

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 13 June 2021

Opening Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 424

Here is love, vast as the ocean,
lovingkindness as the flood,
when the Prince of life, our ransom,
shed for us his precious blood.
Who his love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing his praise?
He can never be forgotten
throughout heaven's eternal days.

2 On the mount of crucifixion
fountains opened deep and wide;
through the floodgates of God's mercy
flowed a vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love, like mighty rivers,
poured incessant from above,
and heaven's peace and perfect justice
kissed a guilty world in love.

William Rees (1802-1883), trans. William Edwards (1848-1929)

Reading: Acts 23, ESV

And looking intently at the council, Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day." ² And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. ³ Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?" ⁴ Those who stood by said, "Would you revile God's high priest?" ⁵ And Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

⁶ Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial." ⁷ And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection,

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nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. ⁹ Then a great clamour arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended sharply, "We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?" ¹⁰ And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks.

¹¹ The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."

¹² When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. ¹³ There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. ¹⁴ They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

¹⁶ Now the son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. ¹⁷ Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him." ¹⁸ So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you." ¹⁹ The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" ²⁰ And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to enquire somewhat more closely about him. ²¹ But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent." ²² So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of these things."

²³ Then he called two of the centurions and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. ²⁴ Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor." ²⁵ And he wrote a letter to this effect:

²⁶ "Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. ²⁷ This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸ And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. ²⁹ I found that he was being accused about questions of their

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law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment.³⁰ And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him.”

³¹ So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris.

³² And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. ³³ When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. ³⁴ On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵ he said, “I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive.” And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.

Hymn: Praise! 774

A sovereign protector I have,
unseen, yet for ever at hand,
unchangeably faithful to save,
almighty to rule and command.

He smiles, and my comforts abound;
his grace as the dew shall descend,
and walls of salvation surround
the soul he delights to defend.

2 Inspirer and hearer of prayer,
both leading and guarding your sheep,
I place in your covenant care
my life, both awake and asleep;

if you are my shield and my sun
the night is no darkness to me,
for, fast as my moments roll on,
so nearer to you I shall be.

3 Creator and ground of my hope,
to your name alone I shall bow,
a new ‘Ebenezer’ set up
to show ‘God has helped us till now.’
I think on the years that are past,
when all my defence you have proved;
nor will you relinquish at last
a sinner so blessed and so loved.

Augustus M Toplady (1740-1778)

Sermon: Acts 23 – Immortal Till Our Work is Done

“The following night the Lord stood by him and said, ‘Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify in Rome’ (11)

1. God’s Protection Promised

2. God’s Protection Demonstrated

Hymn: Praise 2! 24

Blessed be your name in the land that is
plentiful

Where the 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

2 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

*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

Every blessing you pour out...

Blessed be the name of the Lord...

Beth & Matt Redman

Prayer

Hymn: Praise 2! 36

There is a higher throne
than all this world has known,
where faithful ones from every tongue
will one day come.

Before the Son we'll stand,
made faultless through the Lamb;
believing hearts find promised grace:
salvation comes.

*Hear heaven's voices sing,
their thunderous anthem rings
through emerald courts and sapphire skies,
their praises rise.*

Keith & Kristyn Getty

*All glory, wisdom, power,
strength, thanks and honour are
to God, our King who reigns on high,
for evermore.*

2 And there we'll find our home,
our life before the throne;
we'll honour him in perfect song
where we belong.
He'll wipe each tear-stained eye,
as thirst and hunger die;
the Lamb becomes our Shepherd-King:
we'll reign with him.

Closing Prayer