

Order of Service Arklow Presbyterian 10.00 a.m.

WELCOME:

CALL to WORSHIP:

PRAYER (Adoration and Invitation):

PRAISE: 560 Praise my soul the King of heaven

PRAYER (Confession and thanks):

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

CHILDREN'S TALK: 'What will heaven be like?'

PRAISE: 307 I will enter His gates with thanksgiving

(Announce that children leave for Sunday School after this hymn)

PRAYER (Intercession):

NT READING: 2 Corinthians 5: 1-8 (page 1160) *Soul Resurrection*

NT READING: Revelation 7: 9-17 (page 1239) and 21 (kid's talk) *Heaven*

NT READING: 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44 (page 1156) *Resurrection Body*

NT READING: 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18 (page 1188) *General Resurrection*

NT READING: 2 Peter 3: 10-13 (page 1224) *Recreated Cosmos*

PRAISE: 605 Soon and very soon we are going to see the King

SERMON: 'Glorification- I don't need to fear death'

OFFERING AND DEDICATION:

PRAISE: 201 Guide me O Thou great Jehovah

BENEDICTION: The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; be with us all evermore.

Children's Address: 'What's heaven like?'

Intro:

Remember I asked you some questions about Jesus?

Who is He? Why did He die on the cross? What happened to Him 3 days later?

Where did He go? Back to heaven.

Jesus took His disciples up a mountain called the Mount of Olives. He told them to tell everybody the good news that He loved them and died for them. Then He went up into heaven. The disciples were amazed and a bit afraid. But an angel said, "Don't be afraid. Jesus will come back again and take everyone who loves Him up to heaven some day."

If we love Jesus we don't need to be afraid of what happens to us because Jesus will take us to live with Him in heaven. But what will heaven be like?

Things not in heaven:

Church-	God's presence
Sun/moon-	God's glory shines
Candle-	Light forever, no darkness, no fear
Sin-	Everyone will be people who love God, they will be perfect
Tears-	God will wipe away all tears
Sickness-	None in heaven
Death-	Everyone will live forever

Things in heaven:

God-	Don't know exactly what He looks like
Angels-	10,000 X 10,000
Lamb's Book of Life-	List of all people who have turned and trusted
Gold Streets-	12 Pearl gates, Crystal River, Foundations of stones
Tree of life-	Eat of the fruit and live forever
Houses-	Jesus is getting a house ready for all who love Him
Jesus-	We'll be able to say thank you to Him properly

If you love Jesus you don't need to be afraid of the future. One Day you'll be able to go to heaven and live with God and everyone who loves Him including your family.

Glorification

Intro:

I was strolling through botanic park in Belfast one lunch time. A woman in her early thirties was walking towards me. Suddenly she froze unable to move and burst into uncontrollable tears.

“Are you O.K.?” I asked. Eventually she was able to gather herself together enough to hobble towards a seat. “Today is the first time in three years I’ve ever been outside,” she cried. “What happened?” I inquired. “I was attacked by a dog on holiday, and I almost died.” “It’s taken me three years of counselling to pluck up enough courage to walk outside.” “I saw a dog on the other side of the park.” “I can’t help it. It all came flooding back!” After a few minutes, I escorted her to her car in safety feeling helpless and hoping that somehow, in time, she would be able to overcome her paralysing fear.

Whether we like to admit it or not, we all have fears. But perhaps our greatest fear is the fear of death- a fear of the unknown that lies ahead. Of course many people believe that this life is all there is and when it’s over, it’s over, so you might as well just live it to the max. But what hope does that give to those people who aren’t able to live life to the max because of disability, chronic illness, paralysing fear or deep loss. Surely there must be something better ahead? The bible teaches that there is life after death. In fact in Christ it promises to be a far better life than this one. That’s why one of the blessings of being a Christian is that we can live our lives without fearing death. But what do we have to look forward to and what difference does being a Christian make?

1 **Death is not the end but a new beginning:**

The bible clearly teaches us that because Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead when we die we will be resurrected also. At death, the souls of believers, that is the real entity that is you apart from your physical body, will be made perfect and enter into the worshipping life of heaven, God’s Kingdom. The bible calls this glorification. The bible does not teach ‘soul sleep.’ This is perceived as an unconscious state between death and resurrection. Scripture speaks of conscious relationship, involvements and enjoyments after death. No the bible clearly teaches that immediately after death our souls, the real us, will be resurrected to another existence.

The second thing that the bible teaches is that at death our final destiny will be decided. In Hebrews we read, “It is appointed for all people to die once, and after that to be judged.” We will be judged on whether we have received Christ and have had His righteousness put down to our account. If we have been justified in Christ, the evidence in our lives will make this clear. Because when we are justified and adopted we are sealed with the Spirit. The Spirit will then motivate us to live a life that is good. Those who have accepted Christ and have been changed to live a life of obedience to God will enter heaven. But those who have not received Christ and who have not lived a life in obedience to God will spend their eternal existence in the place the bible calls hell. The story of the rich man and Lazarus, shows us that our existence after death will be in one of two places, either heaven or hell. It also teaches us that once we are there, we cannot better ourselves and so cross over from one side to the other. The bible does not teach that there is an intermediate state after

death where we are perfected before entering heaven. That's why Paul can say, "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." When a Christian dies their soul will be immediately perfected and will enter the joy of heaven. It will only be later, that we will be clothed in a new resurrection body when Christ returns to set up the new heaven and the new earth. If you are a Christian here this morning let me assure you of this. Death is not the end, it will merely be a new beginning. You do not need to fear it because at that moment you will enter heaven to live with God and all who have faith in Him. Later when Christ returns you will receive a new resurrection body with which to live in the new heaven and the new earth. John Donne puts it beautifully when he says, "Our last day is our first day; our sunset is our morning; the day of our death is the first day of eternal life."

2 Death should motivate us to tell people about Jesus:

But what about people who have never heard of Christ? What will be their final outcome? The truth is I don't know for sure about any individual. However, I would tentatively speculate the following. First, because by nature we are all sinners, we need God's mercy in Christ to rescue us. Secondly, it's only really as God moves in our lives to see our need of His mercy that we will ever come to Him. Thirdly it's only Christ's death on the cross that can pay for sins. Fourthly God is fair. If He graciously chooses to move someone to seek Him sincerely to receive forgiveness, rather than asserting their own goodness, then He will be merciful. Fifthly, there is an objectivity about Christ's sacrifice for sin. People in the OT never knew of Christ in His fullness, yet His death has paid the price of sin for those who had faith in God. In the same way, if God in His mercy reveals Himself to someone, who then responds in humility and faith, He can choose to forgive them on the basis of what Christ has done, even if they don't fully understand it. It also means that through Christ's sacrifice, God may have mercy on those who are unable to understand the gospel because of disability or because they have died when very young.

But I must reiterate, these are only my speculations based on what I know of God's mercy, His justice and the work of Christ. But what I am sure of is this. All of us are sinners and as such we don't seek after God on His terms. People often seek after God on their terms- trying to make themselves right with God by their own works. But God's way is different. He sent Christ to pay the price for sin. Therefore its only as God shows us our need for His mercy that we can receive forgiveness through Christ. God commands us to go into the world and tell people that they need to repent and believe in Christ. It's only by hearing the good news about Christ that we can be sure that people have really understood how they can receive God's mercy. It's only by hearing about Jesus that people can understand the privileges of being sons of God. It's only by hearing about Jesus that people can have full assurance that they are saved. At the end of the day, we must base our belief and practice on what we are definitely sure of, not on what we can only speculate on. We are certain that if people repent and believe in Christ they will be saved. Therefore we must do all that we can to go into the world and share this good new with everyone. Share your faith with your friends.....

3 Heaven will be a place of blessing and reunion:

But what is heaven going to be like? Well, like a birthday surprise the bible only gives us glimpses of what heaven has in store. But you can be certain that like Frosties “It’s gonna be great!”

Above all, it will be a place where we will unite together with the entire family of God from every century to worship and praise God. It is pictured as a country of rest and at the time of Christ’s return to earth for final judgement, it will take the form of a reconstructed cosmos. There we will have a perfect relationship with God the Father, Son and Spirit and with one another. These relationships will be free from all limitations, frustration and failure. We will experience none of the consequences of the fall, no sickness, no pain, no evil, no conflict or distress. Our days will be filled with every conception of excellence and God-given enjoyment that we know. We will see God face to face. We’ll experience His love and ministry in a new way. We will be reunited and enjoy a renewed relationship with our loved ones who have gone on before us. We will continue to grow, maturing, learning, sharpening the abilities God has given us. We will rest, we will work, we will praise and worship. We will be rewarded for how we have loved Christ while on earth and we will experience the constant fellowship of God and all his saints.

Think of the last time you had an experience that made you think, “I don’t want this ever to end.” Well, the experience of heaven will be beyond all that we can ever dream. When we get there, within a few moments we’ll say, “I want this to go on forever.” The good news is, it will! There can be no greater news than that.

4 Nothing can take this hope away from us:

God promises all who trust in Him a secure home in heaven. Nothing that we go through on this earth can destroy, defile or diminish the wonderful future that God is preparing for us. A friend of mine told me a true, yet tragic story of a man who was offered a life assurance policy. Just before signing the deal, the man rang to say that he would delay taking out the policy so that he could purchase a grand piano for his house. A few months later the financial adviser heard that the man had suddenly died. Whilst speaking to the man’s bereaved wife, he discovered that unfortunately, though she had a beautiful piano, she would no longer have anywhere to keep it because she could no longer afford the payments for their house. Thankfully as Christians, no disaster, no matter how great or painful, even death itself, can rob us of the wonderful home that even now, Christ is preparing for us. The reason we can be certain of our heavenly home is because the insurance policy we have is with God Himself. Under heaven’s lock and key we are protected by the most efficient security system available- the power of God. Listen to how Peter puts it in 1 Peter 1: 3-5:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-- kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

God who cannot lie, promises that neither we nor our inheritance will be lost in the process of suffering. No disease, no disorder, no disaster, no disappointment or

depth of pain, not even death itself can weaken or threaten God's ultimate protection of our lives.

But what about you? Is this your hope? Is your future secured in Christ? Each of us needs to make sure that we have cried out to God for mercy and trusted in Christ. Without Him there is no hope of eternal life but only a fear of death and an eternity away from God's love. None of us can be sure of tomorrow. Make peace with God today. Only then can you be certain of a brighter future tomorrow.

Call:

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with His people. And He will dwell with them. They shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them and be their God."

Invocation:

Almighty God, in sorrow you saw your Son crucified, but with deeper joy, you saw Him raised from the dead. And now we celebrate His return to heaven to His Father's embrace and the acclamation of the angels. Help us to understand these truths more deeply this morning. Through their knowledge may we learn to live as Christ lived and to bear suffering as He bore it. Through their encouragement enable us to maintain an attitude of hope whatever our circumstances with the assurance that in Christ we too will experience resurrection and be received into heaven by Jesus, with you and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory forever, Amen.

Confession and Thanks:

God of mercy and God of grace. You know the secrets of our hearts. How blind we are to our own faults, yet harsh in judging others. How swift we are to take for gain yet slow to give for others. How proud we are of our success, yet grudging in our praise for others. Remember Lord your tender care and unfailing love. Forget our sins and offences but remember us in your goodness and forgive us according to your endless mercy. Lord God, you are the source and giver of all good things. We thank you for all your blessings and for your loving care over all creation. We bless you for the gift of life, for your daily protection, your guiding hand upon us, your steadfast love within us. We thank you for friendship and duty, for good hopes and precious memories, for joys that cheer us and trials that teach us to trust in you. Most of all we thank you for the saving knowledge of your Son our Saviour, for the living presence of your Spirit the comforter, for the hope of a heavenly reunion with our loved ones in Christ, for the support and encouragement of the church, the body of Christ and for the ministry of your word to our lives and hearts every week.

Intercession:

Lord of all the worlds, we bless your name for all those who have entered into their rest and reached the promised land where you are seen face to face. Give us grace to follow in their footsteps as they followed in the footsteps of Jesus. Keep alive in us the memory of those dear to us whom you have called to yourself and grant that every thought which turns our minds from what is temporary to what is eternal will lead us ever closer to you until that day when we will be reunited and share the joys of heaven. _Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us, And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil, For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, For ever and ever, AMEN.

Offering:

We bring our gifts to you, Lord God with cheerfulness and a joyful heart. Grant that with our gifts we may also offer a ready mind and a willing spirit to demonstrate in our lives the truth of the gospel, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.