

Abbey Baptist Church, Reading
Worship Service 10:30am 17 May 2026
Simon Bird leading and Jill Bird preaching

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Our new life in Christ – walking in holiness and obedience



Theme verses: So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. Col 2:6–7

Thankfulness and prayer Col 1:27, 2:2–3

Thank you that God has chosen to make known to us, the glorious riches of this mystery, which is: **Christ in us, the hope of glory.**

We pray that we will have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that we may know the mystery of God, namely: **Christ, in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

Hymn: looking to Christ alone MP1072

In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light my strength my song

This Cornerstone this solid Ground, Firm through the fiercest drought and storm

What heights of love what depths of peace, When fears are stilled when strivings cease

My Comforter my All in All, Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone who took on flesh, Fullness of God in helpless babe

This gift of love and righteousness, Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid, Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay, Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day, Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory, Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine, Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life no fear in death, This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell no scheme of man, Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home, Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

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Declarations of what Christ has done for us Col 2:20, 3:1, 2 Cor 5:17, Eph 2:6

I died with Christ.

I have been raised with Christ.

I am a new creation.

I am seated with Christ in heavenly places.

Family time – change of clothes

Song MP 254 – *We worship God with our offering which will be taken during this song*

I am a new creation, No more in condemnation
Here in the grace of God I stand
My heart is overflowing; My love just keeps on growing
Here in the grace of God I stand

And I will praise You Lord, Yes, I will praise You Lord
And I will sing of all that You have done
A joy that knows no limit, A lightness in my spirit
Here in the grace of God I stand!

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Thanksgiving for offering, and prayer for Sunday School *Children leave for their classes*

Bible Reading Colossians 3:1–17

Song (prayer for ourselves) MP1100

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord. Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You

To see you high and lifted up, shining in the light of Your glory

Pour out Your power and love as we sing holy, holy, holy

Holy, holy, holy; holy, holy, holy

Holy, holy, holy; holy, holy, holy – I want to see You

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Sermon: Walking in holiness and obedience

So where are we in Paul's letter to the Colossian church? - nearing the end. As in many of Paul's letters there is a big turning point. He lays out his theological truths and arguments and then we get SO or THEREFORE. Bible study is never just for debate or interest but for changing us. What effect does this have on our life today? what needs changing in our thinking, attitudes, emotions and behaviour by the power of God? to make us more like Jesus. Are we allowing the word of God to transform us into the likeness of JESUS.

So let's remind ourselves of some of the great truths we have been learning. There are two great sides to the story, each just as important.

1. **You died with Christ**, you have been buried with him in baptism, rescued from the kingdom of darkness. YES, you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God;
2. **You have been raised with Christ**, brought into the kingdom of his son. In Christ you have been given fullness of life in God and are holy in his sight without blemish. You have the glorious riches of Christ living in you and the hope of glory eternally.

Let's take a big breath in as we gaze at all these truths Is this what has happened to you?

Say to your neighbour YES, it has for me, and YES, it has for you!

So do we just say how nice – stick it in a box and go on our way - NO!

The passage we are looking at today has clear instructions – do you read instruction manuals!

Verses 1-4 Says since all these great things are true:

SET YOUR HEARTS on things above, on Jesus who is seated at the right hand of God – your emotions, desires, attitudes. Is your heart fixed on Jesus? Or elsewhere to get support and comfort?

SET YOUR MINDS on things above not on earthly things. Your thoughts, plans, seeing the world with God's eyes.

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10.5 to take captive, take prisoner, every thought and make it obedient to Christ.'

Then two big areas to obey:

1. What do we need to take off – put to death – get rid of with God’s help. We can’t put new wonderful clothes on over dirty spoilt ones. There are things that belong to our old earthly nature. It says we have taken these off; we used to do them freely with little conscience. What is your testimony? Are you wearing fewer and fewer old clothes?

Though the list seems long it actually leaves out many sins, such as pride, stealing, murder etc

It seems he was highlighting three areas that were perhaps particularly common in Colossae. Let’s look at these, but I do wonder what Jesus would come and point his finger at in Abbey. In his final instruction at the end of Matthew, Jesus told us to go and teach everything he had commanded us. So we need to know his teaching and especially in this context the teaching in the sermon on the Mount Matthew 5-7.

A] Firstly **sin associated with sex** - sexual immorality, impurity, lust and evil desires. What does the bible teach is pure holy sex? – **there is only one place** that sex is not just acceptable, but honoured and planned by God, to give joy and reflect the deep union between Christ and the church, is within marriage between a man and a woman. Fornication is the biblical word for sex before or outside of marriage. Adultery, for sex with someone else when you are already married. Practicing homosexuality, for sex between those of same gender. In his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus even raises the stakes higher, to even look lustfully at another person is sin. His answer is to gouge out the eye or cut off the hand that causes the sin to avoid the punishment of hell. How seriously even do you consider looking at pornography or sexually explicit movies to be sinful?

B] Sin associated with **getting what I want** - greed, anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language, lying. Do you just accept these as normal, part of being human, part of your culture? Again Jesus teaches that even being angry with your brother is equivalent to murder and deserves the ‘fire of hell’ with the instruction to and say sorry and put it right before you dare come to worship our holy God.

C] **Sin associated with judgementalism** – despising and feeling superior to others because of their race, colour, gender, riches, or social standing. Could **v11 be a special verse for Abbey?** Here there is no Brit, Hong Konger, Iranian, or any other nationality of any colour, background, rich or poor but Christ is all and in all. What are our hearts saying on this one?

Paul goes on to call the Colossians God’s chosen people, **holy** and dearly loved. Is God raising the stakes of holiness for us? Always before a revival and within a revival, sin became much blacker and holiness much whiter. Is your deep desire to be holy? To let God’s burning refining fire work deeply in you?

Let’s stop at this point in the service and examine our hearts

Are there past or present sexual sins we need to turn from, repent of and seek deep cleansing?

Are there sins of selfishness, self-centredness which lead to greed, anger, slander, lying?

Are there sins of judgementalism especially towards our dear brothers and sisters in this room?

Let’s stand before a holy God, if we dare – **holy, holy, holy is the LORD – eyes like burning fire.**
Nothing is hidden from him.

Purify my heart Let me be as gold and precious silver

Purify my heart Let me be as gold, pure gold

Refiner's fire, My heart's one desire is to be holy

Set apart for You, Lord

I choose to be holy Set apart for You, my Master Ready to do Your will

Purify my heart Cleanse me from within And make me holy

Purify my heart Cleanse me from my sin, deep within

2. What do we need to put on What are our new clothes? God looks at you and says, you are my chosen one, holy and dearly loved and we want to please him more than anything else. This is the incentive to take

off the old and wear proudly these new clothes. In John 14.15 Jesus said, 'If you love me, you will obey what I command' Love is the motivation to long for holiness.

So we put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness patience, forbearance, forgiveness
AND over all these put on love which binds us together in perfect unity
Did you get properly dressed this morning? And will you tomorrow morning? And all week?

Last instructions

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts – Peace RULE and REIGN not worry, fear, anxiety
Let the word of God DWELL in you richly – what does dwell mean here – live deeply inside you.
And be **THANKFUL** – sing with joy to each other as we encourage each other on this journey of holiness

And whatever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him AMEN

Song for responding MP 1000

King of kings, majesty, God of heaven living in me
Gentle Saviour closest friend, Strong deliv'rer beginning and end
All within me falls at Your throne

*Your majesty I can but bow, I lay my all before You now
In royal robes I don't deserve, I live to serve Your majesty*

Earth and heav'n worship You, Love eternal faithful and true
Who bought the nations ransomed souls, Brought this sinner near to Your throne
All within me cries out in praise
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Communion: we are invited to the table

Now in Christ Jesus we who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph 2:13)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' (Matt 11:28–30)

Institution: a tradition the Colossian Christians would have been taught

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my

body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:23–26)

This is the body of Christ, broken for you.

(take a piece of bread and eat as it is served to you)

This is the blood of Christ, shed for you.

(we drink together once all have been served)

Post Communion Prayer:

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us

with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice.

Send us out in the power of your Spirit

to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

Prayers of intercession Ernest and Benna

Heavenly Father, Thank you for your love, mercy, and grace. Thank you for always being with us, even when we are weak, afraid, or anxious. Forgive us for the times we forget Your promises and try to carry our burdens alone. Teach us to trust You more each day.

Lord, help us to walk in holiness and obedience. Give us strength to let go of old sinful habits, wrong attitudes, and harmful ways of living. Help us take off anger, pride, fear, dishonesty, and unforgiveness, and put on kindness, humility, purity, patience, and love. Make us more like Jesus in our thoughts, words, and actions.

Teach us to bring everything to You in prayer. Help us not to worry about tomorrow, because our lives are in Your hands. Remind us daily that You are holding our hand, guiding us, protecting us, and giving us peace and courage.

Father, we also pray for the world around us. In the middle of wars, violence, disasters, sickness, fear, and division in today’s news, bring peace and healing. Comfort families who are grieving, protect those who are suffering, and give wisdom to leaders making difficult

decisions. Let Your light shine in dark places, and help Your people be full of faith, compassion, and hope during these times.

Lord, help us not to return to old ways, but walk daily in the new life You have given us. May our lives honour You and encourage others to follow You.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, **Amen**

Hymn BPW 391, MP631

Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice
Tender to me the promise of His word
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice

Tell out my soul the greatness of His Name
Make known His might the deeds His arm has done
His mercy sure from age to age the same
His holy Name the Lord the Mighty One

Tell out my soul the greatness of His might
Powers and dominions lay their glory by
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight
The hungry fed the humble lifted high

Tell out my soul the glories of His word
Firm is His promise and His mercy sure
Tell out my soul the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and for evermore

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The Blessing Phil 4:4–7

Rejoice in the Lord always. Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious, but with prayer and thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

And may the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

The Grace:

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

Events to highlight this coming week:

Sunday 17		Cantonese bible study
Monday 18	12:15pm 2:00pm	Gwen Davies' funeral at crematorium Thanksgiving service at church
Wednesday 20	10:30 12:00	Renew Café Bible study (There is no God loves you meeting or First Steps course this week)
Thursday 21	10:30	Toddlers (No Bible Study)
Friday 22	4:30pm	Table Tennis
Sunday 24	10.30	Pentecost Sunday Worship, with children's dedications

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