

Church at home

East Leake Methodist Church 2021

Sit comfortably in a quiet place and prepare, start with a brief period of silence, turning your mind and spirit towards God. You may want to have a cross or candle in view as a focus.

Church Anniversary and Gift Day

StheF 28 **Jesus calls us here to meet him**

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

Opening prayer:

God of all power and truth and grace,
to you be all praise for ever.
You have given us eternal life in your Son,
you have called us to eternal glory in Christ,
help us to know his risen and ascended power
as we worship you this day.

Holy God,
your Son our Saviour prayed for his disciples
that they might be one,
as you and he are one.
We confess our divisions and dissensions
and the disunity we have created within the body of Christ.
We have not loved one another
as Christ has loved us.
We have not put our past wrongs behind us
or sought reconciliation and healing.
Forgive our sinful thoughts and actions;
help us to start anew;
and sanctify us in the truth of your Word,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

We share in The Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Reading 1 John 5: 9 - 13

StheF 457 Author of life eternal word

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KywV6mCIGaA>

No sung lyrics with the one above but the lyrics do appear on screen

Reading John 17: 6 - 19

Sermon

John 17: 6 – 19

Eternal life in the Son

1 John 5: 9 - 13

When do you feel most alive?

What is it that you do, or where do you go, that makes you feel, not only that life is worth living, but that life is fully all that it should be?

I know that we cannot not always feel like that, and no matter how wonderful life might seem at times, we still need to put the bins out and clean the bathroom and deal with the mundane, but I wonder, what does living mean for you?

Is it about:

- Being busy all the time.
- Enjoying your family as much as is possible.
- Indulging in your favourite pastime or hobby.
- Keeping in touch with friends
- Listening to music.
- Breathing in the wonders of creation.

When do you feel most alive?

The writer of the first letter of John wrote, **‘He who has the Son has life’** (1 John 5: 11) and you will remember that in John 10:10 Jesus said, “I have come that you might have life and have it to the full.”

Jesus’ prayer for his disciples in John 17, speaks about unity, joy, protection, and being sanctified, or made holy by God. It was not just a prayer for the twelve, it was for all who his Father had given him, ‘out of the world’. Elsewhere in the passage Jesus speaks of them remaining in the world while he was no longer to remain in the world, and that though they were in the world they were not of the world, but they were sent into the world by Jesus.

All that might seem a little confusing, but Jesus is trying to draw a distinction, not between heaven and earth, but between the kingdom of God and the exploitative nature of the world we live in, which is not the way of the kingdom.

The ‘world’, which Jesus refers to, is the world that does not care for the poor; the world that uses the vulnerable for their own means; the world that exploits the environment for short term gain; the world that is content to over fish the seas and drive species to extinction, while at the same time polluting them to the detriment of the species we cannot eat. There is one earth, but there are different worlds with in it – the kingdom of God is in harmony with all of creation and Jesus prays that his disciples might truly know themselves to be part of the kingdom, rejecting the evil that the world easily conforms to.

Jesus prays for protection

The fullness of life that Jesus longed for his disciples and for us to have, is a life that is safe, joyful and is at one with God, so he prays for protection for them. I consider myself to have been truly blessed in my life, to have had the family I have and to have lived in the various places that I have. I don’t think I have ever felt unsafe. I have friends who were mission partners in El Salvador for a number of years, where they were working with children in danger of being caught up in gangs and gun violence, that would have been too far outside of my comfort zone.

But I don’t think Jesus had that kind of protection in mind when he prayed for his disciples, he is more likely to have prayed that they were kept safe from the temptation to go along with the ways of the world. The temptation to construct the newly emerging church in the likeness of the corrupt temple system, when it should be reflecting God’s kingdom of equality, inclusion and love.

Jesus prays for Joy

Life in the kingdom is intended to bring liberation, which is why we call it good news for the poor. It is not necessarily good news for the world which is in opposition to the kingdom, for as Mary sang in the Magnificat, “He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty.” For us to have joy, we need contentment, we need to be satisfied. In Jesus’ prayer he prayed that his disciple should have the full measure of ‘his joy’ within them.

Joy is so much more than a moments happiness. Our joy in a relationship comes from knowing that we are loved by someone, doesn’t it? Deep seated joy comes from being confident in the love that God has for us. When we know that love, we can be confident in the promise that he will never leave us, or forsake us, and that we have a place in the kingdom as children of God.

Jesus prays for sanctification

Jesus then prayed for them to be sanctified, set a part for holy use, or to be made holy. In a sense it was to give them a special purpose, they were to continue the work he had begun; the 12 and others.

We know at one time Jesus sent out 72 disciples in pairs to preach and heal, in this prayer he may have just prayed for the 12, but they in turn would commission others to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick.

They would sanctify and set apart others for the work of the kingdom, but not limiting the numbers to just those in leadership. When the Spirit came there was 'power from on high' transforming all believers, made holy by the anointing of the Spirit.

Reflection

We are not of this world, but we live in it. We should not conform to the evil way of the world that seeks to exploit and control those weaker than ourselves, we should not seek to always have our own way, that is not how life is in the kingdom. The eternal life that we are given is only possible through the Son, Jesus, those who have the Son have life. Those who do not have the Son, do not have life. Those who do not live according to the teaching of the Son, do not have the Son, or life.

The list of things I started with:

- Being busy all the time.
- Enjoying your family as much as is possible.
- Indulging in your favourite pastime or hobby.
- Keeping in touch with friends.
- Listening to music.
- Breathing in the wonders of creation.

Or whatever it is that makes you feel alive are important and God given, if they affirm the life that you have. In them we should recognize the presence of God when they reflect the kingdom of equality, inclusion and love.

Amen.

StheF 518 Father hear the prayer we offer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1-9wam-2Rk>

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession:

God of the past, present and future,
We praise and thank you for the joy of this anniversary day,
as we celebrate the life and witness of our church through the years.

L: Glory to Christ in your church.

R: Today and for evermore!

God of the past,
we thank you for the founding fathers and mothers
who responded to your call to establish our church.
We thank you for the all its faithful people
who have worked and prayed
and given themselves, out of love for you,
to those both within and outside these walls.

L: Glory to Christ in your church.

R: Today and for evermore!

God of the present,
we thank you for your unfailing love
that encourages, inspires and enables us
to continue sharing the good news of Christ
with one another and with our neighbours.
We pray for those of our church and community
who are ill, anxious or sorrowful, for those on our hearts today ...
we ask that our hearts may be open to your presence
and our ears may be tuned to your call.

L: Glory to Christ in your church.

R: Today and for evermore!

God of the future,
we do not know what lies ahead,
but we hear you challenge us
to walk with you and with one another,
without fear, into the unknown future.
Forgive us our past mistakes and failings,
and clear our vision to see the way ahead.

L: Glory to Christ in your church.

R: Today and for evermore!

Amen.

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

Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,
wherever He may send you.

May He guide you through the wilderness,
protect you through the storm.

May He bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders He has shown you.

May He bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.