



Abbey Baptist Church, Reading
Worship Service 10:30am 3rd May 2026
Zoltan Biro leading and Simon Bird preaching
www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk
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The price of being in Christ

Notices

Call to worship

We are gathered here today, Lord God as your people to offer you our sacrifice of prayer and worship.
We come from different walks of life; some are well educated, others not;
some have walked with you for many years; others are just starting their journey;
some are strong, others weak; some are full of joy, others burdened by care.
You love each of us in equal measure. You pour your blessings on us in equal measure.

Song MP1072

Blessed be Your Name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow:
Blessed be Your Name!
Blessed be Your Name,
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness:
Blessed be Your Name

Chorus

Every blessing You pour out
I'll turn back to praise!
When the darkness closes in Lord,
Still I will say,
Blessed be the Name of the Lord,
Blessed be Your Name!
Blessed be the Name of the Lord,
Blessed be Your glorious Name!

Song MP 491

One more step along the world I go,
one more step along the world I go,
from the old things to the new,
keep me traveling along with you:
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.

Blessed be Your Name
When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's "all as it should be"
Blessed be Your Name!
Blessed be Your Name,
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering:
Blessed be Your Name

Chorus

You give and take away,
You give and take away
My heart will choose to say Lord,
Blessed be Your Name!

X2

Chorus

Matt & Beth Redman © 2002, Thankyou Music

Round the corner of the world I turn,
more and more about the world I learn;
all the new things that I see,
you'll be looking at along with me:
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.

As I travel through the bad and good,
keep me traveling the way I should;
Where I see no way to go
you'll be telling me the way I know:
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.

Give me courage when the world is rough,
keep me loving though the world is tough,
leap and sing in all I do,
keep me traveling along with you:

Family time

The offerings will be taken during the next song

Song MP 162

From Heaven, You came helpless babe
Entered our world, your glory veiled
Not to be served but to serve
And give Your life that we might live

Chorus

This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King

There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
"Yet not My will but Yours", He said

Bible Readings - Colossians 1:24-2:5

Sermon: The price of being in Christ - Colossians 1:24-2:5

If you were going for a job, you would show your best credentials – your Curriculum Vitae (CV) and qualifications. We see today what St Paul offered to win over the Colossian Christians.

We are following a series on Paul's letter to the church in Colossae. The background is there was false teaching. Rather than addressing this directly, Paul opened his letter by building a relationship with them - in his thanksgiving and prayer for them. Then Paul makes the powerful declaration, we heard last week, of who Christ is, which counters the wrong teaching. In today's passage, Paul continues to build relationship and their trust by writing about himself. Then he addresses more directly the wrong teaching, and in the second half of the letter he shows how to live out the Christian life.

Now, Paul is concerned for the Colossian Christians. He wants them to accept his teaching and his warnings about the false teaching. How would you expect the great apostle to win them over? With an impressive CV? Standing on his status and authority as an apostle? No, he wins their hearts and minds by telling them something of himself. This may be a cultural thing, but we do tend to warm to people who show their feelings and are vulnerable, as Paul does.

And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.

You are older than the world can be,
you are younger than the life in me,
ever old and ever new,
keep me traveling along with you:
And it's from the old I travel to the new;
keep me traveling along with you.

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Children leave for their classes

Chorus

Come see His hands and His feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered

Chorus

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving

Chorus

*Chris Llewellyn / Graham Kendrick / Gareth Gilkeson ©
1988, Thankyou Music*

He starts with his **suffering**. He suffers for them and he rejoices in it (24). You may remember that when Paul was dealing with a sensitive relationship with the Corinthian church, and they were comparing him to 'super-apostles', Paul did not try to impress; there too he told them about his sufferings, his daily concern for them and that he boasted in his weakness (2 Cor 11:21-33). That is the genuine way to win over hearts.

Paul mentions something here that needs some explanation. It says, he fills up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions (24). This certainly does not mean that Paul helped carry our sin on the cross. When Jesus died there, he carried all our sin and it was a full and finished work (Heb 1:3). The best explanation to me seems to be that the ongoing work of the church in sharing the gospel leads to suffering. Jesus told Paul that when the church is persecuted, he suffers. So this is Paul's way of saying he is sharing in the ongoing suffering of the church.

Another point is, later on, the false teaching includes harsh treatment of the body to help us grow in the Christian life (Christ + again). Ironically, Paul welcomes suffering, but the difference is this suffering is not self-imposed and has a purpose.

Paul is an amazing person to understand. He was a violent persecutor, but Jesus showed grace to him (1 Tim 1:12-14), so you can sense his deep engagement with suffering on behalf of the church. He does not see it as punishment or bear it with resignation, but with joy and a sense of purpose, in building up the church he tried to wipe out. For Paul, as the title of the sermon suggests, this is the price of being in Christ. Remember how James told us to look on our sufferings too, 'count it all joy when you face trials of many kinds.' For us it builds faith, which is a precious thing (James 1:2-4, 1 Pet 1:7).

For Paul, his suffering gave him credibility when he spoke to the Colossians and shows the mark of a true shepherd like his master. Jesus called himself the Good Shepherd. 'I know my sheep and my sheep know me; they will know my voice.' This expresses a caring, warm relationship with his sheep (i.e. us), and supremely he would lay down his life for the sheep (Jn 10:11, 14). A warm relationship and willingness to suffer, like for Paul, are Jesus' credentials to be our guide and Lord.

We will have thought about Christ's sufferings leading up to Easter and will ponder in the communion. The sermon title 'The price of being in Christ,' has this deeper meaning. The price for us to be in Christ is his suffering.

For any undecided about following Jesus, there are many things to consider – did he really rise from the dead? Is he Lord and God? Today, I ask you to consider that Jesus was prepared to die on the cross because he loved you, and wanted you so much to come to him. The extent of his love, and the price he paid for you can be seen in his nail-pierced hands and wounded side. Isn't he someone you would gladly trust?

More briefly, I look at the other things Paul says about himself. He struggles for them (the Greek word gives our word agonising). This probably means his **hard work and prayer** for them, like we read about Epaphras at the end of the letter (4:12). He calls himself a **servant** (25). No high status; again, Paul imitates his master, who came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as ransom (Mk 10:45). Paul had a **calling and commission** to be apostle. Paul does press his status on them, but this calling shows he comes with the authority and credentials of the Lord of the church. Jesus also told Paul he will suffer. Paul also reminds them he has faithfully **passed on the full message**, the word of God in its fullness (25). There is nothing the false teachers can or should add to this. The Colossians have it all.

I want to consider how what Paul says about himself applies to us. As before, it is reminder that we do not escape difficulties, even suffering in the Christian life. Rather than resisting, we can welcome them as the means God uses to refine us: to make us mature and holy. Jesus said, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.' (Mk 8:34). It is important to remind people seeking to follow Jesus of the cost of discipleship. The rewards are the joy of serving him and the hope of glory.

We may not all be leaders like Paul, but we are all commissioned by Christ to follow him, and we must walk in the way he walked. He set us the example - no servant is greater than his master (Jn 13:15-16). We serve as he served; we take up our cross as he did, and we suffer too in our small ways. We work hard and pray and we look to be servants. Like Paul, we need to know we are commissioned, we have authority from the King of Kings to serve him and do all we can to build his Kingdom. We have specific

authority (all authority) to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-19). To take his message to the world, we need to know our message and be confident it works: 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel, it is the power of God for salvation.' (Rom 1:16). This is a call, not to an easy life, but to hard work and prayer, but it is a glorious life. [Christ in you, the hope of glory] Will you like Paul, be a follower of Jesus?

Please use the time of communion to remember again the price Jesus paid so you can follow him. Will you dedicate yourself to the Lord who came as a servant, suffered, gave his life, so you could be rescued? Will you commit yourself to hard work, prayer, suffering with joy and faithfully calling others to follow him too?

Songs MP 66

Broken for me, broken for you,
the body of Jesus broken for you,

This is My body given for you,
eat it rememb'ring I did for you.

He offered His Body, He poured out His soul,
Jesus was broken that we might be whole.

This is My blood I shed for you,
for your forgiveness, making you new.

Come to My table and with Me dine,
eat of My break and drink of My wine.

Janet Lunt ©1978 Sovereign Music UK

Communion

Come to the table of Jesus our Redeemer!
Jesus invites you here as part of the people of God.
Come to the table humbly,
not because you have earned a place here,
but because you need mercy and help.
Come because you love God, and want to love God more.
Come because Jesus first loved us, and gave himself for us.
Come because you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit.
Come because you want to experience the mystery of God's grace.

On the night he was handed over, Jesus had a meal with his friends.
He took a loaf of bread and after giving thanks to God,
he broke it and gave it to his disciples.
He said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."
After supper Jesus took the cup of wine;
and after giving thanks, gave it to them and said,
"Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it, remember me."

Let us pray: God our Creator,
thank you for the gift of your son Jesus Christ,
whose love pursues us our whole life long.
Thank you, Jesus, for giving your life to us in word and deed,
even unto death, even death on a cross.
Come Holy Spirit, feed us with your love
that we may be filled with power
to love God with all our hearts and souls and minds. Amen.
[the bread and wine are served]

Prayer of response:

Blessing

May the strength of God sustain us; may the power of God preserve us; may the hands of God protect us; may the way of God direct us; may the love of God go with us this day and forever. Amen.

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:

Tuesday	8:00pm	Zoom Prayer Meeting
Wednesday 6	10:30 12:00 2:00	Renew Café Bible study iCaf English lesson and First Steps course
Thursday 7	10:30 10:30	Toddlers Bible Study
Friday 8	5:00pm	Table Tennis
Sunday 10	10.30 After service	Sunday Worship Church meeting

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