

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 23 August 2020

Opening Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 23C

The king of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness fails me never;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine for ever.

2 Where streams of living waters flow,
a ransomed soul, he leads me;
and where the richest pastures grow,
with food from heaven feeds me.

3 Perverse and foolish I have strayed,
but in his love he sought me;
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

4 In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with you, dear Lord, beside me;
your rod and staff my comfort still,
your cross before to guide me.

5 You spread a banquet in my sight
of grace beyond all knowing;
and O, the wonder and delight
from your pure chalice flowing!

6 And so through all the length of days
your goodness fails me never:
Good Shepherd, may I sing your praise
within your house for ever!

Henry W Baker (1821-1877)

Reading: Philippians 4:4-23, ESV

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹ What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me — practise these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

¹⁰ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

¹⁴ Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. ¹⁵ And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. ¹⁶ Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. ¹⁸ I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. ¹⁹ And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²¹ Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. ²² All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Prayer

Hymn

Who has held the oceans in his hands?
Who has numbered every grain of sand?
Kings and nations tremble at his voice
All creation rises to rejoice

*Behold our God, seated on his throne
Come, let us adore him
Behold our king, nothing can compare
Come, let us adore him*

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2 Who has given counsel to the Lord?
Who can question any of his words?
Who can teach the one who knows all things?
Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds?

3 Who has felt the nails upon his hands?
Bearing all the guilt of sinful man
God eternal, humbled to the grave
Jesus, Saviour, risen now to reign

Jonathan Baird, Meghan Baird, Ryan Baird, and Stephen Altrogge

Book Review

Hymn: Praise 2! 66

My soul finds rest in God alone,
my Rock and my salvation,
a fortress strong against my foes,
and I will not be shaken.
Though lips may bless and hearts may curse,
and lies like arrows pierce me,
I'll fix my heart on righteousness,
I'll look to Him who hears me.

*O praise Him, hallelujah,
my Delight and my Reward;
everlasting, never failing,
my Redeemer, my God.*

2 Find rest, my soul, in God alone
amid the world's temptations;
when evil seeks to take a hold
I'll cling to my salvation.
Though riches come and riches go,
don't set your heart upon them;
the fields of hope in which I sow
are harvested in heaven.

3 I'll set my gaze on God alone,
and trust in Him completely;
with every day pour out my soul,
and He will prove His mercy.
Though life is but a fleeting breath,
a sigh too brief to measure,
my King has crushed the curse of death
and I am His forever.

Aaron Keyes & Stuart Townend

Sermon: Philippians 4:10-13 – If you had nothing else, would Christ be enough?

How do we approach familiar passages?

- We have to work: 2 Tim 2:7
 - We have to... **think**, then, the Lord gives **understanding**
- Question beyond the obvious - student, fish, professor
- The Bible is inexhaustible

Understand the context: Where was Paul? What, exactly, were his circumstances?

One important foundational doctrine / Bible truth – the Sovereignty of God – God plans and controls everything.

Two main themes: How to be content; How to minister.

1. How to be content in very difficult circumstances

Start with Foundation:

- Paul in dire circumstances... because God put him there...God plans and controls everything: that's what God's sovereignty means
 - Why? For our benefit, for His glory
 - God doesn't make sinful things happen
 - God allows sin, but restrains it
 - Because of this, we can and should thank God - Phil 4:6 '...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.'
 - Does God just plan these things and leave us? No! '...I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.' I can live as a Christian in whatever situation God has called me to live
 - Your current situation, abounding or low, was given you by God – this is starting point for contentment
 - ...because God put you there we have every right to seek his strength to be content
- This contentment here is not passive acceptance of circumstances – it's not being stoical
 - This is the positive embracing of something so valuable, everything else is relatively unimportant: that something is of course Christ
 - Philippians continually takes us to rejoicing in Christ – above all else
 - This contentment is simply another aspect of rejoicing in Christ
- This contentment is a secret to be learned
 - It's a secret because it isn't obvious.
 - It's learned because it's difficult: it's hard to go without particularly if you've known plenty.
 - You learn through experience. Sometimes one step forward, two back.

2. How to minister to others in very difficult circumstances

The requirement to live our lives for the benefit of others doesn't change with circumstances

- The chief end of man ...Glorify God... We do this by 'building one another up' – 1 Thes 5:11; '...stirring to love and good works' – Heb. 10:24; 'loving our neighbours as self' – Gal 5:14

Notice v10a – '...now at length... revived your concern': it sounds grumpy, but he puts right in v 10b – even in prison, at rock bottom, he's sensitive to the feeling of others – his concern for others is woven through whole letter

Are you at a low point? It may not be the dire prison but bereavement, other loss, loneliness, COVID isolation

- But you can still do good to others-there's still a work and witness – Christ expects this and gives strength

Two final brief points:

- Are you content, rejoicing in Christ, in your present circumstances because Christ is your treasure, outshining all else - abundance or need?
- Are you rejoicing in Christ because of what he has done and what more he can do through you?

Hymn: Praise! 804

When peace, like a river, attends all my way,
when sorrows like sea-billows roll,
whatever my path, you have taught me to say,
'It is well, it is well with my soul.'

*'It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.'*

2 Though Satan may buffet, though trials may
come,
let this calm assurance control:
that Christ knows my need and my helplessness
here
and has shed his own blood for my soul.

3 The joy, O the joy of this glorious thought!
my sin, not in part but the whole,
is nailed to his cross and I bear it no more;
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

4 For me it is Christ, it is Christ now to live!
Though death's waters over me roll,
no fear shall be mine, for in death as in life
you will whisper your peace to my soul.

5 But, Lord, for your coming in glory we wait;
the sky, not the grave, is our goal;
the trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall
descend:
bless the Lord, bless the Lord, O my soul!

Horatio G Spafford (1828-1888)