

## TIMC Sunday Online, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020

### Welcome

Hello and welcome to our online service for Sunday, 27<sup>th</sup> of September. If it's your first time joining with us, then a very special welcome to you.

This week we received the bad news that lockdown restrictions are going to continue for some months to come, and that's going to affect us as a church as well as individuals and families, but as Paul said, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair" (2 Corinthians 4 verse 8). And as Christians we have good reason not to be crushed and not to despair, because as Paul said in another verse of that same chapter, "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.'

With the light of God shining in our hearts, let's praise Him in song, in prayer, and in our lives day to day, and have courage, however long this situation goes on for.

So let's pick up the first two of those right now, as I lead us in a brief prayer and then we'll sing "This is amazing grace".

Father God, we meet together in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Your Son. Please come and fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Grant us Your peace and Your joy, and fill our hearts with Your love. We look to You as our Rock and our Refuge. We place our trust in You for now and for eternity. And we know that nothing and no one can pluck us from Your powerful hand.

Accept our praise, hear our prayers and be glorified in our virtual gathering right now. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Song: This is amazing grace**

**Reading: Hebrews 9 v 11-28 NIV**

### Message

In July, Stuart and Hako asked me if I would bring a message and straight away the Lord gave me part of an old hymn to bring to you today. The hymn is by Isaac Watts, who penned the verses of this hymn published in 1707, but it was Ralph E. Hudson who added the chorus that we will be thinking about, and the words of that chorus are:

**At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light and the burden of my heart rolled away.**

**It was there by faith I received my sight and now I am happy all the day.**

Let's look through these words together.

## **At the cross, at the cross.**

Why is this repeated phrase, 'at the cross' so special? Why do we still sing about this event that happened over 2,000 years ago? Why do buildings around the world have this shape within their structure, why do we have the shape of the cross displayed for people to see both outside and inside places of worship?

You might have the shape of the cross in your home to look at, wear or to hold. It would be right to consider why do people want to remember such a barbaric act and to sing about it in times of worship.

All these questions are answered in this: It's because of **who** was on that cross! Let's consider today, who was on that cross and why He was there.

Today is Yom Kippur, the holiest of days for the Jewish community across the world. Yom Kippur translated into English, Yom – meaning 'day' and Kippur – 'to atone'. Breaking the word 'atone' down we get **at – one** but who do we need to be at one with?

The Bible tells us we need to be 'at one' – atoned with God. Throughout the Bible we read that God is a God of love, but also a God of justice. He loves us and desperately wants to have fellowship with us, but to do that we need to be pure and clean of all sin. Sins are all the ungodly thoughts, acts and deeds that we have done in our lives, and God who is pure and holy cannot look upon it.

God laid out the map right from the very beginning. He set out the plan to allow the Israelites to be atoned to Him (recorded in the Old Testament book of Leviticus), with steps for how the High Priest needed to be cleansed, the sacrifices of the animal's life-blood being shed and the scapegoat for the sins of the people being released into the wilderness.

More scripture references are set out for us through the Bible and they can be found throughout the Old Testament in Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, Hosea 13, and also in the New Testament by John the Baptist saying , 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world', these scriptures are like stepping stones leading us to see God's plan that led to Jesus dying for us, his act of love so that we could be with Him forever.

Jesus led his life on this earth without sin. He knew the plan was for Him to go to the cross and that all of mankind's sin would be laid on Him on that day. Jesus had never known sin, had never known what it would be like to be separated from his Father, yet He took it all so that He could once and for all be that sacrifice in atoning for our sins. He was punished, so that we can go free!

Jesus' life-blood was shed on that cross and there is power in the blood of Christ. That power in his blood cleanses us from sin. As a result of the shed blood of Christ, we have access to God in worship and prayer, and we are able to lead a life free from sin and death.

To go back to the questions that I posed at the beginning, this is why people down the ages have buildings with a cross displayed as the focal point for all to see, why we sing about the cross and what it means to us today.

Going back to the chorus, *at the cross, at the cross*, maybe that's why we sing this phrase twice, it's to bring to our attention, to bring into focus the cross on which Jesus died, where He shed His blood for our sins once and for all and for everyone.

The chorus moves onto the line *Where I first saw the light*.

I'd been brought up to go to church every week, I attended Sunday School which was separate to the church service and I went along to Evensong on Sunday evenings. I was part of the GFS, Girls' Friendly Society, for many years and I even gained 100%, winning a group competition, for my prayer book, which if you can see here had Jesus portrayed as the Light of the World.

Despite all of that time spent at church, it wasn't until I heard that I needed to say sorry for all the wrong things in my life and accept Jesus into my life that I finally 'saw the light'. There was a pounding in my heart as I listened to those words that Jesus had died for me so that I could live a new life and live forever with Him.

1 Peter 2 v 9 says we are called '*out of darkness into his marvellous light*'.

The next part of the line says *And the burden of my heart rolled away...*

When a person first becomes a Christian they usually have the sense that a great weight has been lifted from them and they feel a new sense of freedom that they have never experienced before. This is because Jesus has made us a new creation, the old way of life has gone and the new way of life with Jesus has begun. A new life journey with Jesus starts.

Let's go back to the book of Leviticus and the plan that God gave to His people, the Israelites. Within the law set out in Leviticus 16 and 17, on this very day of Yom Kippur, the appointed High Priest would make his preparation of a bull sacrificed for himself and his household, as he was to step into the Holy of Holies, in the presence of the Lord. Two goats would be chosen, they would look similar in every way and lots (like dice) would be taken as to which goat would be sacrificed and which one would be the scapegoat. One would be sacrificed with its life-blood being shed over the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant. This atoned for the unintentional sins that the people of Israel had committed. The High Priest would then place his hands on the head of the other goat and he would pray that all of the sins of people for that year would go as the goat was led out into the wilderness, taking with it all the sins that had been laid on it. This goat was the scapegoat, the one that showed to all the people that their sins had been forgiven and taken away.

We read in the New Testament, in Hebrews, that Jesus, on the cross, was the ultimate sacrifice, shedding His life-blood for all of our sins, both intentional and unintentional, and that He took away our sins once and for all time. In Jesus, all of our sins are taken away and forgotten by Him.

Our sins, and the guilt of them, can feel like a burden, a great weight, that some people say they didn't realise they were carrying. At the cross we can lay them all down and there the burden can be rolled away. Jesus has borne them all.

The chorus goes on to say, *It was there by faith I received my sight*

Hebrews 11 v. 6 says, *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

By taking a step of faith, we receive Jesus into our lives, because of what Jesus did for us on the cross. You and I can have a personal relationship with God. There is no way we can have this relationship through our own good works and hope that God will weigh up whether we have lived a good life for most of the time during our time on earth. God's plan has been made clear and that is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Walking with God every day is trusting Him to be with us throughout our lives. Living our lives with Jesus as our Lord and Saviour means that we know, deep down, when we have turned our back on God and we know when we are rebelling against his will instead of doing what God wants us to do. The Holy Spirit within us shows us what is right and what is wrong. When we do step out of God's best for us, it is important that we ask God to forgive us, as Jesus taught us in His prayer, 'forgive us this day our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us'. But we come to Him knowing that our sins are forgiven and we come with assurance in the knowledge that Jesus has died for our sins both now and for evermore.

The last line of the chorus says *And now I am happy all the day*

This is an interesting line – how do you feel about this line today? Is it true for you today? Do you feel happy everyday – all the time? Does God promise that life with Him will be an easy life and that we will be happy every day?

Yes, living as a Christian does mean enjoying and experiencing life in a totally new way. Before we ask Jesus into our lives we are spiritually dead, but as we ask Him into our lives we open up an exciting new way of living that is fresh and new. He gives us a new quality of life which is open to God and lasts for ever. He brings to us love, hope and peace, along with power and patience to cope with difficulties.

Sometimes our faith and trust lie in material things we can see and possess, but over these past few months our lives have certainly been shaken and our world looks very different to how it was 9 months ago, and will probably never look the same again. Where does our happiness lie in times like these?

How would you write this line? Would it go like this ... 'And now I am contented all the day'? 'And now I am satisfied all the day'? Or even, 'And now I get through the day'?!

I think I would write this line, 'And now I know I'm loved every day' ... I know it doesn't scan properly, but deep down I know that I am loved with an everlasting love and have been forgiven with the amazing grace through Christ Jesus.

Today, is God calling you, like He called me many years ago? Do you feel it within your very being? It might be a quiet whisper or it might be that your heart is thumping within your chest. God calls His own and today is the day of salvation for you. God wants you to be 'at one' with Him, because He loves you and Jesus has died for you. His plan of salvation is simple, yet life-changing.

For those of you who have made that step of faith but yet are being tested by life, today God is calling to you to come back to Jesus to lay the weight that you're needlessly carrying at the foot of the cross. There is power in the shed life-blood of Christ.

**Today we can enter boldly into the holiest of holies...and live!**

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full

assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 10:19-22)

No matter what we have done or will do, we can ask God to forgive us and we can, with confidence, come before the Lord with a pure heart and be with him forever.

Amen.

Please allow me to pray with you.

If today you are feeling God's call for salvation, please say this prayer with me.

Dear God,

I know I'm a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness.

I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe that He died for my sin and that You raised Him to life.

I want to trust Him as my saviour and follow Him as Lord, from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do Your will.

I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

And for those of you who know the Lord, please let me pray with you.

Dear Lord Jesus,

Thank You for dying for me on the cross, thank You that I know You as my Lord and my saviour.

Lord, help me to walk closer with You each day. Help me to shine Your light to others in this needy world. Help me to share Your Good News of Your unfailing love and Your amazing grace.

Amen .

Song: [My Lord, what love is this?](#)

### Communion

As Deborah shared, God has made a way for our sins to be atoned for and for us to be reconciled to Him, at the cross. Let's share together in remembering the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on the cross, through bread and the cup. But first, let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we confess our need of Your salvation. We come to you now trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer. We come in faith, sharing together as one body, to eat bread and drink the cup, to remember the Lord Jesus and to proclaim His death. Please bless us and strengthen our faith. Amen.

The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.'

Let's give thanks and take bread together in remembrance of the Lord Jesus.

Father God, thank You for Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Please bless this bread to us now, as we remember Him and although we are physically separated and restricted in our meeting together, we remember that we are one body, Your people, the Church of Christ, along with all believers around the world and through the ages. Amen.

In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Father God, we remember the Lord Jesus and we proclaim His death, the once for all sacrifice that bought our freedom. We thank You for bringing us back to yourself and giving us life forever through Jesus. Bless this cup to us, Lord. Amen.

### Prayers

Now, we all have needs and we're all aware of others who have needs. This loving God whom we worship is concerned for you and for those people, places and situations that are on your heart. Take a moment now to bring them to God, believing in faith that He hears and trusting Him to do what is right and good, and knowing that one day He will bring all things under His control ...

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers.

If you want to know more about what Jesus' death on the cross means for you, then please use the **Get in touch** section lower down this web page.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.

Whilst meeting virtually has its down sides, one of the advantages is that you can sing as loudly as you want – always being conscious of your neighbours, of course! So before we go, fill your lungs if you can, and let rip to your heart's content as we sing about the Lord Jesus Christ who has saved us and bought us back for Himself – My Saviour, Redeemer!

**Song: My Saviour, Redeemer**