



St. Columba's Church, Stewarton
(SC013595) (CCLI 1095831)
Home Service – June Week 2

Prayer

God of Grace and God of Glory we rejoice to be in your presence this day. Guide us by your word and by your goodness. Enfold us in your love, surround us with your peace and empower us to do what you would have us do through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.

Hymn CH4 535 Who would true valour see

Reading 1 Samuel 17: 4 – 25; Mark 4: 35 – 41

Both of our readings today have within them the notion of fear.

In the course of our lives there are many things that arise that cause us to fear and for each of us the dangers are different. The things we fear vary from person to person, and the intensity of our fear likewise varies. There are people who are afraid to drive in city traffic, others who dread speaking in public, and still others who are terrified by the thought that they might get serious illness. Some people fear being alone, others worry and fret about becoming unemployed, or having to face an abusive spouse, still others must fight against the giants of addiction. There are many dangers out in the world - and we do right to fear these dangers. Fear is a natural reaction - a God given reaction - to those things that threaten us. Fear can prevent us from dealing with what threatens us; and it can – in the end - permit the thing we fear to destroy us; not just our bodies, but our hearts, and our minds, and even our very souls.

That is what was happening at the time when the Philistines came to make war on Israel during the reign of King Saul. The Philistines came with a champion - Goliath of Gath - and he was huge -over nine feet tall, and he was well armed and well armoured - and he challenged the Israelites to send a man against him - and whoever won the battle - his side would win the war. Each day, for forty days he issued this challenge - and each day - the Israelites fled at the sight of him. All were afraid - none would go forth to do battle - except for David - the youngest child of his family - the one who had been relegated to tending his father's sheep while his older and bigger brothers conducted business and served in the army of King Saul. We know the story, David defeats Goliath - and he does so not with the weapons of war that Saul sought to equip him with - a sword, a helmet, and a coat of mail - but with the instrument that he used as a shepherd - a sling -and with the name of God. It was the same for the disciples in the storm in the Sea of Galilee. When they saw the wind and the waves they felt powerless - they felt overwhelmed and unable to help themselves - unable to overcome the danger around them. Until Jesus stepped in. The trick - if it can be called that is to gain a perspective on the danger we are in; to understand that God is able to help us - and that he will help us, that he has power over the wind and the waves. that he can still the storm and calm the troubled waters, that he can triumph in the face of overwhelming odds because he is the Lord of Hosts - the God who is over all. Someone writes When I was a lot younger, I used to go swimming in the sea. I used to swim within the buoys that marked out the area covered by the lifeguards and watch the other kids, the stronger kids, swim from there to a dock that was anchored offshore - and then jump and dive off it over and over again. One day I decided to swim out to that dock. I had never swum that far before, and I struck out and got about half-way there and then began to feel tired. I went slower and slower - and finally I began to flounder – I went under the water a couple of times, and I was petrified - and I called out for help - but there was none, there was too much noise around. I realised that I was on my own - and that I had to make it on my own - or drown. So - what I did was focus on the dock - on my salvation - and take a single stroke - then another. I refused to think about the depth of the water - or how tired I was - instead I kept looking at the dock -

and how it was coming closer - stroke by stroke - and yes - I made it. After resting a while - and then jumping and diving off the dock - I swam back to shore - with no problem at all. It is that way with all our fears - with all the dangers we encounter. We have to look to the solution instead of only looking at the problem if we are to overcome the odds that are so much against us, if we are to overcome the fears that prevent us from acting. In AA - Alcoholics Anonymous, and in all the dependency groups based on the AA Model, there is a slogan -- which says, "Let Go - and Let God." It is a marvellously liberating thing to let go - and to let God, to trust God to make things come out right instead of worrying about how we are going to make it happen, To decide to act in His will instead of worrying about how to do what we want to do, instead of trying to fix everything on our own. Blessed be our God, day by day. Amen.

Prayer - Lord of life, we gather this day to praise you, to acknowledge you as Creator of heaven and earth, to thank you for your faithful provision. We remember once more how fortunate we are, and we celebrate the wonders of your creation. Day by day, year by year, we see your hand at work, we marvel at the beauty of your design, and we rejoice in all you have given. We praise you for this vast and awesome universe in which you have placed us, this world in which we live, and this country in which we have been born - so many reasons to count our blessings, so much to thank you for. We take your blessings for granted, complaining about what we haven't got instead of rejoicing in what we have. For the poverty of our response to your great goodness, Lord, forgive us. Lord, we acknowledge how easily we identify with the fear of the disciples when they were caught in the storm; like them, our faith falters and our anxiety soars, when life becomes too turbulent for us. Help us to remember O God, that you can bring peace into the stormiest of situations. Be with us in the times of stress and anxiety, let nor our lives spin out of control with worries over health, relationships, finances, the state of the world. Renew and strengthen our faith and help us to live empowered by the loving presence of Jesus Christ our Lord. We pray for our world with all its suffering, and anxiety, its injustice.

Bless the poor and the hungry and let us not rest until there is an equal sharing of what you have provided for us. Be with those who are oppressed and exploited, the helpless and the hopeless. Reach out to them in love and help us to do what we can to relieve their pain. Be with the leaders of the world and guide them in this week and always. Living God there is so much need around us in our neighbourhood in our town, our country, our world. So many people crying out for help. Reach out to them in love and show us how to act as your Church as we seek to express your compassion in action. We pray for our loved ones with all their joys and sorrows. We pray for all who are ill at home or in hospital. Lay your healing hand upon them. We give you thanks that you are the God who makes all things new. We pray for those who are dying and those who are bereaved. May they know the joy and the peace and the hope that comes from you. All this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn CH4 468 Son of God, eternal Saviour

May the Blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit be with you and all those whom you love, this day and always, Amen.

Intimations/Dates for your Diary

Intimations

Important Notice - A meeting of the congregation will be held on Sunday 16th June, immediately after the morning service, to vote on the proposal to change the constitution from the Model Deed (Kirk Session and Board) to Unitary Constitution (Kirk Session only). A paper outlining the changes is available at both doors on Sunday 9th June.

Annual Bonnet Guild Devine Service – This will be held in St. Columba's Church on Sunday 16th June at 6.30pm.

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