

Dorset South and West written Service
12th. December by Rev. J.E.M. Barber

Please use your own bible for scripture readings.

Advent is a time to prepare to worship God for the birth and ministry of Jesus not for satisfying our material pleasures.

Hymn SF 154

Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes
The Saviour promised long,
let every heart prepare a throne
And every voice a song.

He comes the prisoner to release
In satan's bondage held
The gates of brass before him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure
And with the treasures of His grace
enrich the humble poor

Our glad hosannas Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With thy beloved Name. Amen.

As we look ahead we must also look back and thank God for all that he has done for each one of us and confess all our sins. So a short time of silence for self examination and repentance for all our sins, as we name them before God.

Hymn SF129 God forgave my sin in Jesus name

I've been born again in Jesus name
And in Jesus name I come to you
To share His love as He told me to

Chorus:

He said Freely, freely you have received
Freely, freely give,
Go in my name and because you believe,
others will know that I live.

All power is given in Jesus' name,
In earth and heaven in Jesus' name,
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His love as He told me to.

That hymn reminds us of the love and compassion of God but scripture continually reminds us of the sin of man and how we stray from God's ways and how he keeps calling us back to the ways of righteousness and peace.

One of the less well known books in the bible is that of the prophet Zephaniah one of the last and shortest in the Old Testament and can be summarised in these 3 sections but it would be good to read them.

Ch1 v1 -2v3 The Day of the Lords Judgement
2 v 4-15 The doom of Israel's neighbours
3 v 1-20 Jerusalem's doom and redemption.

As we read these scriptures surely we have to ask how God will deal with us. The Jews did not learn all the lessons in the Old Testament, God had to keep on sending the prophets and still they went on sinning. That is why he had to send John the Baptist as a final last call to the people to turn from their sins and welcome and believe in Jesus who was about to start his ministry. Mark Ch1 v 1-3

Hymn Hps 84 On Jordon's banks the Baptist cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of Kings!

Then cleansed be every Christian breast,
And furnished for so great a guest!
Yea, let us each our heart prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.

For Thou art our salvation, Lord,
Our refuge, and our great reward;
Without thy grace we waste away
Like flowers that wither and decay.

To heal the sick stretch out thy hand,
And bid the fallen sinner stand;
Shine forth, and let thy light restore
Earth's own true loveliness once more.

All praise, eternal Son, to thee
Whose advent sets thy people free,
Whom, with the Father, we adore,
And Holy Ghost, for evermore.

All this leaves us with two serious questions+
How did we or have we responded when God has called us -
was it through another Christian ? A congregation and their
worship ? Or did God speak to us direct ? How did we
respond ?

Who is he wanting to use today ? Has each one of us
heard and responded to what he has asked each one of us
to do ?

Hymn Combined sounds 95 God has spoken
(An ancient Israeli folk song)

Refrain: God has spoken to his people, hallelujah!
And His words are words of wisdom,
hallelujah!

Open your ears, O Christian people,
Open your ears and hear good news.
Open your hearts, O royal priesthood.
God has come to you:

Refrain:-

He who has ears to hear his message,
He who has ears then let him hear.
He who would learn the way of wisdom,
let him hear Gods word:

Refrain:

Israel comes to greet the Saviour;
Judah is glad to see his day.
From East and West the peoples travel.
He will show the way.

Surely our nation today desperately needs to hear the cry of
the prophets calling people back to God.
May God bless you as you answer His call on your life.