

SCAC Aldersgate Sunday Worship Service, 2020

The theme for *Aldersgate Sunday 2020* is “Look to the Lord in Time of Trails” based on 1 Peter 1:6-7, while the Sermon Outline is based on John Wesley’s Standard Sermon No 47—Heaviness through Manifold Temptations.

This liturgy is divided into three parts and its basic ideas are as follow:

1. We who are saved by Jesus rejoice greatly in His salvation.
2. However, there is a time for everything; therefore encountering trials in our life is unavoidable. In these circumstances, we should trust Him whole-heartedly as He is our savior and friend, and He will carry us through.
3. As we demonstrate our faith in time of trails, we will receive praise, honor and glory when Jesus returns. Trails are temporal while praise, honor and glory from Jesus are eternal.

Look to the Lord in Time of Trails

Rejoice Greatly

Prelude:		Pianist
Wait:	“Still for Thy Loving Kindness” <i>Hymns of United Worship 248</i>	Choir/ Ensemble
Awake:	My heart, O God, is steadfast; I will sing and make music with all my soul. Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise you, LORD, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. <i>(Ps 108:1-5, NIV)</i>	Liturgist
† Exalt:	“O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing” <i>UMH 57</i> “Rejoice, the Lord is King” <i>UMH715</i>	All
† Mercy:	Liturgist: Brothers and sisters, The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. Let us pray: Liturgist: Depth of mercy! Can there be mercy still reserved for me? Can my God His wrath forbear, me, the chief of sinners, spare? Sisters: I have long withstood His grace, long provoked Him to His face, Would not hearken to His calls, grieved Him by a thousand falls. Brothers: I my Master have denied, I afresh have crucified, oft profaned His hallowed Name, put Him to an open shame. Liturgist: There for me the Savior stands, shows His wounds and spreads His hands. God is love! I know, I feel; Jesus weeps and loves me still.	Liturgist/All

All: Now incline me to repent,
let me now my sins lament,
Now my foul revolt deplore,
weep, believe, and sin no more.

Liturgist: Lord, you are forgiving and good,
abounding in love to all who call to you.
(Ps 103:8; 86:5; "Depth of Mercy"UMH 355)

† Pray: The Lord's Prayer All
Praise: Choir

Trust Him Wholeheartedly

Turn to: "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" *UMH 479, Stz 1* All

A Time: There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, NIV)

Secure: "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" *UMH 479, Stz 2* All

Trust: In all this you greatly rejoice,
though now for a little while you may have had
to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.
These have come so that the proven genuineness of your
faith—
of greater worth than gold,
which perishes even though refined by fire—
may result in praise, glory and honor
when Jesus Christ is revealed. *(1 Peter 1:6-7, NIV)*

Preach: "In Time of Trails" Pastor

† Affirm: The Apostles' Creed All

Offer: "I Want a Principle Within" *UMH 410* All

† "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" *UMH 95* All

Announce: Pastor

Hope Gloriously

† Hope:	“Blow Ye the Trumpet, Blow” <i>UMH379</i>	All
† Bless:	“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” <i>(Romans 15:5-6)</i>	Pastor
† Response:	“Amen”	All
† Dismiss:	“Forth in Thy Name, I go” <i>UMH 438</i>	All
Postlude:		Pianist
Silence:		All

Title: “In Time of Trials” (1 Peter 1: 6-7)

Based on John Wesley’s Standard Sermon 47: “*Heaviness through Manifold Temptations*”. See Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley (Volume 2): Sermons II, 34-70* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 222-235.

Introduction

Since the past few months, we have been witnessing various kinds of natural disasters and sufferings: bushfires in Australia, desert locust outbreak in East Africa, flu outbreak in the United States, Wuhan corona-virus epidemic.... Christians are not spared of these disasters and sufferings. How should we face all these disasters? Let’s turn to God’s Word in I Peter 1: 6-7.

I. Do not forget the great joy in our salvation (1: 6a)

1. God the Father through the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit has granted us spiritual new birth and eternal salvation in Christ (1: 1-5). We rejoice greatly for that! ‘Holiness’ and ‘happiness’ are the two fruits of salvation that John Wesley emphasized.
2. Illustration: Share about the joy you experienced in your new birth.
3. Question: Have you experienced such great joy in life? Have your beloved family members experienced such great joy? We face all kinds of sufferings in this world but these are not going to rob us of our joy in our eternal salvation.

II. Do not allow sufferings to destroy our faith (1: 6b-7center)

1. Although Christians have great joy in salvation, we still face many trials in life – “various kinds of trials” that cause “suffering for a little while”.
2. Christians will face “manifold/various” trials, temptations, tests, sufferings, challenges, shocks, stress, illness, bereavement, family members’ unbelief, Satanic attack and etc. Even “suffered” (distressed, grieved, agonized). In his sermon “Heaviness through Manifold Temptations”, John Wesley pointed out that Christians with a living faith and sincere love for God would also experience such sadness and distress that would enfold his heart and soul.
3. But all these sufferings will enhance the faith of Christians to be purer and stronger like gold tested by fire. Wesley stated that sufferings and sorrows would not impair, much less destroy, any part of the work of God in the heart of a real Christian. Wesley remarked, “Though they were heavy, yet were they holy. They retained the same power over sin.” Wesley emphasized that as believers’ faith became purer, stronger and grew, their hopes, their gratitude to God and their kindness to people would also multiply (that is, their love for God and neighbours). We will become more and more humble and holy. Others will emulate our life and behaviour as they see a life that is calm, stable, strong, joyous, kind, virtuous, and growing in the midst of storm, sorrow, disease, and pain. In a letter to George Whitefield on March 16, 1739, Wesley praised Rev. Simon Patrick, an Anglican priest in the mid-17th century, during the terrible plague in London in the years 1665-1666 (then about 100,000 of London’s total population of 460,000 died). He stayed put in the community and continued to shepherd those suffering people.

4. **Illustration:** Share about how you experienced true faith and belief, virtue and growth when you were facing trials, sufferings and sorrows (or a certain brother or sister, or a saint in the history of the church, such as Rev. William Mompesson, the Anglican pastor of Eyam, in the southeast of Manchester, England, how in 1665 in the face of Black Death he led 344 villagers to self-sacrifice by isolating themselves and hence stop the epidemic in the area).
5. **Question:** Are you faithful enough to stand these trials? Do your family members have a strong faith in the Lord? We need to strengthen family discipleship and train them in their knowledge about our Lord and confidence in the Lord.

III. Do not let the glory before the Lord be obscured by the current disasters (1: 7b)

1. Christians with strong faith in trials will receive “praise, glory and honour” from Christ! The current disasters are only temporary; the praise, glory, and honour that the Lord Jesus brings to us at His second coming are eternal.
2. John Wesley said that Christians with faith, hope, love, and holiness would receive “praise from God himself” and “glory assigned by the great Judge to all that have endured to the end”, “honour from men and angels”. Matthew 16:27 says, “For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.” (NIV) II Corinthians 4:17 says, “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” (NIV)

Conclusion

In the face of disasters and trials, don’t forget our great joy in salvation; don’t let all kinds of sufferings destroy our faith; and don’t let the great praise, glory, and honour that we shall receive before our Lord be obscured by the disasters happening in the world. John Wesley said that true Christian faith would bring about eternal hope and present love and virtue.