salvation.

Three qualities which all those who pursue true religion display:

- “Worship by the Spirit of God”... “Therefore,” Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” The evidence of this new creation is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. When God indwells us, he makes us worshippers. His Spirit helps us in our weaknesses and empowers us to bring worship and prayer before the throne of God which is acceptable. Worshipping in the Spirit of God means that we don’t have to be in a specific place, at a specific time, in order to be heard. All of life becomes worship.
- “Glory in Christ Jesus”. This is because the Spirit’s work is to exalt Jesus Christ – to magnify his worth. So when we worship in the Spirit, we naturally glory in Jesus Christ. More than that, we boast in the Lord Jesus. The evidence of the fullness of the Spirit is a one-track mind and a one theme tongue that speaks always of Christ. Christ becomes the source of all satisfaction and the focus of our praise.
- “Put no confidence in the flesh”. God’s people don’t seek their trust or assurance in anything – or anyone – outside of Christ. If our boast is in Christ, our confidence cannot be in ourselves. Circumcision, was part of a number of external, religious, observations in which they put their trust. Paul is clear – we must never put our hope in what we do for God – no matter what it may be.

So we must be aware, but we must also trust. There is the safety of joy in the Lord – in him, we can be so full of joy that none of these false gospels appeal to us anymore.

Hymn: Praise! 812

O for a heart to praise my God,
a heart from sin set free,
a heart that's sprinkled with the blood
so freely shed for me.

2 A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
my great Redeemer's throne;
where only Christ is heard to speak,
where Jesus reigns alone.

3 A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
believing, true and clean,
which neither life nor death can part
from him who dwells within.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

4 A heart in every thought renewed
and full of love divine;
perfect and right and pure and good-
your life revealed in mine.

5 Your nature, gracious Lord, impart;
come quickly from above,
write your new name upon my heart,
your new best name of Love.

Closing Prayer