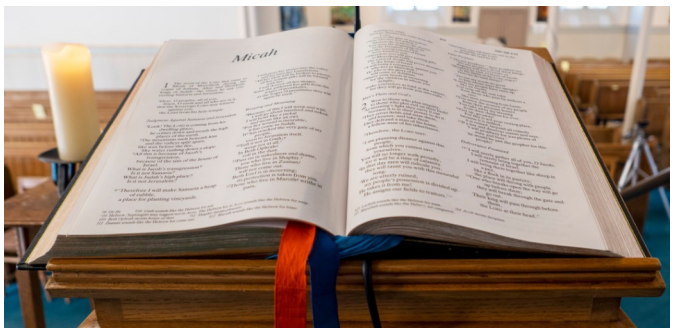
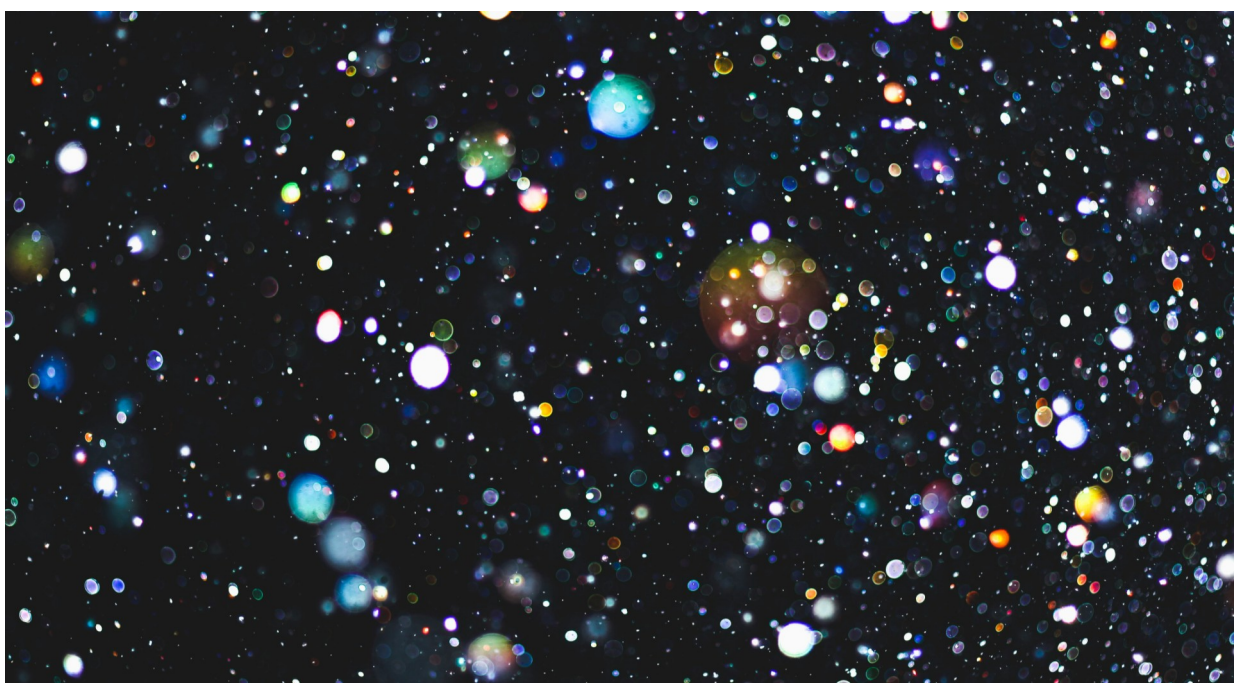


THE WORD FOR TODAY

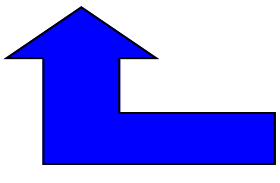
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS, chapter 2, verses 12-18 ". . shine like stars"

Paul was writing to the Christian Church at Philippi. You can read about that church coming into being in Acts 16, 12-40, marking the arrival in Europe of the Gospel of Jesus. It was a thriving Christian community with not so many of the problems which beset some of the other young churches, and the Christians there were outward-looking and generous, and delighted Paul's heart. Paul was in prison in Rome, not sure if he would live. Even in this dire situation he wanted to encourage the Philippians to keep developing their faith and their Christian life.

However desperate Paul's situation might be, this is a letter full of positivity and joy—joy which he hopes the Philippians will have too. What a benefit that joy would be in people's lives today, in the church, and in our troubled world!



Follow these words from Philippians 2 on seven panels around the church. The first is just round the corner on the north wall of this little building and the others are on benches round the sides and back of the church building. You will be directed to them. The translation of the Bible used is the New International Version, and you can look it up on the internet under Bible Gateway.



Turn immediately left to find the first Bible extract on the bench

“Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”

1



We know that God’s grace and forgiveness is offered freely to anyone who believes in him, but we know that if we are to really know and enjoy a relationship with this awesome God, our Saviour, we have to make an effort to live in his ways, difficult though that may seem at times when things are not necessarily going our way. Yet we know the rewards are great.

People need encouragement to stay on the right path through life—to keep going. All these young churches had to continue to be and to flourish when Paul was no longer there, just as Liberton Kirk has to continue without a minister. All of us need nurture and encouragement.

Lord, I praise you for your forgiveness and understanding.
it’s not easy to keep going on the right track on my own.
Help me to find the support and encouragement I need.

(No. 2 is on the bench just round the corner of the church building you are facing.



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“. . . for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.”

2

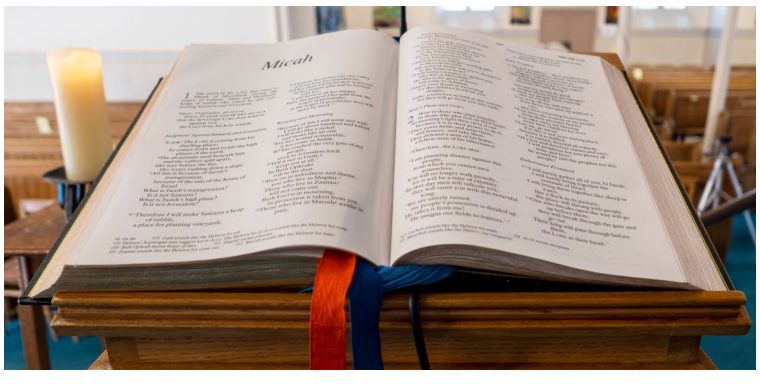


There is always help at hand to give us guidance and strength—we just need to ask. The God who comes so close to us when we make the effort to get closer to him, through Bible reading and prayer, will hear us and answer.

“What would Jesus do?” is such a good question when we have a dilemma, closely followed by a wee prayer “Show me, Lord!” We have to remember to allow time to listen for an answer!

Lord, help me to know you are always there to help and guide me.
Make me ready to ask.
Work in me through your Holy Spirit.

(No. 3 is further along this side of the church)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“Do everything without complaining or arguing; . . .”

3

Most of Paul’s hearers would be aware of the story of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, and their frequent complaints. It’s a very human tendency to complain about things—how many conversations do you hear complaining about the weather? We are quite good at muttering in the background too—undercurrents of dissension whenever any changes are proposed.

Why don’t we try being positive for a change? Yes, but Paul is asking a lot when he says “Do <u>everything</u> without complaining or arguing”. Everything? Perhaps this is the time to remember Jesus’ words *“Everything is possible for him who believes”* (Mark 9:23). Let’s see how Jesus can help us.



Lord, help me not to be negative.
Deepen my faith in you.
Make me open to your guidance and your will for me.

(Walk along the back of the church to find No. 4 on the bench)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“. . . so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation . . .”

4

When we accept God’s offer of forgiveness made possible through Jesus’ death on the cross, we are brought into his family. As children of God we want him to be proud of us like any child with his parents.

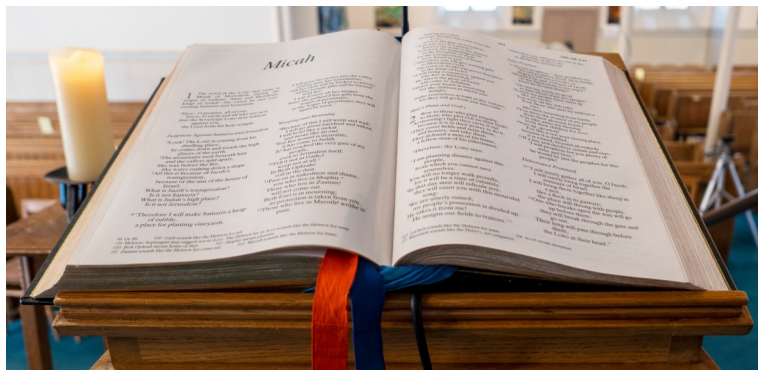


It’s a privilege to be a child of God, but as such we should behave in a noticeably different way to the world around us, which is as crooked and depraved today as it was in Paul’s day. We will to a certain extent be under scrutiny if people know we are Christians.

The way we behave <u>will be noticed</u>.

Lord, thank you for the sacrifice you made to bring me back into your family.
Help me to live as a grateful person in the way you would wish.
May I give an example to those around me of a good way to live.

(Walk along the back of the church and turn left to find panel 5 on the bench before the tower)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“ . . . in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life. . .”

5



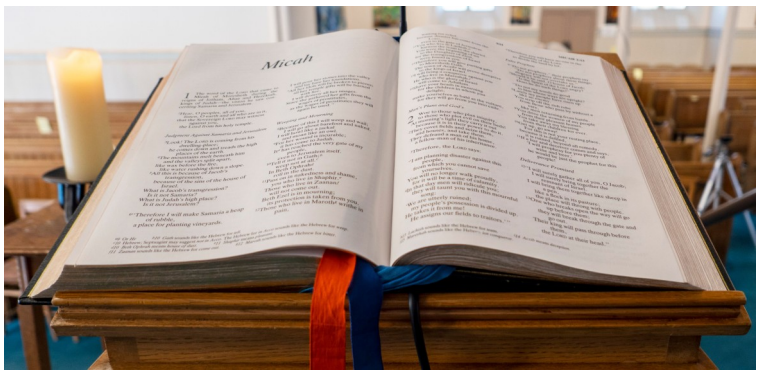
Jesus said something similar when he said *“. . let your light shine before men , that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”* **(Matthew 5:16)**

If you know Jesus in your life you have something to offer to others—to know Jesus is a truly life-changing experience. Because of that others should be seeing the difference in the way you live your life and finding it appealing.

It’s quite possible for them to know Jesus in their lives too. Be ready to tell them that if there is an opportunity!

Lord, thank you for being in my life and making a difference.
Help me to shine like a star in this dark world,
and not to hide my God-given light, but to offer it to others.

(Walk past the tower to find No. 6 beside the Cairn and the Covid Memorial)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“. . . in order that I may boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labour for nothing.”

6

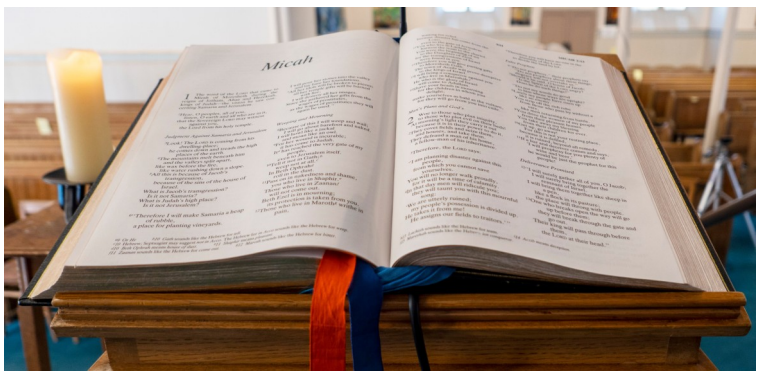
This is not so much about Paul boasting but again about encouraging his friends. He wants them to know he is proud of them, just as mums and dads and grandparents boast about their children or grandchildren, because they are proud of them. Telling them that is congratulating them, but also a form of encouragement. People like to be told they are doing well and as a result it spurs them on to achieve more.



People need congratulations and encouragement—it’s up to us to try to find something positive to say to people at all times. It will make you feel better too!

Lord, help me to be an encourager.
Open my eyes to see the people behind good things
and to take the time to speak to them about their efforts.

(You will find No. 7 just round the corner on the bench at the front of the church)



THE WORD FOR TODAY

“But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.”

7

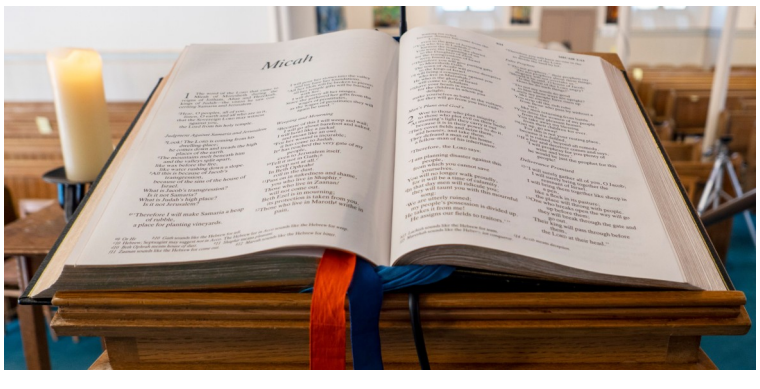
Paul is in dire straits. He feels he might lose his life before long. He’s grateful for the money and support he has received from the Philippians and he wants them to know he takes joy from what they are doing. He wants them to have that same joy in their hearts and not to fret over his difficulties.



How can anyone be joyful in really difficult personal circumstances such as Paul’s imprisonment and likely death? When we believe in Jesus, because of his death and rising again we can have a sure hope of life with him for ever. Deep down we have peace and joy in our hearts because of this certainty. Life may still have its share of difficulties, but that peace and joy will remain.

Lord, thank you for being the still centre of my life,
bringing peace and joy through all the storms of life.
Draw me closer to you every day, I pray.

Liberton Kirk has no minister at the moment, but you can contact us at minister@libertonkirk.net and your request will be dealt with by the appropriate person.



THE WORD FOR TODAY

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