

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 7 February 2021

Opening Prayer

Hymn

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

3 Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Frances J van Alstyne (1820-1915)

Reading: Acts 22, NIV 1984

‘Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defence.’

² When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said: ³ ‘I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. ⁴ I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, ⁵ as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

⁶ ‘About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. ⁷ I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, “Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?”

⁸ “Who are you, Lord?” I asked.

“I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. ⁹ My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

¹⁰ “What shall I do, Lord?” I asked.

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“Get up,” the Lord said, “and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.”¹¹ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

¹² ‘A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. ¹³ He stood beside me and said, “Brother Saul, receive your sight!” And at that very moment I was able to see him.

¹⁴ ‘Then he said: “The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. ¹⁵ You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”

¹⁷ ‘When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw the Lord speaking to me. “Quick!” he said. “Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.”

¹⁹ “Lord,” I replied, “these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. ²⁰ And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.”

²¹ ‘Then the Lord said to me, “Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.”’

²² The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, ‘Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!’

²³ As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, ²⁴ the commander ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and interrogated in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. ²⁵ As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, ‘Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?’

²⁶ When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. ‘What are you going to do?’ he asked. ‘This man is a Roman citizen.’

²⁷ The commander went to Paul and asked, ‘Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?’

‘Yes, I am,’ he answered.

²⁸ Then the commander said, ‘I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship.’

‘But I was born a citizen,’ Paul replied.

²⁹ Those who were about to interrogate him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realised that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

³⁰ The commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the members of the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and set him before them.

Hymn: Praise! 729

I stand amazed in the presence
of Jesus the Nazarene
and wonder how he could love me,
a sinner condemned, unclean!

*How marvellous! how wonderful!
this my song shall ever be:
how marvellous! how wonderful
is my Saviour's love for me!*

2 For me he prayed in the garden
and bowed to the will divine;
he had no tears for his own griefs,
but sweat drops of blood for mine.

Charles H Gabriel (1856-1932)

Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 723

All I once held dear, built my life upon,
all this world reveres and wars to own,
all I once thought gain I have counted loss;
spent and worthless now, compared to this.

*Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you;
there is no greater thing.
You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy, my righteousness
and I love you, Lord.*

3 In pity angels beheld him,
and came from the world of light
to comfort him in the sorrows
he bore for my soul that night.

4 He took my sins and my sorrows,
he made them his very own,
he bore the burden to Calvary
and suffered and died alone.

5 When with the ransomed in glory
his face I at last shall see,
my joy will be through the ages
to sing of his love for me.

2 Now my heart's desire is to know you more,
to be found in you and known as yours;
to possess by faith what I could not earn,
all-surpassing gift of righteousness.

3 O to know the power of your risen life
and to know you in your sufferings;
to become like you in your death, my Lord,
so with you to live and never die.

Graham Kendrick

Sermon: Acts 22 – Be Prepared

Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. (1 Peter 3:14b-16)

1. Be Intelligible (21:37-22:2)

2. Be Personal (22:3-21)

3. Be Wise (22:22-30)

Hymn: Praise! 625

Jesus, the name high over all
in hell or earth or sky;
angels and men before it fall
and devils fear and fly,
and devils fear and fly.

2 Jesus, the name to sinners dear,
the name to sinners given;
it scatters all their guilty fear,
it turns their hell to heaven,
it turns their hell to heaven.

3 Jesus the prisoner's fetters breaks
and bruises Satan's head;
power into strengthless souls he speaks
and life into the dead,
and life into the dead.

4 O that the world might taste and see
the riches of his grace!
The arms of love that welcome me
would all mankind embrace,
would all mankind embrace.

5 His righteousness alone I show,
his saving truth proclaim;
this is my work on earth below,
to cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'
to cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'

6 Happy if with my final breath
I may but gasp his name,
preach him to all, and cry in death,
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Closing Prayer