



Simon is looking at the book of Daniel today – a great book about how Daniel and his 3 friends struggled to maintain hope in the land of their conquerors.

Listening to the news at the moment we can see some glimpses of hope – the extended furlough scheme, a new vaccine, students being allowed home for Christmas. But at the same time there is still much sobering news – the increasing death toll and the likelihood that restrictions are likely to continue in 2021 even with the new vaccine.

1 Peter 1: '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. This inheritance is 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. 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.'

Introduction

Elizabeth Smith: To prepare for this service, I really felt I wanted our worship to focus on the phrase “words of eternal life” *John 6*. Jesus has just said to his disciples “*The words I have spoken to you – they are spirit and they are life*” but some followers were deserting him and Jesus challenged them as to whether they too would leave and Peter said “*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life*” (6:68).

Lord open our ears to listen to your words to us this morning - through scripture, worship and prayer and use Simon's words to challenge us in our walk with you. Amen

Readings

Deuteronomy 32:1-4

Psalms 119:103 and 160

Matthew 24: 35

John 1:1-2 then 14

1 Peter 1:22-25

Song

You are the King of glory
 You are the Prince of Peace
 You are the Lord of heav'n and earth
 You're the Son of righteousness
 Angels bow down before You
 Worship and adore
 For You have the words of eternal life
 You are Jesus Christ the Lord

Hosanna to the Son of David
 Hosanna to the King of kings
 Glory in the highest heaven
 For Jesus the Messiah reigns

Mavis Ford

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Song

You were the Word at the beginning
One with God the Lord Most High
Your hidden glory in creation
Now revealed in You our Christ

What a beautiful Name it is
What a beautiful Name it is
The Name of Jesus Christ my King
What a beautiful Name it is
Nothing compares to this
What a beautiful Name it is
The Name of Jesus

You didn't want heaven without us
So Jesus You brought heaven down
My sin was great Your love was greater
What could separate us now

What a wonderful Name it is
What a wonderful Name it is
The Name of Jesus Christ my King
What a wonderful Name it is
Nothing compares to this
What a wonderful Name it is
The Name of Jesus

Death could not hold You
The veil tore before You
You silence the boast of sin and grave
The heavens are roaring
The praise of Your glory
For You are raised to life again

You have no rival
You have no equal
Now and forever God You reign
Yours is the kingdom
Yours is the glory
Yours is the Name above all names

What a powerful Name it is
What a powerful Name it is
The Name of Jesus Christ my King
What a powerful Name it is
Nothing can stand against
What a powerful Name it is
The Name of Jesus

What a powerful Name it is
The Name of Jesus
What a powerful Name it is
The Name of Jesus

Ben Fielding | Brooke Ligertwood

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Read Daniel 1 and 6:7-23

Teaching

Daniels' response to his lockdown.

- He keeps his eyes focussed towards God
- He gives thanks to God, despite everything

How do we respond today when things aren't as we would like them?

Prayers

Let's pray about our own use of words (and that includes written words via emails, texts, social media and so on). Often we say things that are unhelpful, unkind or critical. Often we fail to take opportunities to say an affirming or kind word, or we fail to speak a word about Jesus when we could have done so. Pause and reflect for a moment on the last week...

Lord Jesus

Forgive us when our words do not reflect the life of your Spirit within us, and cause hurt or harm or deny someone the opportunity to hear "words of eternal life".

This week please prompt us and give us the courage to speak your words when appropriate and to refrain from speaking when it would cause damage to others.

Amen

Let's pray about the use of words by our leaders. We are saddened when opinions are expressed in a hostile way by our world leaders. These are difficult times but we want to see civilised debate and co-operation to find workable solutions to our problems. Pause for a moment and focus on one issue (pandemic, economy, asylum seekers, terrorism, climate change or something else that concerns you) and think about the words you've heard used

Lord Jesus

We pray for leaders of the nations to use words based on Christian values of respect, honesty and seeking the common good. We pray they would be filled with great wisdom as they face unprecedented issues. May they work for peace and justice, rather than their own power. Amen

Let's pray for Helen Cobbald and Wycliffe Bible Translators. Their prayer diary is entitled "Words for life". Scripture being available in people's local tongue is so important to enable people to find Jesus – the way the truth and the life. Translation teams have had to adapt to working under Covid restrictions, and poor internet connectivity can make distanced meetings and workshops hard. South Africa is still a tough place to be working in – pray for workers like Helen to stay safe.

Lord Jesus

We praise you for the work of Wycliffe in enabling scripture to be available in local languages and in different ways – written text, audio, phone apps. Please use these "words of life" to bring many to faith in you. We pray particularly for Helen and her South Africa team – keep them safe. Thank you for the enthusiasm they have for the new SePulana translation project - we pray particularly for a workshop this week where Helen is helping.

Lord we thank you so much for the gift of words and especially the words of eternal life we find in you – inspire us this week to share that gift. Amen

Song

You're the Word of God the Father
From before the world began
Ev'ry star and ev'ry planet
Has been fashioned by Your hand
All creation holds together
By the power of Your voice
Let the skies declare Your glory
Let the land and seas rejoice

You're the author of creation
You're the Lord of ev'ry man
And Your cry of love rings out
Across the lands

Yet You left the gaze of angels
Came to seek and save the lost
And exchanged the joy of heaven
For the anguish of a cross
With a prayer You fed the hungry
With a word You stilled the sea
Yet how silently You suffered
That the guilty may go free

With a shout You rose victorious
Wresting victory from the grave
And ascended into heaven
Leading captives in Your wake
Now You stand before the Father
Interceding for Your own
From each tribe and tongue and nation
You are leading sinners home

Keith Getty | Stuart Townend

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May God's Word be in your heart.
May God's Word be on your lips.
May God's Word be in your touch.
May God's Word direct your feet.
On this day and all your days to come
May God's Word be the life you live.