

Yateley Baptist Church, Remembrance Sunday 8 November 2020

Opening Prayer

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 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:

Reading: Acts 19:8-40, ESV

⁸ And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

¹¹ And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. ¹³ Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name

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of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." ¹⁴ Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. ¹⁵ But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" ¹⁶ And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. ¹⁸ Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. ¹⁹ And a number of those who had practised magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. ²⁰ So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

²¹ Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." ²² And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

²³ About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. ²⁴ For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. ²⁵ These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. ²⁶ And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. ²⁷ And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship."

²⁸ When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

²⁹ So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theatre, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. ³⁰ But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. ³¹ And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theatre. ³² Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. ³³ Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defence to the crowd. ³⁴ But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

³⁵ And when the town clerk had quietened the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone

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that fell from the sky? ³⁶ Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. ³⁷ For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. ³⁸ If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. ³⁹ But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰ For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion.” ⁴¹ And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

Hymn: Praise! 860

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
in living echoes of your tone;
as you have sought, so let me seek
your wandering children, lost, alone.

4 O fill me with your fulness, Lord,
until my heart shall overflow
in kindling thought and glowing word
your love to tell, your praise to show.

2 O lead me, Lord, that I may lead
the stumbling and the straying feet;
and feed me, Lord, that I may feed
your hungry ones with manna sweet.

5 O use me, Lord, use even me,
just as you will, and when, and where;
until at last your face I see,
your rest, your joy, your glory share.

3 O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
the precious truths that you impart;
and wing my words that they may reach
the hidden depths of many a heart.

Frances R Havergal (1836-1879)

Act of Remembrance

Sermon: Acts 19:8-20 – The Word Did the Work

“So the Word of God continued to increase and prevail mightily” (20)

“When the coin in the coffer rings/the soul from purgatory springs” (John Tetzel)

“Take myself as an example. I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg

beer with my friends Philipp and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything. Had I desired to foment trouble, I could have brought great bloodshed upon Germany; indeed, I could have started such a game that even the emperor would not have been safe. But what would it have been? Mere fool's play. I did nothing; I let the Word do its work. What do you suppose is Satan's thought when one tries to do the thing by kicking up a row? He sits back in hell and thinks: Oh, what a fine game the poor fools are up to now! But when we spread the Word alone and let it alone do the work, that distresses him. For it is almighty, and takes captive the hearts, and when the hearts are captured the work will fall of itself." (Martin Luther)

1. The Word Spreads

"...boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God."

"That words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak" (Ephesians 6:19-20)

"They eventually descended into attacking in public what they did not want to embrace; and they did this simply because they wanted, if possible, to have everyone share in their impiety." (John Calvin)

"Rather than wallow in self-pity, we must always be asking ourselves in similar situations of seeming defeat, 'What good will the Lord bring out of this situation?'" (Derek Thomas)

Romans 8:28-29 say, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

2. The Word, Contextualised

"All the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (10)

3. The Word of God and Power

"I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims" (13)

"Jesus I know, and Paul I recognise, but who are you?"

"And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded."

And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. 18 Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. 19 And a number of those who had

practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver.

“So the Word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.”

“Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Prayer

Hymn

Lord, thy word abideth,
and our footsteps guideth;
who its truth believeth
light and joy receiveth.

2 When our foes are near us,
then thy word doth cheer us,
word of consolation,
message of salvation.

3 When the storms are o'er us,
and dark clouds before us,
then its light directeth,
and our way protecteth.

4 Who can tell the pleasure,
who recount the treasure
by thy word imparted
to the simple-hearted?

5 Word of mercy, giving
succour to the living;
word of life, supplying
comfort to the dying.

6 O that we discerning
its most holy learning,
Lord, may love and fear thee,
evermore be near thee!

Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)

Closing Prayer