

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 3 January 2021

Opening Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 146

I'll praise my maker while I've breath;
and when my voice is lost in death,
praise shall employ my nobler powers;
my days of praise shall not be past,
while life and thought and being last
or immortality endures.

2 Happy the one whose hopes rely
on Jacob's God, who made the sky,
the earth, the sea, the night and day;
his truth for ever stands secure,
he saves the oppressed, he feeds the poor,
and none who seeks is turned away.

3 The Lord gives eyesight to the blind,
he calms and heals the troubled mind,
he sends the wounded conscience peace;
he helps the stranger in distress,
the widow and the fatherless,
and grants the prisoner glad release.

4 I'll praise him while he lends me breath,
and when my voice is lost in death
praise shall employ my nobler powers;
my days of praise shall not be past
while life and thought and being last
or immortality endures.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Reading: Acts 16:11-40, ESV

¹¹ So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, ¹² and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. ¹³ And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. ¹⁴ One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

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¹⁶ As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market-place before the rulers. ²⁰ And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. ²¹ They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practise." ²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. ²³ And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. ²⁴ Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

²⁷ When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." ²⁹ And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

³⁴ Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

³⁵ But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." ³⁶ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace." ³⁷ But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." ³⁸ The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. ³⁹ So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰ So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

Hymn: Praise! 779

My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
no merit of my own I claim,
but wholly trust in Jesus' name.

*On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,
all other ground is sinking sand.*

2 When darkness veils his lovely face,
I rest on his unchanging grace;
in every high and stormy gale,
my anchor holds and will not fail.

Edward Mote (1797-1874)

3 His oath, his covenant and his blood
support me in the rising flood;
when all around my soul gives way,
he then is all my hope and stay.

4 I trust his righteous character,
his counsel, promises and power;
his name and honour are at stake
to save me from the burning lake.

5 When the last trumpet's voice shall sound,
O may I then in him be found,
clothed in his righteousness alone,
faultless to stand before the throne!

Reading: Philippians 1:18b-30, ESV

Yes, and I will rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰ as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴ But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰ engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Prayer

Hymn

What is our hope in life and death?

Christ alone, Christ alone.

What is our only confidence?

That our souls to Him belong.

Who holds our days within His hand?

What comes, apart from his command?

And what will keep us to the end?

The love of Christ, in which we stand.

O sing Hallelujah! Our hope springs eternal;

O sing Hallelujah! Now and ever we confess

Christ our hope in life and death.

2 What truth can calm the troubled soul?

God is good, God is good.

Where is His Grace and goodness known?

In our great Redeemer's blood.

Who holds our faith when fears arise?

Who stands above the stormy trial?

Who sends the waves that bring us nigh?

Unto the shore, the rock of Christ.

3 Unto the grave, what shall we sing?

Christ, He lives, Christ, He lives!

And what reward will heaven bring?

Everlasting life with Him.

There we will rise to meet the Lord.

Then sin and death will be destroyed.

And we will feast in endless joy,

When Christ is ours for evermore.

Keith Getty & Matt Papa

Sermon: Acts 16:11-40; Philippians 1:18b-30 – Christ Our Hope in Life and Death

1. For me, to live is...?

2. For me, to die is....?

Hymn: Praise! 299

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds
and drives away our fear.

2 It makes the wounded spirit whole,
and calms each heart oppressed;
it's manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary rest.

3 Dear name, the rock on which I build,
my shield and hiding-place;
my never-failing treasury, filled
with boundless stores of grace!

4 By you my prayers acceptance gain,
although with sin defiled;
Satan accuses me in vain
since I am God's own child.

John Newton (1725-1807)

5 Jesus, my shepherd, brother, friend,
my Prophet, Priest and King,
my Lord, my life, my way, my end,
accept the praise I bring.

6 Weak is the effort of my heart,
and cold my warmest thought;
but when I see you as you are,
I'll praise you as I ought.

7 Till then I would your love proclaim
with every fleeting breath;
and may the music of your name
refresh my soul in death.

Closing Prayer