

Worship at Home

Sunday 19th June 2022

Some of the prayers today are taken from Worship and Preaching 1998.

As we come to worship, let us think on these words:

Blessed are You Sovereign God of all. To you be glory and praise for ever. From the rising of the sun to its setting, Your Glory is proclaimed in all the world. You gave the Christ as a light to the nations, and through the anointing of His Spirit, You established us a Royal priesthood.

As You call us into His marvellous light, may our lives bear witness to your truth. And our lips never cease to proclaim your praise. Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

StF 544: As the deer pants for the water

**As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.**

*You alone are my strength, my shield,
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.*

**I want you more than gold or silver,
only you can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
and the apple of my eye.**

**You're my friend and you are my brother,
even though you are a king.
I love you more than any other,
so much more than anything.**

Martin J. Nystrom (b. 1956).

Opening Prayers

Let us thank God that His Holy Spirit has been moving among us to open our hearts to Him and to each other. **Amen**

Let us thank God that he has brought us through our misunderstanding and unfaithfulness to this day of truth and joy. **Amen**

Forgive us, Father that we have harboured suspicion and magnified hurts within our hearts. **Amen**

Forgive us Father, as we have been blinded by prejudice, careless in our conversation, quick to anger, slow to forgive. **Amen**

Christ came into the world to save sinners. Hear then the word of grace. "Your sins are forgiven". **Amen**

Praise be to you, O Lord, for You have filled our cup to overflowing. **Amen**

Praise to you, O Lord, who in the power of your Resurrection gives us confidence and hope for the future.

So thank you O Lord for, "This is the day that you have made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." **Amen**

StF 20: Be still for the presence of the Lord.

**Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One, is here;
come bow before him now
with reverence and fear:
in him no sin is found
we stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy One, is here.**

**Be still, for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around;
he burns with holy fire,
with splendour he is crowned:**

**how awesome is the sight
our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around.**

**Be still, for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place;
he comes to cleanse and heal,
to minister his grace:
no work too hard for him —
in faith receive from him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place.**

David J. Evans (b. 1957).

**Readings: 1 Kings 19 v 1 -15a
Luke 8 v 26 - 39**

Reflection: When God Speaks in Whispers

Sometimes we wonder why we do not hear the voice of God, perhaps when we have prayed for guidance. Could it be that we don't take time to listen, as is often said, "He cannot get a word in edgeways". Elijah was expecting God to answer but He was not in the great and powerful wind. After the wind came the earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came the fire but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire came a gentle whisper.

God chooses His way of speaking to us: sometimes through His word, sometimes through our conscience, sometimes through the words of others.

God speaks when we make a special effort to be quiet. How often, in a world of noise and turmoil, do we do that. The fragile moments of life, these are the times when we feel God especially near, if we recognise Him. Perhaps we have a burden on our hearts so great that we cannot share it.

In Psalm 46. The Psalmist wrote, "Be still and know that I am God."

A true story of a Minister who, after many years, took his wife and children to Wales for a break. The wife had taken the children to the amusements, while her husband stood on the deserted beach. He wrote that his thoughts were far away. After ten years in parish work, he felt tired and defeated. Feeling precious little had been accomplished. That can be a pretty general feeling. Hard work and a 70hour week had brought him to a feeling of despondency. As he gazed out to sea, a text came to him, "To know the love of Christ which is beyond all knowledge", words he had preached on, yet he felt those words were outside his experience.

Suddenly he realised the tide was coming in. Instinctively, he stepped back into safety. As he did so he felt as though God was speaking to him. These words came clearly to his mind, "This is what you are always doing. My love is wanting to reach you, but all you do is step back, retreating into the safety of your own efforts and energy". That was his moment of truth.

When the Minister returned home, he preached again on Ephesians 3 v 19. This time he could preach the truth from his own experience. Because of listening to the still small voice, he began to feel that he was really doing the Lord's work. This changed and blessed his ministry.

When Elijah listened and heard the voice of God asking him what he was doing there, Elijah was then able to tell the Lord what was troubling him, how he too was despondent. Feeling that he was alone. The Lord said, "Go back the way that you came and go to the desert of Damascus".

Elijah's depth of fatigue and discouragement had come after two great Spiritual victories. This often happens.

When we look at the Gospel lesson, why did Jesus not destroy the demons? The same could be asked today. Why does God allow all the horrors of war, as we see in the Ukraine? The terrible loss of life. The

destroying of everything around them. Why? God gave us all freewill. The choice is ours.

I was reading that the time has not yet come. The book of Revelation portrays the future victory of Jesus over Satan, the demons and all evil, reminding us that God is still on the throne and in Him we trust.

"This, this is the God we adore, our Faithful unchangeable friend, Whose love is as great as His power, and neither knows measure or end. 'Tis Jesus the first and the last, whose Spirit shall guide us safe home. We'll praise Him for all that is past and trust Him for all that's to come." Amen

StF 495: Dear Lord and Father of mankind

**Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways; reclothe us in our rightful
mind; in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.**

**In simple trust like theirs who heard
beside the Syrian sea, the gracious calling of the
Lord, let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.**

**O sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above, where Jesus knelt to share
with thee the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love!**

**With that deep hush subduing all
our words and works that drown the tender
whisper of thy call as noiseless let thy blessing fall
as fell thy manna down.**

**Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease; take from our souls the
strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.**

**Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm; let sense be dumb, let
flesh retire; speak through the earthquake, wind,**

and fire, O still small voice of calm!

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807–1892)

Prayers of concern for others

Loving God, we pray for all who witness to you in schools, colleges, and universities, that in the many different teachings, Christ's loving influence may shine forth upon young lives. We pray for all young people trying to find their way in a confusing world. Give them power to discern what is your will for their lives.

Silent prayer **Lord hear our prayer**

Loving God, we pray for all who are in positions of leadership. Those in government. Those in our schools. That all may be dedicated to working for the good of people and for the world. We pray for the Church, that in its mission it may seek to proclaim Good news to all. To establish Gods Kingdom on earth.

Silent prayer **Lord hear our prayer**

Lord we bring these prayers of concern. We know that peace begins with each one of us. Forgive us when we have not cared for your world as we ought, Forgive us when we have not served you in ways that you would have us serve. May your Holy Spirit move in us so that our lives are a daily witness to your love. We ask these prayers in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. **Amen**

We pray together *The Lord's Prayer*

Blessing

May the Lord bless and keep you, make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. May the lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and give you peace. **Amen**