

ROCHFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Welcome to

CHURCH AT HOME

Sunday 17th May 2020

Read through this outline and join with everyone else at 11am

HYMN (to sing or read)

Fight the good fight with all thy might,
Christ is thy strength and Christ thy right.
lay hold on life, and it shall be
thy joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race through God's good grace,
Lift up thine eyes, and seek His face,
life with its path before thee lies,
Christ is the way, and Christ the prize.

Cast care aside, lean on thy guide,
His boundless mercy will provide,
lean and thy trusting soul shall prove
Christ is thy life, and Christ thy love.

Faint not, nor fear, His arm is near,
He changeth not, and thou art dear,
only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is all-in-all to thee.

CHORUS

When the road is rough and steep, fix your eyes upon Jesus
He alone has power to keep, fix your eyes upon Him.
Jesus is the greatest friend, one on whom you can depend
He will keep you to the end, fix your eyes upon Him!

PRAYER

Our loving Heavenly Father, God of grace and glory:

In our world in which everything has changed, thank you that you never change – and your Word stands forever. Thank you for being with me through another week. Thank you for your presence with me now. May all who share this service with me know your presence, peace and strength.

Thank you for continuing to help us as a nation – and we pray for those who have hard decisions to make. Give them wisdom and give to us patience.

We pray for those who are on the frontline in caring for the sick, for those who mourn the loss of loved ones through the Covid-19 virus and other diseases.

Feed us with your Word today, fill us with fresh hope – and may your Son, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, be glorified in all things this day. Amen.

Let's say the Lord's Prayer together:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name

Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, amen.

BIBLE VERSES FOR THE WEEK

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day – and not only me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (2 Timothy 4.7-8)

(Read 2 Timothy 3.1-4.8)

"Keep going till the end..."

"Throwing in the towel" is a description from a sporting setting of the Boxing Coach, ringside, who makes the decision to end the bout and spare his charge

anymore hardship and pain. Paul coaches Timothy – but there is no thought of throwing in the towel however hard things have become!
Paul encourages Timothy to keep going – as our Lord did before him.
Paul speaks of fighting a good fight, finishing a good race and keeping the faith. We see this in the life and work of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1. He is a Fighter

Jesus faced many challenges to what He said and did.

“I tell you the truth...” was how he began much of his teaching as He was surrounded by the lies of the enemy in the world – as we are today.

He fought and conquered sin and death for us!

His kingdom is not of this world. As an army we don't have guns but the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

Paul recognised the way to fight the good fight was with the Word – fighting for the Truth (See v2-5)

The Lord Jesus is a fighter – and aids us in the fight by His Spirit.

2. He is a Finisher

Jesus had the finishing line in sight as he progressed in his life's race and ministry: “**Jesus...For the joy set before him endured the cross**” (Hebrews 12.2) Paul writing to Timothy, knew where he was heading (2 Timothy 4.8) but also knew the presence of the Lord with him in the race (v1a)

The Lord Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead – to reward with crowns of righteousness. His first coming was to save us from the penalty of sin; His second coming is to save us from the presence of sin. He is a finisher – He completes the work given him. We must complete the work as Church He has given us to do. Paul knew that personally and was willing to be poured out as an offering like his Lord had been (v6; see Ephesians 5.1-2)

The Lord is a fighter, a finisher but note also...

3. He is a Keeper

“**He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus**” (Philippians 1.6)

By His Spirit – He coaches us – and will never throw in the towel. We are more than conquerors in Christ. He will keep us to the end – as we keep looking to Him.

Like our Saviour, Paul had sought to be these things.

“I have fought the fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith”

The battle is for the Truth – for Jesus – who sets free and keeps us free from Sin. The battle is against what is lies and errors.

In the previous chapter, Paul has described days in which people are opposed to God’s Truth but stresses the need for Jesus’ followers (like Timothy) to know the scriptures and the wisdom and salvation they bring when applied with faith. We need to fight for the faith, give our all, in response to what our Coach has said and done for us. Knowing that, **“He who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Mark 13.13b)**

Are these Christ-like qualities, modelled by the Apostle Paul, in your daily life – in your fight, race and faith?

We are being called upon to show fresh resolve in the current battle with Coronavirus. May the Lord strengthen us. In the greater spiritual battle may we not be found wanting but fully relying on the One who can get us through any fight – without any thought of throwing in the towel!

LOOKING AHEAD

This Thursday is **Ascension Day** – when Jesus returned to Heaven after 40 days of visible proofs that he had risen from the dead. Why not read about it in **Luke 24.50-53 and Acts 1.1-11**

It’s a great day to celebrate Jesus complete, finished, work of salvation for us. Our Risen Lord is seated in Heaven in the place of highest honour making intercession for us. Having shared our humanity He has made everything possible for us to share a divine eternity with him! Praise the Lord!

BENEDICTION

“To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.” (Jude 24-25)