



The Free North Church Inverness

a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland

A GUIDE TO SUNDAY WORSHIP

11 am - Sunday 5th April 2020

Service conducted by the minister, Rev Angus MacRae.

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Hello friends. This is a guide to how we worshipped God on Sunday 5th April. (If you have access to the internet you can hear the sermon at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk_22x6exjs or watch the whole service at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Rq5JRZDzFc&t=1100s>).

Call to Worship from Psalm 96

Minister: Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!

ALL: Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come into his courts!

Minister: Worship the Lord in the splendour of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

ALL: Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!" Amen.

Psalm 113 (Sing Psalms)

O praise, you servants of the LORD;
Sing praises to his holy name.
O blessed be the name of God;
His praise for evermore proclaim.
From east to west the praise of God
Each day is to be spread abroad.

The LORD is high above the earth,
His glory far above the sky.
Who else is like the LORD our God,
The one who sits enthroned on high?

He is the one who stoops down low
To look on heav'n and earth below.

He raises outcasts from the dust
And from the ash-heap lifts the poor,
Exalting them to dignity,
With noblemen to sit secure.
The childless woman he'll reward
With home and children.
Praise the LORD!

Prayer and Talk to Children about their Rainbow Art and God's Rainbow

Song of the Month: Learning a verse from "Christ our hope in life & death."

What is our hope in life and death?
Christ alone, Christ alone.
What is our only confidence?
That our souls to Him belong.

Who holds our days within His hand?
What comes, apart from His command?
And what will keep us to the end?
The love of Christ, in which we stand.

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-14 (read by Victoria Cameron-Mackintosh)

Sermon Summary - John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John, the author of the fourth gospel, explains his purpose for writing in John 20:30-31. Every word is set down to help us BELIEVE in Jesus as Messiah and find new LIFE through our trust in his Name. Do not miss the opportunity to find God and place your trust in Jesus as we study the beginning of John's Gospel during this public health crisis. The way books begin is important and sets the tone for all that follows. Think of examples from fiction like the unnerving first line of George Orwell's disturbing novel, *1984*. "*It was a bright, cold day in April and the clocks were striking 13.*" The gospel of John makes a point of starting with a clear echo of Genesis 1:1 ("*In the beginning God created*") when he writes, "*in the beginning was the Word.*" We can learn several lessons from how this gospel begins.

1). THE GOD WHO EXISTS IS NOT ALONE. NEVER!

Our God is Trinity, one God in a family of three person, the God who is three-in-one and one-in-three. This is hinted at in the language of creation from Genesis (as God speaks, deliberates and sends his Spirit over the unformed creation). Our world and all creation were formed by a God capable of love and relationships. By his nature, god is never alone. In his grace, we need never be alone. Because of sin and death our world has suffered a catastrophe and has been plunged into chaos and darkness. We now live in a fallen planet, in a world of envy, violence and fear. It sees as if DEATH reigns as deep darkness mocks the light. But as we open up this magnificent Gospel of John, we find that the god who is never alone recreates, restores and saves. The focus is on THE WORD WHO WAS WITH GOD. He is not immediately named, but we know his name as JESUS MESSIAH, JESUS THE CHRIST. He is the mighty WORD of God. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

2). THE GOD WHO EXISTS IS NOT POWERLESS. NEVER!

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. There is no room for dualism or a power to rival the absolute authority of God. All life and existence depend on God completely. Even in a crisis, we are comforted by thinking about the kingly authority and power of God. All life, physical life and spiritual life, finds its source and ongoing strength from the life-giving Christ. *In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.*

3). THE GOD WHO EXISTS IS NOT SILENT. NEVER!

The speaking God is the God of revelation. The Second Person of the Trinity is so bound up with God's communication to us that we are taught to know Him as THE WORD. He spoke in the beginning, and all creation was formed. As we listen to Christ the Word, we don't need to be alone, or powerless, or uncertain about what to believe and what to trust. Let him speak into your life. As you listen to his voice his speech will end our global, cosmic isolation. Take off the gloves of isolation. Make a beginning by knowing God through his living Word. A man once went for an interview in a large office building. He was a bit arrogant and full of his own importance as he stepped into the lift along with a smartly dressed young woman. Reaching the correct floor for the interview, as he stepped out of the lift, he asked the woman for a cup of coffee, assuming she was a secretary. She brought him his coffee as he waited for the interview to start. 30 minutes later he

realised he had made a serious misjudgement, for the young woman sat opposite him leading the interview panel. She was in charge of that company. He had not noticed her or recognised her importance. As we listen to news bulletins and public health messages, it can be easy to miss the more important messages that our Creator wants us to hear. In this public health crisis, are you looking for God? For His hope, peace, and wisdom? The speaking God wants to be found! Genesis 1 onwards explains to humanity why the world is the way we experience it, with such a strange mixture of beauty and ugliness, of the happy and the tragic. John 1 onwards lifts up Jesus Christ, The Word, as the source of NEW LIFE. Don't miss or look past the WORD of God! That is where you will find what you need in this Crisis, and for every day of your life.

The words of an old hymn are attributed to the 13th century Bishop Richard of Chichester, a man who chose to live not in a Palace but in relative poverty. *Day by day, dear Lord, of thee three things I pray: to see thee more clearly, to love thee more dearly, to follow thee more nearly, day by day.* As you respond to John 1:1-5, could this hymn become your prayer for your life? John was an evangelist. Part of his good news is a prayer from the very lips of Jesus Christ, *Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent* (John 17:3).

In the Covid-19 epidemic, we and all the people in our nation and our City of Inverness desperately need to know God and His Son Jesus. It is in knowing God that we know eternal life. Calm your fears with His Word. Feed your heart from His written word which brings you to the Living Word. Are you still going out to work? Or are you now forced to isolate yourself for your own health and protection? Whatever the next days, weeks and months hold, get to know the Word. God is speaking! He wants you to see, hear, love and follow His Son, the Word made flesh.

Closing Song: To God be the Glory

To God be the glory! Great things he has done;
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord! Let the earth
hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord! Let the
people rejoice!
O Come to the Father through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory; Great things He has
done.

O perfect redemption, The purchase of blood!
To every believer the promise of God:
The vilest offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord! Let the earth
hear His voice!

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord! Let the
people rejoice!
O Come to the Father through Jesus the Son.
And give Him the glory; great things He has
done.

Great things He has taught us, great things He
has done,
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the
Son:
But purer and higher and greater will be
our joy and our wonder, when Jesus we see!

Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord! Let the earth
hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord! Let the
people rejoice!
O Come to the Father through Jesus the Son.
And give Him the glory; Great things He has
done.

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