



~ AT HOME WORSHIP ~

29th November 2020

Advent Sunday

Advent Series ~ Extraordinary Women of the Bible



Lydia

INTRODUCTION & PREPARATION

In a moment of quiet take time to be still and place yourself in God's hands.

Last week was "Stir-up Sunday" and we might have been mixing up the 13 different ingredients for our Christmas Pudding. Today is the first Sunday of Advent ... We have lit the first candle on our Advent Candle Wreath.

Now we need to wait until our "pudding" is ready ... only another four weeks.

We have to wait until we are ready.

We wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hymn ~ "Christ, be our light!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJq3bhdgQoc>

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Chorus

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us.

Make us your living voice.

Chorus

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Chorus

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Chorus

5. Many the gifts, many the people,

Many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,

Making your kingdom come.

Chorus

Opening Prayer

“One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.”

Psalm 27:4

We pray for those women, who have influenced, not just us in our lives, but the lives of so many throughout the ages. We particularly give thanks for the work and faith of Lydia of Thyatira, who we remember in our reflections today, for her tenacity and application, and the service and hospitality she showed to all those around her, of Gentile and Jewish heritage alike.

Lord God, as we gather; where-ever we are, we thank you for your presence here with us. Thank you, Lord, that through our uniqueness, we are able to share a common bond in you. **Amen**

A Special Prayer for the First Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns,
turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness,
that we may be ready to meet you
in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Saying Sorry

Cleanse our hearts, we humbly beseech thee, O Lord, from all vain and wandering thoughts, that we may joyfully praise Thee wherever we may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Psalm 51 vv15-17

Holy God, Maker of all	Have mercy on us.
Jesus Christ, Servant of the poor	Have mercy on us.
Holy Spirit, Breath of life,	Have mercy on us.

Let us in silence confess our faults and admit our frailty.

Before God, with the people of God, we confess to our brokenness: to the ways we wound our lives, the lives of others, and the life of the world. May God forgive us, Christ renew us, and the Spirit enable us to grow in love. Amen

BIBLE READINGS



Mark 13 vv24-37

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁴ “In the days after that time of trouble the sun will grow dark, the moon will no longer shine, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers in space will be driven from their courses. Then the Son of Man will appear, coming in the clouds with great power and glory. He will send the angels out to the four corners of the earth to gather God's chosen people from one end of the world to the other.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

²⁸ “Let the fig tree teach you a lesson. When its branches become green and tender and it starts putting out leaves, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you will know that the time is near, ready to begin. Remember that all these things will happen before the people now living have all died. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

³² “No one knows, however, when that day or hour will come—neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; only the Father knows. Be on watch, be alert, for you do not know when the time will come. It will be like a man who goes away from home on a trip and leaves his servants in charge, after giving to each one his own work to do and after telling the doorkeeper to keep watch. Watch, then, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming—it might be in the evening or at midnight or before dawn or at sunrise. If he comes suddenly, he must not find you asleep. What I say to you, then, I say to all: Watch!”

Acts 16 vv11-15 (Focus on Lydia)

In Philippi: the Conversion of Lydia

¹¹ We left by ship from Troas and sailed straight across to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis. From there we went inland to Philippi, a city of the first district of Macedonia; it is also a Roman colony. We spent several days there. On the Sabbath we went out of the city to the riverside, where we thought there would be a place where Jews gathered for prayer. We sat down and talked to the women who gathered there. One of those who heard us was Lydia from Thyatira, who was a dealer in purple cloth. She was a woman who worshiped God, and the Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what Paul was saying. After she and the people of her house had been baptized, she invited us, “Come and stay in my house if you have decided that I am a true believer in the Lord.” And she persuaded us to go.



REFLECTION TIME

Short Reflection by Revd Trevor Day

Children may choose to use the Activity and Colouring Sheet

I promised last time, that I would aim to keep my reflection short. I know that's a challenge for me but here goes.

Today, as we enter Advent-tide, we are starting to look at women of significance from the bible and our first is Lydia, who majored in our first reading from Acts.

I am presenting a short[ish] biographical note, that aims to say something about the values by which Lydia lived her life as a new Christian.

Lydia was from the city of Thyatira, a Macedonian colony, which is now in the West of Turkey [*now known as Akhisar ... it is inland in a NE direction from the*

port of Izmir]. Lydia was a prominent women there, particularly conspicuous as a leading exponent in the manufacture of specially dyed materials ... significantly, in the creation of a unique purple dye for which she and her city were renowned, This was the purple dye that was specially used for those in very high positions ... eg royalty, gentry and other high-ups in their country organisations. This special purple is still revered today and is worn by bishops and kings throughout the world. I suspect that the purple of today is not as unique as the purple of 2000 years ago, but then, the knowledge to produce that colour for dying material was much sought after. Lydia could not, by any means be referred to as a poor person and her business accumen was well respected in that region ... It is highly likely that she owned a spacious home and had servants to care for her.

Although, she wouldn't have naturally come from a Jewish family, she was known to have been a devout woshipper of God/Jehovah. Despite of her business and secular obligations, they still found time regularly to worship, according to the Jewish faith.

It is through her regular prayer meetings, that she first encountered Paul his fellow travellers and it was through her hunger for a deeper spiritual experience and a clearer understanding of Paul's teaching, that her heart was opened to receive Jesus Christ as her Saviour. Her Christian faith grew, through her more intense understanding of Scripture. For her, as for many of us, the Psalms came alive and started to mean more than just the history of the Jewish Faith and the past relationships between human beings and God.

She then took that extra step, to prove to herself and to show those around her, when she became baptised. Her enthusiasm, spread amongst those living at her home and they too all became baptised in the faith. Her baptism in the Christian Faith, it is said, did not detract from, nor hamper, her work as a leading business woman. When Paul & Silas were discharged from prison, it was to Lydia's home to which they were invited ... she was not afraid of prisoners, specially those, who had incarcerated in the name of our Lord. In time, her home became a "open house" for followers of Christ, who might be travelling through their city. She was referred to by Paul in further letters to the church at Philipii and it is suspected that it was Lydia to which Paul referred when he wrote his triple exhortation in Romans [ch12 v11] ... "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Whether or not ... she certainly exemplified these three virtues.

I'm reminded of the four values of the Royal AirForce ... **Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence** ... we might add Humility and Grace.

Maybe this is a short biography ... but for me there are lessons for my life. It's not about either being good at what we do or having a Christian faith; it's and/and ... our/my faith leads me in trying to do whatever I do, better and in a loving and caring way. Showing that hospitality and care that Lydia showed.

At which point, I'm going to draw stumps and as I think of Lydia and her contribution to the faith of so many followers of Christ around her, I/we will say "the Grace" together: **The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us and all those with whom we come into contact in our lives; now and always. Amen**

Family Song ~ “And He shall reign forever”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoMpOSFrsm>



Chorus: And he shall reign forever
His throne and crown shall ever endure
And he shall reign forever
And we shall reign with him

1. What a vision filled my eyes
One like a Son of man
Coming with the clouds of heaven
He approached an awesome throne. *Chorus*

2. He was given sovereign power
Glory and authority
Every nation, tribe and tongue
Worshipped him on bended knee. *Chorus*

3. On the throne forever
See the Lamb who once was slain
Wounds of sacrificial love
Forever shall remain. *Chorus x 2*

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TIME FOR PRAYER

God within and beyond us all, teach us the silence of humility,
the silence of wisdom, the silence of love, the silence of faith,
the silence that enables reflection and speaks without words.

Teach us, God, to silence our own hearts and minds,
that we may listen for the movement of your Spirit within us,
and treasure your presence in the depths of our being.

<< allow a time of silence >>

Holy God, as you have heard every silent prayer
and wordless petition, hear now these prayers for others.

<< allow a time of open prayer >>

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

Song ~ “Faithful One, so unchanging”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqK-UnsRTFI>

Faithful one, so unchanging.
Ageless one, you're my rock of peace.
Lord of all I depend on you.
I call out to you, again and again.
I call out to you, again and again.
You are my rock in times of trouble.
You lift me up when I fall down.
All through the storm
Your love is, the anchor.
My hope is in You alone.

*Words & Music: Brian Doerksen Copyrights: Mercy/Vineyard Publishing
Scripture Reference(s): Psalm 30:1-3, Psalm 6*

Closing Anthem ~ “E'en so Lord Jesus, quickly come”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjtMJxtoool>

Peace be to you and grace from him, who freed us from our sins
Who loved us all and shed his blood, that we might saved be
Sing Holy, Holy to our Lord, the Lord, Almighty God
Who was, and is, and is to come, sing Holy, Holy Lord
Rejoice in heaven, all ye that dwell within
Rejoice on earth, ye saints below.
For Christ is coming, is coming soon, for Christ is coming soon
E'en so Lord Jesus, quickly come and night shall be no more
They need no light nor lamp nor sun, for Christ will be their All!

Music & Words: Paul & Ruth Manz [1954] cf Revelation 22

Dismissal & Blessing

May God be
a bright flame before us
a guiding star above us
a smooth path below us
a kindly shepherd behind us
this day, tomorrow and for ever. **Amen**

God bless us as we



watch and wait