

## **ORDER OF SERVICE**

### **ST COLUMBAS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**17 May 2020 - Sunday**

**Message by: Tshinan̄e Mutshatshi**

I would like to welcome everyone and pray that our Lord talks to us through the reading of his word and the sharing of the sermon.

#### **Call to Worship – Psalms 66:8-20**

“Let the whole world bless our God and loudly sing his praises. Our lives are in his hands, and he keeps our feet from stumbling. You have tested us, O God; you have purified us like silver. You captured us in your net and laid the burden of slavery on our backs. Then you put a leader over us. We went through fire and flood, but you brought us to a place of great abundance. Now I come to your Temple with burnt offerings to fulfil the vows I made to you— yes, the sacred vows that I made when I was in deep trouble. That is why I am sacrificing burnt offerings to you— the best of my rams as a pleasing aroma, and a sacrifice of bulls and male goats. Interlude Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he did for me. For I cried out to him for help, praising him as I spoke. If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer. Praise God, who did not ignore my prayer or withdraw his unfailing love from me.”

#### **Prayer of Adoration and Confession**

Father almighty, the creator of heaven and earth, the provider of life. You are the King of kings. We are called human beings because you have blessed us with life. We are so privileged to be called your children. We are accepted and forgiven and embraced. You are almighty, above and beyond everything. We are astounded by your compassion and love. You are holy, beautiful and full of love.

Oh God, we are sorry for being carried away with our lives that we forget to see your goodness. We are caught in conflicts, hatred, and frustration. We desire more of wrong things, blinded by what the world offers. We get fulfilled by what we eat, what we drink and entertainments. Yet, fail to indulge in your love and truth.

We therefore, ask for your forgiveness. Through your love and promises we believe we shall be protected from sin.

**Amen.**

#### **Scripture Reading:**

**John 14: 15 – 21**

*"If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."*

#### **Acts 17: 22 – 31**

*"So Paul, standing before the council, addressed them as follows: "Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: 'To an Unknown God.' This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I'm telling you about. "He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn't live in man-made temples, and human hands can't serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. "His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' And since this is true, we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone. "God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead".*

#### **Sermon: 1 Peter 3: 13 – 22 (ESV): "BEING GOOD IN THE EYES OF THE LORD"**

*<sup>13</sup> Now, who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, so that when you are slandered, those who reviled your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*

*<sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> because they*

*formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.<sup>21</sup> Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,<sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers having been subjected to him.*

Here we looking at the writing or passages written by Peter, who was an Apostle of Christ, and also the eye witness of the sufferings of Christ.

Before we start with the passage we just read. The first few verses of this chapter tell us of the submission, love and respect between the wives and the husbands. And also emphasizing that the husbands shall understand their wives. Thereby, showing honour to the women.

It then simply takes us to the very important social aspect of Christianity, which is UNITY. And then teaches us how to respond to bad encounters and evil. And for us who desires to love life,

Verse 10 ***"For whoever desires to love life and see good days let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from specking deceit".***

Meaning that our tongue can be very destruction and we therefore need to be careful of what we say to each other, how we say something and when.....

### **Coming to today's passage**

Someone once wrote ***"The reward for the additional work is not greater power, it is higher pay"***

People are bound to endure hardships in their life, and the Christian are of no exception to that. The passage we just read tells us of the suffering in a Godly way. As believers we encounters good and bad situations, while we look at the bad, we know that the final reward is awaiting and is great. It is of a known fact that Christ suffered from his death and was raised from the dead, and that has triumph over demonic powers.

Looking at the situations we are might be in i.e. not in good health, not finding jobs, losing your job (perhaps due to COVID-19 pandemic, or any form of suffering; we shall all know that the light is coming. There is no night that last forever, there is always a day, that then brightens up, we then see the way better, plant sow or reap better.

We are therefore edged to give ourselves wholly to God, being willing to suffer and do what is right. Our expected outcomes are great and fulfilling, and they shall motivate us to live in a way that pleases God. We can all do that by exercising our spiritual gifts.

Peter is writing to us who are now suffering, but giving us an assurance that such suffering is improbable. Continued to say that even if we suffer now, God will reward us.

We can all be accused of many things, but it what we say and what we do is done with good conscience, any accusations against us will prove groundless. We have seen Men (Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego) and Women in the bible who were falsely accused but their accusers were put to shame. It is sometimes God's will that we suffer for doing good. So that people can see the goodness of God in everything we do.

As Christ suffered, I believe that in this day in age we also suffer not that God has deserted us but to show his power as Christ made alive in spirit. It is therefore, important to watch our ways as we are the salt of the earth and/ or the mirror. Some people should see us as role models, good hearted people, people with compassion, live like Christ, so that they can say we want to be like those Christian.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has taught a lot of people to realise that we have people, sickly, dejected and the suffering amongst ourselves. I therefore, appeal to all of us to do whatever we can to assist those who don't have and those who have little.

Lastly, Peter make a comparison between salvation of the ark (Noah's time) and baptism (as we all know it by John the Baptist). The last three verses tell us that, in both instances, believers are saved through the waters of judgement, since baptism portrays salvation through judgement.

*VERSES 21 and 22 "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities and powers having been subjected to him.*

May the good Lord blesses us all the time, fill us with compassion, kindness and love of human kind.

### **Prayer for Africa**

God bless Africa, God bless Africa

Guard her Children, guide her leaders

God bless Africa and bring us Peace. AMEN

### **Closing Prayer:**

We thanks you Lord for the privilege, for the time you have afforded us during this time of pandemic to be able to meditate in your word, share your word amongst each other and keeping us in one faith.

May the Lord bless us.

And keep us.

May the Lord smile upon us.

And be gracious unto us.

May the Lord protect and show his favour to us.

And give us peace

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit one God be with us always. **AMEN**