

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 9 August 2020

Opening Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 570

Glorious things of you are spoken,
Zion, city of our God!
He whose word cannot be broken
formed you for his own abode:
on the Rock of ages founded,
what can shake your sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded
you may smile at all your foes.

2 See, the streams of living waters,
springing from eternal love,
well supply your sons and daughters
and all fear of want remove:
who can faint while such a river
ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace, which like the Lord the giver
never fails from age to age.

3 Round each habitation hovering
see the cloud and fire appear
for a glory and a covering,
showing that the Lord is near:
thus they march, the pillar leading,
light by night and shade by day;
daily on the manna feeding
which he gives them as they pray.

4 Saviour, since of Zion's city
I through grace a member am,
let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in your name:
fading are the world's best pleasures,
all its boasted pomp and show;
solid joys and lasting treasures
none but Zion's children know.

John Newton (1725-1807)

Reading: James 2:1-13, ESV

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. ² For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, ³ and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place", while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there", or, "Sit down at my feet", ⁴ have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ⁵ Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you have dishonoured the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honourable name by which you were called?

⁸ If you really fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself", you are doing well. ⁹ But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. ¹¹ For he who said, "Do not commit adultery", also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. ¹² So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. ¹³ For judgement is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgement.

Hymn: Praise! 587

Blessed be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
foreshadows that above.

2 Before our Father's throne
we pour our fervent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.

3 We share our mutual woes,
our mutual burdens bear;
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.

4 When for a while we part,
this thought will soothe our pain:
in Christ we still are joined in heart
and we shall meet again.

5 This glorious hope revives
our courage on the way,
while each in expectation lives
and longs to see that day.

6 From sorrow, toil and pain
and sin we shall be free,
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity.

John Fawcett (1740-1817)

Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 366

Lord, you were rich beyond all splendour,
yet, for love's sake, became so poor;
thrones for a manger did surrender,
sapphire-paved courts for stable floor:

Lord, you were rich beyond all splendour,
yet, for love's sake, became so poor.

2 Lord, you are God beyond all praising,
yet, for love's sake, became a man;
stooping so low, but sinners raising
heavenwards by your eternal plan:

Lord, you are God beyond all praising,
yet, for love's sake, became a man.

3 Lord, you are love beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship you;

Immanuel, within us dwelling,
make us and keep us pure and true:

Lord, you are love beyond all telling,
Saviour and King, we worship you.

Frank Houghton (1894-1972)

Sermon: James 2:1-13 – On Purity and Partiality

Remember from Chapter 1: if we don't do what we heard, then we didn't really hear it!

1. Pure and Faultless Religion

- Off on a tangent?
- Emphasis by counterexample: faulty and impure religion
- Thames Valley limescale, washing machines, and your soul

2. The Royal Law

- 'Choose thy neighbour'?
- The Samaritan example
- Equality in the sight of God
- The painful case of the two visitors

3. The Divine Welcome

- Nothing wrong with a rich welcome...
- Remember where we were when God found us!
- Living under the law of liberty
- 'Mercy triumphs over judgement'

Hymn: Praise! 616

Go forth and tell! O church of God, awake!
God's saving news to all the nations take:
proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord and King,
that all the world his worthy praise may sing.

2 Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;
he will in grace respond to all who call;
how shall they call if they have never heard
the gracious invitation of his word?

3 Go forth and tell! where still the darkness
lies;
in wealth or want, the sinner surely dies:
give us, O Lord, concern of heart and mind,
a love like yours which cares for all mankind.

4 Go forth and tell! the doors are open wide;
share God's good gifts, let no one be denied;
live out your life as Christ your Lord shall
choose,
your ransomed powers for his sole glory use.

5 Go forth and tell! O church of God, arise!
Go in the strength which Christ your Lord
supplies;
go till all nations his great name adore
and serve him, Lord and King for evermore!

James Seddon (1915-1983)

Closing Prayer