



Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

Sunday 14th June, 10:30am. Galatians part 2

Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon

This written worship has been prepared for you to use as we gather in separate places but united in love for our Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing that other people are sharing in this worship with you in their own homes is an encouragement to us and brings us closer together. We are almost at our 3-month anniversary of worshipping in this physically separated way and our producing these sheets for you. In some ways it still feels as upsetting as it did on that first Sunday (Mothering Sunday) back in those cold, strange and fearful days of March, but in other ways, as we have journeyed together through the great Christian seasons and festivals of Lent, Easter and Pentecost we have drawn so much comfort by being connected in this new way. Jesus says to His followers: "in this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world".

Good morning church!

Opening Prayers:

Loving and all-knowing God, may we experience Your powerful yet gentle presence with us today as we gather in our homes. Join us together with our brothers and sisters whom we miss so much. Calm our hearts and minds this morning so that we may clearly hear Your voice, Your touch and more clearly perceive what You are teaching us today.

Creator God, we love and honour You this morning with all that we are, we enter Your presence in worship, in praise, in reverence and in thankfulness for all You have done and continue to do in our lives. We pray that everything we do this morning is pleasing in Your sight Lord. May Your Holy Spirit come into our homes and our hearts this morning, may we feel the delight of Your presence, we bless You and we love You **Amen.**

Proclamation: I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Galatians 2:20

Hymn: StF 351 In Christ Alone

Sing/read /pray /proclaim the words
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnLl663WWnc>

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song
this Cornerstone, this solid ground
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of
peace

when fears are stilled, when strivings
cease!

My Comforter, my All in All

here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones He came to save
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied
for every sin on Him was laid
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
then bursting forth in glorious Day
up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Keith Getty (1974) and Stuart Townend (1963)

Prayer of confession:

And when a person has escaped from the wicked ways of the world by learning about our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and then gets tangled up with sin and becomes its slave again, he is worse off than he was before. 2 Peter 2:20

Loving and forgiving God, we confess to You our errors and foolishness, for the times when our pride and our self-interest takes precedence over You. We are sorry for the times of judging others or thinking that we know the motives of others when only You know their hearts and minds.

We are sorry for the times when we have thought that our relationship with You is confined to a particular building or a day in the week. For the times when we have considered that religion is an outward act and not a transformation that we undergo and a relationship that we participate within, we are truly sorry.

On behalf of the world of which we are a part, we are sorry for the unjust treatment that those, who You created, suffer because of the colour of their skin or their backgrounds. We ask forgiveness on behalf of this world for the way we mistreat Your magnificent creation.

We are sorry for the idols that we have created, the slogans, the causes, the events and activities that we follow, instead of You. We ask forgiveness for the times when our prayers are about what we want, our selfish solutions and not about seeking Your will and giving thanks for all You are doing.

Pause

Loving and forgiving God, I name the specific things for which I come to You, asking Your forgiveness....

A time of silence to hear what the Lord may be saying to us today.

God of love and power, thank You for the forgiveness and freedom You have given me from my sins, heal and strengthen me by Your Holy Spirit so that I may walk today a path of righteousness with my past life of sin behind me. I have died to that old life and have been raised, new, refreshed and redeemed . I pray that Your Holy Spirit will fill me afresh today with miraculous light, love and kindness so that I may always reflect Your wondrous glory.

Amen.

Preparation for the reading of Scripture:

Lord, prepare our hearts for the reading of Your word, help us to understand the meaning of what we are reading, may Your Holy Spirit, who inspired these words, come to us now. Amen

Reading: Galatians 2:17-21 But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

A time to pause, read again, pray, and reflect.

Hymn: I am a new creation StF 553

Sing/read /pray /proclaim the words.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KtOu2iwmuEA>

I am a new creation
 No more in condemnation
 Here in the grace of God I stand
 My heart is overflowing
 My love just keeps on growing
 Here in the grace of God I stand
 And I will praise You Lord
 Yes, I will praise You Lord
 And I will sing of all
 that you have done
 A joy that knows no limit
 A likeness in my spirit
 Here in the grace of God I stand
 Dave Bilborough (b. 1965)

Preaching notes:

These notes are complementary to the preaching on this passage that can be accessed on our YouTube channel, Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches, Sunday 14th June.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoF3pzV1QdM6DPfGUEAgp0g>

Although a short section of scripture with just 5 verses, they represent a hugely significant contribution to our understanding of what our faith in Jesus Christ is for and why we cannot ever rely on anything other than Jesus for our salvation. This letter, to the churches of Galatia, is all about the apostle Paul giving a well-reasoned argument why it can only be a full reliance and trust in Jesus from which salvation can be received. Often it is in defence of a cherished truth that is being destabilised by others, that a coherent, well-reasoned argument emerges.

The Gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ is a transformational body of writing, it cry's out transformation! His coming, His ministry among us, His death and resurrection and the coming of God's Holy Spirit are all transformational events that cannot be ignored, understated or misunderstood. Paul is explaining in clear terms that salvation is from faith in Jesus alone. Justification is a legal term and its meaning is best explained by saying that it is the exact opposite to condemnation, therefore to state, "I am justified in Christ" means, "I am found innocent of sin because of my faith in Jesus". Hence we have what Martin Luther, the great 16th Century Protestant reformer stated as "the most principal and special article of

Christian doctrine (set of beliefs) for it is this which maketh true Christians indeed". I have heard it explained to me and I offer it to you that "justification" can be thought of as "just-as-if-I-had-never-sinned" and perhaps that is helpful, as are the terms: "innocent" or "not guilty". However, we have sinned, we are guilty, we are undeserving of salvation, even the best of us are unworthy. This is the very reason why a nominal and outward expression of belief, without a complete inner change is not sufficient. The death that Christ died 2,000 years ago, was for me and for you, so that we can be justified in Him, to be found not "in Him", is to miss the mark. It is not by adhering to a set of rules (the law) or "going through the motions" and hoping that God does not notice that your heart is not changed. "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me" results in a completely changed life, it's not just the old you but slightly nicer and busy on Sunday mornings.

Chuck Swindell explains "when Christ died on the cross (literally), we also died (figurately) to the old way of living". The argument of the Judaizers then and now (the modern version being self-righteousness) was: "that's a licence to sin, thinking that God will always forgive, means you keep breaking the rules". Christ achieves in us what the law never could, an inner change that removes the desire to sin replacing it with a desire for holiness, for peace and for love of the other above yourself. We need do nothing other than "be born again" (John 3:3) and accept and affirm that it is God's grace, in Christ Jesus, offered to each of us that achieves the new life. **Amen**

Personal Prayer:

Holy Spirit come powerfully into my life today, fill me afresh with Your supernatural love and power. Help me to be true to Your gospel and to be faithful and clear in my understanding. Thank you for Your gift of grace. I pray that, if I have not already done so, I may receive the new life that is offered to me through faith in Christ Jesus. I willingly lay down the old life of doubt, unbelief, self-righteousness and reliance on rules and exchange it for a transformed life of hope, love, peace and holiness. Lord, add to our number daily those who are seeking salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. May we be a faithful fellowship, relying and trusting completely in Christ . **Amen.**

Hymn: When I survey the wondrous

cross StF 287 Sing/read /pray /proclaim.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fvFfPqjO4>

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small.

Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

We pray together our Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your Kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the Kingdom, the power,
and the glory are Yours
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4: 6,7 TLB.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for our brothers and sisters who are ministering the love and peace of Christ in cities and countries that are suffering from violence and rioting. We pray for justice, complete respect and acceptance of one another for their heritage, culture and skin colour. May the Church be a soothing balm to those who are hurting, angry and frustrated.

We pray for persecuted Christians throughout the world, thinking particularly of India, Syria and Iran. Lord we pray for them to be strengthened and protected from those who wish them harm.

We pray for those countries whose health care systems are at risk of being seriously overwhelmed by the COVID-19 virus. Lord we pray that stronger and more wealthy countries like ours will come to their aid.

In a world climate of anxiety about trade and wealth, we pray for a new understanding of justice and fairness in sharing resources. We pray for non-political organisations who promote equality of opportunity to be active with national governments.

We pray Lord for our own government and its ministers of state, give them the wisdom and integrity they need to serve all of the people, may they make the right decisions in the coming weeks. We pray for our police, that in the coming days they will keep the peace with humility, fairness and professionalism, Lord, protect them from harm.

We pray for those in hospital suffering from the virus and for those in various stages of recovery. We pray comfort for those who are mourning the loss of loved ones. Lord for the scientists and all who are leading this countries response to the pandemic, give them the knowledge they need to fight this pandemic.

For those who we know, family and friends who are suffering at this time, through illness, grieving, loneliness, despair and anxiety, we name them now and ask that they be comforted.....

In You Father, we are one family on earth and in heaven. We thank you Lord for hearing our prayers, may we never tire of bringing the situations that are laid on our hearts to You in prayer. Accept these heartfelt prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Blessing: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit **Amen**

Notices:

Local Preacher Chris Slade provides an excellent reflection each week. If you are missing attending an evening service on a Sunday may I suggest engaging with this. You can watch it at <https://youtu.be/PeWQkrnYS84>.



For those who are connected with us on-line we are providing a series of discussions which will help us with our prayer lives, an area of faith that we all, at times, struggle with. Each session lasts for an hour and everyone who receives these Worship at Home sheets by email has received an invitation, I urge you to sign-up soon, even if you think you've got prayer "covered", perhaps you can help someone who hasn't.

On Saturday 27th June at 6pm I will be received into full Methodist Connexion. It is a recognition that following much testing my call to ministry is now firmly and with much celebration accepted by the Church. This was to have taken place in Telford but will now be a virtual occasion from my study at home. It will be livestreamed on the Methodist website <https://www.methodist.org.uk/> and follow the links to the 2020 Conference.

There is a lot of news coverage explaining that places of worship are now able to open for private prayer. I would like to reassure everyone that your stewards, property lead and I are reviewing this slight easing of restrictions. The actual Government advice is a minor amendment that allows, if the building is suitable, individuals or people from the same household to undertake "private prayer", nothing can be organised or led in any way that might constitute a public service. The Evangelical Alliance have produced an excellent article about what is meant by "private prayer" and it is well worth reading if you can.

<https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views>

Please continue to let me know how you are coping during this continued period of separation. I hope that our pastoral care is keeping you all in touch with one another. There are some excellent Christian resources being screened on television and aired on the radio.

At the beginning of this period of "lockdown" I provided information to you about morning and night prayers. Thank you to those who let me know that they were finding them very beneficial. For the benefit of those who may need help to sleep. "In peace I will lie down to sleep for you alone Lord make me dwell in safety. Abide with me Lord Jesus for the night is at hand and the day is past. As the night watch looks for the morning so do I look for you O Christ, come afresh with dawning of the day. Amen".

Until we meet again, God bless. Phillip
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phillip.dixon@methodist.org.uk YouTube links are external resources and are provided to help you engage with the songs. Singing the Faith resources are provided under license: CCLI 178182