

Sermon Notes

14th March 2021

10.00am



Worship led by Rev Dr Andre Groenewald
Music from Harry Thomson

Welcome & Announcements

Good morning and welcome to our service. Please look at our website and Facebook page to stay up to date with all the news and events happening in our congregation.

Worshipping God Together

Call to worship (Psalm 127)

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.

I greet you in the Name of God the Father, the SON and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Hymn All over the world the Spirit is moving

All over the world the Spirit is moving,
all over the world as the prophet said it would be;
All over the world there's a mighty revelation
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

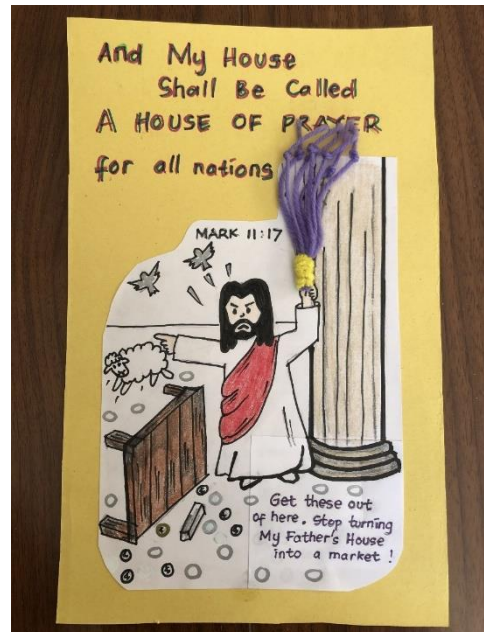
Deep down in my heart the Spirit is moving,
Deep down in my heart as the prophet said it would be;
Deep down in my heart there's a mighty revelation
Of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Anon.

Opening prayer and Lord's prayer

Father God, we adore you for your patience with your wayward children; for bearing with us when our understanding is skewed and our behaviour wrong.

Jesus, we adore you for being with us always, your humanity entwined with ours; for showing us the way in your life and through the Word.



Holy Spirit, we adore you for working through us despite our failings; for living in us and enabling us with a strength greater than our own.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are wisdom in our world; you flow through creation and consciousness.

Our attempts to house you in bricks and mortar are foolish. Come to us as we gather here within this church made to honour you, and lift the stones from our hearts, so that we may be your Church in word and in deed.

We ask this in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, the glory for ever. Amen.

Reflecting on God's Word

Reading: Mark 11:15-17

¹⁵ On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, ¹⁶ and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. ¹⁷ And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"

Reading John 2:13-22

Jesus clears the temple courts

¹³ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. ¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, 'Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!' ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'

¹⁸ The Jews then responded to him, 'What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?'

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.'

²⁰ They replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?' ²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Children's address

Good morning boys and girls

This morning we will think of the definition of "church". When you hear the word Church what do you think of? Discuss your answer with your parents and compare notes of what they think of "church".

Usually we think of church as a building and sometimes we will look for "signs" around the church to see what "that" church is like. Or we will look at the people who are going into a church or listen to what they say when they exit the building...

The bottom line is that you and I are the church together.

If there is one thing, I know about you – it is most definitely that you all like screens.... To watch something on a screen is so much better than a boring talk....

So this morning I want to do that. I am going to stop talking now and let you watch a video clip of how some "churches" advertise what they are doing

Hymn 198 Let us build a house where love can dwell

Let us build a house where love can dwell, and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive;
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions: *all are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
Where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus: *all are welcome.....*

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat:
A banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us: *all are welcome.....*

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone
To heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;
Let us bring an end to fear and danger: *all are welcome.....*

Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
And loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter: *all are welcome.....*

Sermon

Jesus goes to Jerusalem for the Passover, and causes uproar when he attacks the lawful business going on in the Temple.

In Marks Gospel which we read, this happened during Jesus' final week on earth. In Johns Gospel it happens at the beginning of his narrative with an added interpretation or comments. In Johns Gospel Jesus' words and actions suggest that, through his cross, he will replace the Temple.

It is Passover, and the Temple is busy with people selling the animals required for sacrifices, and changing ordinary everyday coinage into the currency needed to buy anything in the Temple. Nothing wrong with any of that. But Jesus makes a whip, turns over the tables and drives the animals out of the precincts. He objects to the crass commercialism (v.16), and his disciples see this as evidence of a zeal for the house of God. Naturally, the Temple authorities take umbrage and want an explanation. But Jesus cryptically says that if they were to 'destroy this temple' (v.19), he will raise it in three days. His interrogators miss his point – but then his point is obscure. Only John has to tell us what he was talking about!

But perhaps Jesus' answer explains why this episode begins John's story: Jesus has come to die, and his death has something to do with what happens in this place. Furthermore, after three days he will rise again. John notes that his disciples remembered this incident after the resurrection. In this story, we see the passion of Jesus – his anger leading to dramatic and controversial action – and we get a foretaste of his Passion, the offering of his life for the sins of the world, replacing the temple in an once-and-for-all act of redemption. This is appropriately prefigured during the feast of Passover, when Jews are remembering the redemption of their ancestors from slavery in Egypt.

Jesus wanted to make the point in both accounts: What does the temple mean to people?

I guess we can translate Jesus' WORDS into our current context as saying: what do people see/hear/feel when they stand in front of our church?

What do people think when they pass the church building?

Do they read the notice board....do they reflect with sadness or joy that the DOORS are shut and have been shut for a lengthy amount of time?

What do they see when they look at the building?

Do they think of how beautiful it is - surrounded by beautiful gardens? Do they think of God and what He has done for us in and through Jesus Christ?

What do they hear when we as believers do our daily business in our community? Do they hear how we pray for one another? Do they hear how we speak of God and our

Saviour Jesus? Do they hear how we gossip and belittle or condemn each other whilst proclaiming God's love for all?

How do our younger members feel/think about the "church"? Is it indeed an institution with an expired "sell by date"?

Is our church still the gathering of believers praying together for one another? Is our church still a gathering of believers who talk with joy about our Lord and Saviour?

Or has our church become something else

If you are listening to this sermon, I pray that God's Holy Spirit will stir in you heart to honestly answer these questions.

As believers of God, we have a big responsibility as we are the church together. The church is not a social club but a place where all are welcome, where there are no walls separating people

So let us do what the words in the HYMN suggests:

Let us build a house where love can dwell, and all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive;
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
Where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus

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And loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter: all are welcome.....

May God help us to be His true representatives as we embody His presence in our current context through our words, deeds and thoughts. Amen

Prayer of thanksgiving

Let us pray:

In the name of the one who came to cleanse the Temple,
we pray for the institutions by which we organise our society:
for churches and chapels and house groups; for educational establishments;
for places of healing, law and order, commerce and recreation.
May they serve the greater good, and adapt to the changing needs of the time.
In the name of the one who came to redeem the world,
we pray for those institutions by which we regulate global relations:
for governments and rulers, democracies, monarchies and dictatorships;
for bodies that regulate trade, diplomacy and the balance of peace;
for environmental, development and welfare organisations.
May they serve the greater good, and adapt to the changing needs of the time.
In the name of the one who came to save us from ourselves,
we pray for those institutions we have in our lives:
for our friends, families and colleagues; for our local communities;
for the church communities to which we belong.
May they serve the greater good, and adapt to the changing needs of the time.
Amen.

Hymn 739 The church's one foundation

The Church's one foundation, is Jesus Christ her Lord:
She is his new creation by water and the word;
From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.
Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation one Lord, one faith, one birth:
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.
'Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation of peace for evermore,
Till with the vision glorious Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest.
Yet she on earth hath union with God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.

Samuel John Stone, 1839-1900

Receive the blessing of God and go in peace:

Jesus, you spoke words that changed attitudes.

May our words and thoughts be always acceptable to you,

may our deeds and actions be always worthy of you,

and may our lives show forth your love in the world.

**And the blessing of God Almighty Father Son and Holy Spirit will be with you, now
and forever more Amen**