

Virtual Service 10 5 20

Praise: Immortal, invisible...

- 1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.
- 2 Unresting, unchanging, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.
- 3 To all life Thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish, but nought changeth Thee.
- 4 Great Father of Glory, pure Father of Light
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render, O help us to see:
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee.
- 5 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spE-BE23qxA>

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,

For ever and ever. Amen.

Reading: Numbers 13

13 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the people of Israel. From each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a chief among them.” ³So Moses sent them from the wilderness of Paran, according to the command of the LORD, all of them men who were heads of the people of Israel. ⁴And these were their names: From the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; ⁵from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; ⁶from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; ⁷from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; ⁸from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Nun; ⁹from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; ¹⁰from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; ¹¹from the tribe of Joseph (that is, from the tribe of Manasseh), Gaddi the son of Susi; ¹²from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; ¹³from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; ¹⁴from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; ¹⁵from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi. ¹⁶These were the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua.

¹⁷Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan and said to them, “Go up into the Negeb and go up into the hill country, ¹⁸and see what the land is, and whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many, ¹⁹and whether the land that they dwell in is good or bad, and whether the cities that they dwell in are camps or strongholds, ²⁰and whether the land is rich or poor, and whether there are trees in it or not. Be of good courage and bring some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.

²¹So they went up and spied out the land from the wilderness of Zin to Rehob, near Lebo-hamath. ²²They went up into the Negeb and came to Hebron. Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi, the descendants of Anak, were there. (Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) ²³And they came to the Valley of Eshcol and cut down from there a branch with a single cluster of grapes, and they carried it on a pole between two of them; they also brought some pomegranates and figs. ²⁴That place was called the Valley of Eshcol,^[a] because of the cluster that the people of Israel cut down from there.

²⁵ At the end of forty days they returned from spying out the land. ²⁶ And they came to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation of the people of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh. They brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷ And they told him, “We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸ However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large. And besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ The Amalekites dwell in the land of the Negeb. The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the hill country. And the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and along the Jordan.”

³⁰ But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it.” ³¹ Then the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are.” ³² So they brought to the people of Israel a bad report of the land that they had spied out, saying, “The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. ³³ And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

Sermon: On the brink!

Numbers 13 - On the brink!

Good day. I hope and pray that I find you all well. Let me first of all say ‘happy Mother’s Day’ to all you mums out there. I do hope you have a good day, even if it must be in social isolation. I find myself losing track of days and dates and so our theme is unrelated. However, I do believe it is particularly relevant to our present predicament and situation.

While we cannot be certain, it appears that we have past the worst of the coronavirus crisis and that restrictions will slowly be eased in the coming weeks and months. Well, that is certainly our hope and prayer. No doubt, there will be changes and challenges ahead for us all but these we will face with fortitude and in faith.

Here in Numbers 13, which provides the focus for our thoughts today, the OT church was confronted with a similar situation that called for commitment,

confidence, and courage. They were on the brink of a better and brighter future. They had suffered much, many had died, and much struggle lay ahead but God was with them and would bless their faithful labours. Consider:

Firstly, by way of some necessary background information...

1. The OT church was rescued from bondage/slavery:

- a) They were redeemed by grace...
- b) They were recipients of guarantees or promises...
- c) They were given responsibilities as well as rights...

2. The OT church needlessly roamed in a barren wilderness:

- a) On account of their own folly...
- b) On account of their lack of faith...
- c) On account of their fears...

3. The OT church was restive on the border: (1-24)

- a) Selection was made of men from each tribe to spy out the land...
- b) They were sent into the land with a specific brief... people, places, fecundity... promised a land flowing with milk and honey... a veritable Eschol...
- c) Survey was made of the land of Canaan according to the Lord's instruction to Moses... affirmation and confirmation...

4. The OT church was reluctant to take possession of the land on account of evident barriers, difficulties, and dangers: (25-33)

- a) Many portray fear and forgetfulness.... And they spread it by means of exacerbation and exaggeration... ²⁷ *And they told him, "We came to the land to which you sent us. It flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸ However, the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large.*

"The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. ³³ And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them."

- b) Caleb, however, personifies faith... *But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it." (30)*

c) God's word is teaching us that if we wish to enjoy fruitfulness, we must follow the path of faith and faithfulness... At times this necessitates struggle and strife for the cross precedes the crown... but the Promised Land is our inheritance and we are more than conquerors in and through the Lord Jesus Christ

There is a NT text which says: *For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control* (2Tim.1:7). Let us be thankful to God for his goodness. We will come through the present crisis. Let us hope and let us work by faith for a better and brighter future to God's glory

<https://www.facebook.com/1142790689184754/videos/247679596471822/>

Praise: O God our help...

1 O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:

2 Beneath the shadow of your throne
your people lived secure;
sufficient is your arm alone,
and our defence is sure.

3 Before the hills in order stood,
or earth from darkness came,
from everlasting you are God,
to endless years the same.

4 A thousand ages in your sight
are like an evening gone;
short is the watch that ends the night,
before the rising sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
will bear us all away;
we pass forgotten, as a dream
dies with the dawning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come:

be our defence while life shall last,
and our eternal home!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-hN740J6qA>

Prayer of Intercession: by Gill Reid

Dear Lord and Father,

We bring our prayers to you this Sunday asking for a renewing and strengthening of our Faith during these difficult times. We ask that Churches throughout the world will find inspiration and new ways of reaching out to their communities, providing support and bringing messages of Love and Hope.

We pray for all leaders, political, scientific and medical who are providing us with guidance during the Covid-19 crisis. We ask for strength and wisdom for them as they make difficult decisions. Each of us Lord also have decisions to make about how we cope with lockdown and how we live our lives at the moment. Help us to be open to Your guidance and Your loving support and to trust in You that You are never closer to us than during times of trouble.

We pray that world leaders can work together to combat this virus which is having such a devastating impact on all countries, that the strong will provide support for the weak. Help us in our community to reach out to those who are most in need in whatever ways we are able to. This situation is affecting lives in so many different ways, both the young and the old.

Finally Lord we pray for all those who are particularly dear to us, our family and friends, those who we know are suffering because of illness, bereavement, loneliness or anxiety and depression.

We bring all these prayers to you through Jesus Christ Your Son.

Amen and God Bless

Praise: Great is Thy faithfulness

1 “Great is Thy faithfulness,” O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;

Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

“Great is Thy faithfulness!” “Great is Thy faithfulness!”
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
“Great is Thy faithfulness,” Lord, unto me!

2 Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0k1WhFtVp0o>

Benediction: And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. AMEN.

Next Sunday would have been our Communion Sunday. With that in mind, I aim to post not only my sermon but also a second short video of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper which I will record beforehand. I, therefore, invite you to join me in a virtual commemoration and celebration of the Lord’s Supper. All you will require is a piece of bread and a cup/glass with wine or grape juice.

Also, next weekend we are all invited to watch and participate in the online installation of Rev Martin Fair, Arbroath, as Moderator, from the Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh. We wish Martin God's rich blessing upon his ministry as moderator for the coming year, especially in light of the exceptional circumstances and challenges he will face as a result of the present restrictions. May God uphold and bless him, and his wife and family. There will also be a link to this year’s virtual Heart and Soul on our Facebook page and on the website.