

Service – I will offer up my life

Intro: Sometimes it does us good to look back on our life and think on how we can change our mindset to be more like Jesus.

SoF 1066 – Thy Word is a lamp unto my Feet (Disk 8-1-15)

*Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
And a light unto my path.*
(Repeat)

Please be near me to the end.

When I feel afraid,
Think I've lost my way,
Still You're there right beside me.
And nothing will I fear
As long as You are near;

I will not forget
Your love for me, and yet
My heart forever is wandering.
Jesus, be my guide
And hold me to Your side,
And I will love You to the end.

Let's PRAY: the prayer Jesus Himself gave us: ***Our Father, who art in Heaven.....***

Father God, our Father, my Father, we adore You, we worship and love You. Help us Father to live our lives in a way that pleases You the most, and help us Father to put You first in everything.

Father, we confess that we have sinned, there are things we should have done and we haven't, as well as things we should not have done, and we have given into temptations. Father we confess all our sins to You now and we ask for Your forgiveness.....

Father God, we thank You for loving and forgiving us, we thank You for all You give to us.

Father, we ask that Your Holy Spirit remains in us and guides us to fulfil your wishes for our lives.

We pray for the members of this church, for those they love, for those who we know who are unwell, and for our country.

We will now have a time of Open Prayer both spoken and silent.....

1st Reading – Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
3 he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,^[a]
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

- ⁵ You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
- ⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

1030 – The Lord’s my Shepherd (Disk 2 – 3 – 10)

The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not
want.
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in You alone.
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.*

(Descant)
*I will trust, I will trust in You.
I will trust, I will trust in You.*

*Endless mercy follows me,
Goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod
and staff
Are the comfort I need to know.

THE MESSAGE

I have a confession to make, in that over the last 38.5 years since I first started coming to Congregational Churches, I confess that I have certainly exasperated, and caused anguish to quite a few people in the churches, which is a problem, as within any family!!

As I see this new year as a new page in my life’s history, I want to start with my apologies to those people to whom I have offended.

Although I learnt a few things when I went to school in the 1950’s - I left school in July 1960, that is 66 years ago this summer, nothing I learned then has really taught me anything about how to live my life. And I expect that this is the same for most people.

But there was one lasting thing I did learn at school and I am most grateful for, and that is my Christian Faith, and, like I suspect most people, I hope that my faith in Jesus is growing stronger year by year!

I used to think that Ignorance is bliss, but now I think it’s easier to be wise AFTER the event, we should learn from our mistakes and move on taking our newly found knowledge with us for whatever happens next in our lives.

With God to guide us, to show us His love for us and to guide our way through this life, we don’t need any more, do we? The answer to that question is: Yes, yes we do! We need the WILL to persevere and follow God’s leading to the very end of our life, without us straying from the

path! We need to depend on God for everything and not try to act independently from God. To wait for His lead and then follow Him whole heartedly.

Whatever your situation in life, whatever your problem, the answer is Jesus and to follow Him!

When we take this morning's worship songs and thoughts to our hearts, when you get home, think what do I need to do now? When you have the answer, pray for God's guidance and follow Him!

When I moved my home and membership back to Steeple last year, I promised WECC that I would continue to lead the Midweek Services for as long as the church want me to, or until you take on a new minister!

In the middle of July last year, I prayed as to how I should live my life going forwards, and these words came into my mind: *"More Love, more power, More of You in my life."*

I also felt that I need to take those worshipful words and incorporate them with my friendships and the principles of **Chapel Community Care** of caring for one another, to produce a new way of life of being part of a "separated living community," like a hermit, rather than a "living together" life.

So producing a life of commitment to God first and foremost combined with a life of Christian Love, with care and commitment to each other.

This is NOT a marriage between 2 people, but a loving caring relationship with more than 2 people, and which together with Chapel Community Care takes that way of caring to others who are not necessarily Christian. This is a life of love and service to others.

Paul wrote in his Letter to the Ephesians, starting at 4:17 to 5:20:

"So, I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal

no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them.

⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said:

*"Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."*

¹⁵ Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸ Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen.

Pray with me: thank You Father for all You have done in my life.....

Heavenly Father, I commit my life from now on to You, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Our last 2 hymns are:

392 - More love, more power, more of You in my life (Disk 3-1-3)

MORE LOVE (more love),
MORE POWER (more power),
More of You in my life.
More love (more love),
More power (more power),
More of You in my life.

*And I will worship You with all of my heart,
And I will worship You with all of my mind,
And I will worship You with all of my strength,*

For You are my Lord.

*(Last time)
And I will seek Your face with all of my heart,
And I will seek Your face with all of my mind,
And I will seek Your face with all of my strength,
For You are my Lord,
You are my Lord*

851 - I will offer up my life (Disk 1 – 2 -1)

I will offer up my life

In spirit and truth,

Pouring out the oil of love

As my worship to You.

In surrender I must give my every part;

Lord, receive the sacrifice

Of a broken heart.

Oh, my words could not tell, not even in part,

Of the debt of love that is owed by this thankful heart.

You deserve my every breath

For You've paid the great cost;

Giving up Your life to death,

Even death on a cross.

You took all my shame away,

There defeated my sin,

Opened up the gates of heaven,

And have beckoned me in.

Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring

To so faithful a friend, to so loving a King?

Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung

As a praise of Your name

For the things You have done?

THE GRACE

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all for ever more, Amen.

This Service has been prepared by: Christopher Stirling of West End Congregational Church, Haverhill, UK.
If you have been sent this Service by a friend and would like to receive a Service every month, please email your request, titled "Please add me to your Emailing List" to: yewtreehouse@btinternet.com

Sources: Hymns are from Songs of Fellowship. The Readings are from the NIV and as shown.