

SSUC Online Worship Sheet

Sunday May 30th – Trinity Sunday

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Collect

Father God,

You call your people, as You called Abraham from the land of his ancestors –

To walk in Your ways, to claim the land of Your possession.

So You grant us the mission field for Your harvest,

The land of Your promise for Your people today.

Christ our Lord,

You walked with Your disciples,

You ate, You prayed, You healed, You embraced...

All these things You did among those You would call, brothers and sisters [Mt. 12:48-50]

This Love would lead You to that great and awesome sacrifice on the Cross.

Holy Spirit,

You descended upon those who knew and understood the reality of Christ.

Again, and again, You descend upon Your church –

Those who would be led by You,

Triune God of Grace and Mercy,

Bless us with an understanding of Your call,

A revelation of Your Love for us all,

And a sense of being led forwards in Your Name,

Thus we pray,

Amen.

Prayer for Others

Triune God,

You heard the cry of Your children in Egypt, and You liberated them.

You saw Your children in the wilderness and You had pity on them.

You heard Your children cry to You from Babylon and you redeemed them.

Through Christ, we know how boundless is grace,

How pure Your Love,

We pray for Your children now, suffering, hungering, struggling...

Grant them the presence and consolation of Your Holy Spirit,

May the Spirit of Grace rest upon all those who mourn and grieve at this moment,

And lift them up so they may understand and know Your Love,

Through Christ our Lord we pray.

Amen.

The Love of God for the World

John 3:1-17

"Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

John 3:5-8

This is Jesus' challenge to Nicodemus, this leader among the Jewish community at Jerusalem – steals away into the night – to have this conversation with this radical, rebel leader. He does not come to Jesus publicly, but to ask a question that very pertinent... even today: "How can someone be born when they are old?" (John 3:4)

There is a certain logic to this question that we need to understand as we unpack this passage further – Nicodemus' question is actually asking 'what is the logic to being born again?' This question is relevant today also, as society asks – what is the point in accepting Jesus Christ if we are already good people.

Of note is the fact that Jesus pre-empts this question, when Nicodemus acknowledges Jesus' divinity – Jesus jumps in with: "...no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." (John 3:3) This is something that we have forgotten in our modern society, that it is not merely about being good or being bad, but it is about aligning ourselves with God's call on us and the work of Christ in our lives. This may be difficult for some to hear, as a 'Christian' society, we like to believe that this means we would be already alright with God. However, we need to look at who is talking to Jesus here – Nicodemus was not a regular person, he was a Jew – a person who is part of the chosen people of God. The other thing we must note is the fact that Nicodemus was a member of the Jewish ruling council.

The Sanhedrin was a council of men who had undertaken study or had been part of a religious instruction programme to be able to be part of this group. Some of these men were even serving priests or Levites who had been entitled with this privilege of leading the Jewish community. Nicodemus' knowledge of the Scriptures would probably rival that of most ministers' or theologians today – yet Jesus still calls him to account for that lack of awareness of God's call on His people.

I am challenged by this as we are a missional expression for the Southside – if Jesus were to meet with us, would he say something similar? "...do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony." (John 3:10-11) The testimony of Christ is that He was sent to give His life in redemption of *our* sins and in this we must be ready to hear Christ's call to repentance – to placing our own lives in the hands of God and to be challenged to preach the same message as Christ.

"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

May we be as those born of the Spirit – ready to follow and go as God commands!

Amen