

Traditional Home service Sunday 21st Nov

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

**O King enthroned on high,
filling the earth with your glory:
holy is your name, Lord God almighty.
In our sinfulness we cry to you
to take our guilt away, and to cleanse
our lips to speak your word,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

READINGS - Daniel 7.9-10,13,14
Revelation 1.4b-8
John 18.33-37

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Spend some time praying for our nation,
our community and our families.*

THE 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.

HYMN 2 (*Turn your eyes upon Jesus*)

CONCLUSION

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, by the power which is at work among us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

1 Rejoice, the Lord is King:
Your Lord and King adore!
Rejoice, give thanks and sing,
And triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

2 Jesus, the Saviour, reigns,
The God of truth and love;
When He has purged our stains,
He took his seat above;
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

3 His kingdom cannot fail,
He rules o'er earth and heav'n;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Jesus giv'n:
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

4 Rejoice in glorious hope!
Our Lord and judge shall come
And take His servants up
To their eternal home:
Lift up your heart,
Lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!

O soul are you weary and troubled
No light in the darkness you see
There's light for a look at the Saviour
And life more abundant and free

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow
strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace

His word shall not fail you he promised
Believe him and all will be well
Then go to a world that is dying
His perfect salvation to tell

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Sermon - Adrian Morton

3 reasons why being baptised is life changing...

Revelation 1:5b-6 *"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever!"*

When people were baptised in the early church it was a life changing experience.

It marked the most significant change in someone's life.

And of course, it should be the same today. The significance of baptism hasn't changed.

This morning I want to give 3 reasons why being baptised is life changing.

And they all come from the Revelation reading.

And they come from these verses:

"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father"

So the **first** reason is that we come to be baptised knowing *"him who loves us."*

Jesus loves us.
The Father loves us.

The creator of the universe.
The One who is behind life... loves us!

We often describe Christianity as an adventure.
And it is.

The essence of the adventure is continuously discovering the extent of God's love for us.

Because I don't think we understand it well.

Our understanding of love normally comes from our upbringing.
Or from our experience of those around us.
Or from our own ability to love others.

<I think the Lord uses the Hardware bridge crossing to teach me about love and patience...

Our experience of being loved and loving others can be hit and miss...

And its tempting to project what we think we know about love back onto God.

Yet He is the perfect Father.
Jesus is the perfect brother and friend.
The Spirit is the perfect comforter and counsellor.

God is supremely patient, kind, not envious, not boastful or proud.
God honours others, he's not easily angered and keeps no record of wrong.
God rejoices with truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always persevere with us.
He never fails us.

And living with the knowledge of that love in our lives is life changing.

And as we say on Alpha, its not just about having a head knowledge of His love.

That's important, that we know about the cross, where His love is supremely displayed.

But also we experience the reality of His love by the Spirit that he has poured into our hearts.

That's why we have the Holy Spirit day. on Alpha
That's why I hope this church encourages people to be open to the work of the Spirit.

Because he gives us an experience of the reality of Gods love.

And that is life changing.

The **second** reason why being baptised is life changing is that he *has freed us from our sins by his blood...*

Or the word is *'he has washed us from our sins'*, which of course is particularly relevant when we are baptising...

One of the things I love about Jesus is the way he dealt with those who had lifestyles that you wouldn't normally associate with being religious.

Jesus just loved people like that and accepted them.

I'm sure all of us here can look back on our lives with certain regrets over bad decisions made.

Poor choices...
Or just acting selfishly, maliciously, wrongly...

All of these things not only mar our own humanity, but all these things cut us off from God...

They prevent us from having a spirit relationship with God...

And I think many people carry so much guilt, shame and regret in their lives.

Jesus on the cross has dealt with that.

And baptism of course symbolises that.
That our sin is washed away.

We have complete forgiveness.

2 Corinthians 5 says it even more profoundly...

"if anyone is in Christ. he or she is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

When we come to Christ, we receive His spirit and we become a different person.

Things which once we had regarded as being important, are now seen to have little value at all.

Where once we maybe were overly concerned with how others saw us, our standing before 'man' if you like.

We become more concerned with our standing before God.

What does He think of me...?

We are free to have relationship with God..

To get to know Him...

There's a great story that we often use on the Alpha course...

<Jackie Pullinger, a famous Christian missionary used to run a place in Hong Kong — working particularly with heroin addicts and with prostitutes. And she told a story once about a 72-year-old woman called Alfreda. And Alfreda had been a heroin addict for 60 years, and she'd been a prostitute for 60 years, or involved in the prostitution business for 60 years.

But she was too old, obviously, to work, and she used to sit outside a brothel and just poke the sewers in this very run-down area with a stick to keep them moving freely. And she'd inject her back three times a day with heroin, because her legs and her arms, they'd been overused. She had no identity card, and as far as the Hong Kong government was concerned she didn't even exist.

But after a number of years of Jackie being there she gave her life to Christ, and she received forgiveness, and she began to change. And she went to live in one of Jackie's houses. And to begin with she was quite difficult, but then God started to heal her, and she saw that there were people who were worse off than her, and she began to try and help them. And she changed.

And then she met a man called Little Wa, who was aged 75, and they got married.

And Jackie Pullinger described her wedding as 'the wedding of the decade': because this former prostitute, heroin addict, walked down the aisle, in white, cleansed, forgiven, transformed by the love of Jesus Christ.>

Why could she do that?

She could do that because she is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

he has freed us from our sins by his blood...

And that is life changing...

The **third** reason why being baptised is life changing is this:

he has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father”

We have a new purpose in life...
Which is to serve the purposes of God...

D.H. Lawrence said this: *‘If only we could have two lives—the first one in which to make our mistakes, and the second one in which to profit from those mistakes.’*

But there are no dress rehearsals for life—we’re on stage straight away.

There is no better purpose in life that to serve the purposes of God.
And it is something we learn to do.

We learn to live by His values.
We learn to be directed by His Spirit.

When we are baptised we become part of God’s regiment to use an army illustration.

Or as again as 2 Corinthians 5 says:

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors.”

So we represent Christ where ever we go.
In what ever we do...

What does that look like in practice?

Paul says in Romans, *“do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world.”*

There is so much pressure around us to conform.
Yet we are called to be distinctive.

To maintain our Christian identity.

I don’t know whether its cultural thing but it seems to me that there is so much moaning or grumbling, or criticising of speaking negatively about people.

And it’s seldom done to a persons face.

Its one of the bug bears I have about things like Facebook.. it allows people to moan, grumble, criticise from afar...

It takes courage not to conform.

It takes courage not to succumb to peer pressure...

Are we going to be a Thermostat or a Thermometer?

A Thermometer simply measures the temperature of a room.
It reflects what the temperature is.

A Thermostat sets the temperature of a room.
It changes things...

An ambassador of Christ changes things...

We have the Spirit of Jesus living inside of us.

We have the full resources of heaven to bring the kingdom of heaven to bear.

We can pray for healing.
We can dispense hope, comfort, peace, generosity...

Are we going to tell others where our Hope in life is now found.

One thing I’ve noticed in my years of being a vicar is this...

Those who come to God, even accept Christ into their lives but do so with the belief, or the intention that God is now simply going to help their life go better...

So they come to God with that primary motivation, that God will now help their life go better.

Or in other words, they are wanting God to serve them...

They tend to fall away after not too long..
It never really grabs them...

Yet those who come to God, accept Christ into there lives and surrender their life to Him and to His purposes..

In other words they resolve to learn to serve Him in the best way they can...

It is these people who tend to be seized by the great affection to quote John Wesley I believe.

They seem to experience the reality of a relationship with God more readily..

And it's not that our heavenly Father doesn't want us to live life to the full.

Of course He does...

It's just that we need it the right way round. His way round.

And that is we come to serve Him and His purposes...

3 reasons why being baptised is life changing...

- i. knowing *"him who loves us."*
- ii. he *has freed us from our sins by his blood...*
- iii. he *has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father"*

Amen.