

## AT HOME SERVICE - SUNDAY 14 AUGUST 2022

Prepared by Graham Skedgell

*"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!*

(Luke 12 verse 49)

### HYMN

There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in His justice,  
Which is more than liberty.

There is plentiful redemption  
In the blood that has been shed;  
There is joy for all the members  
In the sorrows of the Head.

There is no place where earth's sorrows  
Are more felt than up in Heaven;  
There is no place where earth's failings  
Have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of our mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.

But we make His love too narrow  
By false limits of our own;  
And we magnify His strictness  
With a zeal He will not own.

If our love were but more simple,  
We should take Him at His word;  
And our lives would be all sunshine  
In the sweetness of our Lord.

### PRAYER

O God our King, through the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ on the first day of the week, you conquered sin, put death to flight, and gave us the hope of everlasting life: Redeem all our days by this victory; forgive our sins, banish our fears, make us bold to praise you and to do your will; and help us as we wait for the consummation of your kingdom on the last great Day; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

### LORD'S PRAYER

### BIBLE READING: Luke 12 verses 49-59

### HYMN

Beauty for brokenness  
Hope for despair  
Lord, in the suffering  
This is our prayer  
Bread for the children  
Justice, joy, peace  
Sunrise to sunset  
Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives  
Cures for their ills  
Work for the craftsman  
Trade for their skills  
Land for the dispossessed  
Rights for the weak  
Voices to plead the cause  
Of those who can't speak

God of the poor  
Friend of the weak  
Give us compassion we pray  
Melt our cold hearts  
Let tears fall like rain  
Come, change our love  
From a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars  
Havens from fear  
Cities for sanctuary  
Freedoms to share  
Peace to the killing-fields  
Scorched earth to green  
Christ for the bitterness  
His cross for the pain

Rest for the ravaged earth  
Oceans and streams  
Plundered and poisoned  
Our future, our dreams  
Lord, end our madness  
Carelessness, greed  
Make us content with  
The things that we need

Lighten our darkness  
Breathe on this flame  
Until your justice  
Burns brightly again  
Until the nations  
Learn of your ways  
Seek your salvation  
And bring you their praise

## REFLECTION

I wonder what thoughts came into your mind when you read the opening words of Scripture today. *"I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!* Perhaps you asked yourself the question, "Did Jesus really come to bring fire on the earth? I thought he came to be the Prince of Peace". In fact he posed a similar question himself. *"Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division."*

And to make sure his disciples knew that he meant what he said, he told them how such 'division' would show itself. *"From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."* Not what the disciples expected him to say.

It's not an easy passage to understand unless we consider first its context. In the previous verses, Jesus had been urging his disciples not to worry about things we might think of as being important in life: food and drink, possessions, and clothes. Instead, he wanted them to devote themselves to the kingdom of God. He also told them that just as God takes care of birds and flowers, he would do the same for them. Without these day-to-day worries, they would be able to concentrate on the kingdom of God.

If you watched the Commonwealth Games, you will have heard people talk constantly about the need for competitors to *focus*, to be *in the zone*. That's what athletes do. They are single-minded in their pursuit of a goal, whether that is a gold medal, or a new record. If they become distracted by other things, their performance will inevitably suffer. However, if they achieve that *focus*, it will result in mind and body working together in perfect harmony. The Christian life is no different. Our focus, as followers of Jesus, should be on the kingdom of God, not on other things, no matter how important those other things may be. That's what Jesus wanted them, and us, to understand. Our priority is to do the will of God.

But Jesus wanted the disciples to know that if people become followers of *the way*, it would often result in family division, if not conflict. Perhaps you have seen or experienced this for yourself. It's

always sad, but it's inevitable. Some years ago, I knew someone who was disowned by the rest of his family when he became a Christian. That's what can happen. He also drew their attention to the fact that they were perfectly able to interpret signs around them predicting the weather, such as clouds rising in the west, or the wind blowing from the south, but they were unable to interpret what he called "*this present time*." He wanted them to wake up to the fact that although he would be leaving the earth, he would later return. In the meantime they were to occupy themselves doing the will of God, whilst at the same time making sure they were ready for his return.

These are challenging thoughts which we would do well to consider. They have implications for our own lives, and for the lives of others who don't yet know God.

Amen

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Father, as we come before you, we pray for the needs of the world. In particular we pray for the continued conflict in Ukraine, and for all those whose lives have been shattered by these tragic events. We pray too for the people of Taiwan, who are fearful of what may happen as a result of the visit of the delegation from the USA. Father, in these areas, and in other areas of conflict, may your peace come into the hearts of all those who are caught up in them.

We pray too, Father, for our local communities, that in them, the light of your love may be seen in us. Through our witness, may others come to know you as we do. May we truly be salt and light to them. May we offer a hand of friendship, a listening ear, a warm heart, and live like Jesus in every way.

And for ourselves, we pray that you will help us in our daily lives, that we may be true followers of Jesus, and live for your glory. These things we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

### **HYMN**

O Thou who camest from above,  
The pure celestial fire to impart,  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
Upon the mean altar of my heart.

There let it for Thy glory burn  
With inextinguishable blaze,  
And trembling to its source return,  
In humble prayer and fervent  
praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
To work and speak  
and think for Thee;  
Still let me guard the holy fire,  
And still stir up Thy gift in me.

Ready for all Thy perfect will,  
My acts of faith and love repeat,  
Till death Thy endless mercies  
seal,  
And make my sacrifice complete.

### **THE GRACE**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen