



Sunday 3rd October 2021

The Methodist Circuit of Gloucestershire

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

How many days is it until
Christmas? Has anyone asked
you that yet? The answer
is....well I will tell you later... But
why do I ask that question?
That's because the reading that
we will hear today from the
letter to the Hebrews, is often
read on Christmas Day... so I
was just getting you in the
mood!

Prayer of Approach

**We come to worship as we are,
known by God and called by name.
We come with our joys and our
fears
to a Lord who knows joy and fear
too.
We come, excited yet weary,
to the Spirit who breathes new life
into us
and who wants to send us on our
way rejoicing.
Amen.**

HYMN STF 39 Angels Voices ever
singing

Angel voices ever singing
round thy throne of light,
angel-harps for ever ringing,
rest not day nor night;
thousands only live to bless thee
and confess thee
Lord of might.

Thou who art beyond the farthest
mortal eye can scan,
can it be that thou regardest
songs of sinful man?
can we know that thou art near us,
and wilt hear us?
yea, we can.

Yea, we know that thou rejoicest
o'er each work of thine;
thou didst ears and hands and voices
for thy praise design;
craftsman's art and music's measure
for thy pleasure
all combine.

In thy house, great God, we offer
of thine own to thee;
and for thine acceptance proffer
all unworthily
hearts and minds and hands and
voices
in our choicest
psalmody.

Honour, glory, might, and merit
thine shall ever be,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
blessed Trinity.

Of the best that thou hast given
earth and heaven
render thee.

In July 1969 Apollo 11 carried
to the moon a Goodwill Disc that
had messages etched into its
surface from leaders and
prominent people from seventy-
three countries. It was left on
the Sea of Tranquillity by
astronauts Neil Armstrong and
Buzz Aldrin.

The Vatican submitted a
message that included a text
from the Bible. If you could
have chosen a part of the Bible
to send up to the moon, what
would have been your choice?
Old Testament story, teaching
from Jesus, words from Paul?
The Vatican chose Psalm 8,
making it the first Biblical text
to reach the moon. Why this
one...? Let's hear it first...

Psalm 8 *Lord, our Lord, how
majestic is your name in all the
earth! You have set your glory in
the heavens.*

² *Through the praise of children*

and infants

*you have established a
stronghold against your
enemies, to silence the foe and
the avenger.*

³ *When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which
you have set in place, ⁴ what is
humankind that you are mindful
of them, human beings that you
care for them?*

⁵ *You have made them a little
lower than the angels*

*and crowned them with glory
and honour.*

⁶ *You made them rulers over the
works of your hands; you put
everything under their feet:*

⁷ *all flocks and herds, and the
animals of the wild, ⁸ the birds in
the sky, and the fish in the
sea, all that swim the paths of
the seas.*

⁹ *LORD, our Lord, how majestic is
your name in all the earth!*

What a beautiful Psalm. Some
suggest that this Psalm of
celebration pours out of David
as he recalls his victory over
Goliath and which has been
brought about by the God he
worships who is so powerful.

In contrast David considers the
rather weak and inadequate
nature of humanity.

What is humankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

You can almost hear the mixture of shock and astonishment in his voice as he wrestles with many emotions.

David is awestruck by the beauty he sees around him, the awesome majesty of it all - are you and I still awestruck? Or are we too busy to notice, too concerned for our own immediate needs?

Our answer to that can be shown in many ways... by the amount of time we stop and watch... (just like I am at the 3 blue tits that are doing acrobatics on the tree outside my window right now !) and the worship I give to God for that... and by our treatment of creation... COP 26 soon upon us, which you will have heard about in the news, is another occasion surely for world leaders to reflect on Psalm 8!

All of this leads David ask the question, "In comparison What are humans?": "In comparison to your splendour and majesty, O Lord, what is puny, weak, frail humanity?" Well, we obviously mean everything to God for he never forgets us, and is constantly paying attention to us. How amazing!

If the daily stress of life leaves us feeling overlooked, this Psalm says that the God who created all the magnificent surroundings of the universe actually remembers and pays attention to puny individuals like you and me. Yippee!

Let us pray....

By the word of our Lord the heavens were made

By the spirit of our Lord was life begun

By the wisdom of our Lord his laws were laid

By the love of our Lord was born his Son

By the grace of our Lord mankind was saved

By the power of our Lord the victory was won

**Creator God,
forgive our moments of ingratitude,
the spiritual blindness that prevents us**

from appreciating the wonder that is this world.

Forgive us for taking without giving,
reaping without sowing.

Open our eyes to see, our lips to praise,
our hands to share.

May our feet tread lightly on the path we tread,
and our footsteps be worthy of following,
for they lead to you. Amen

HYMN STF 338 There is a Redeemer

1 There is a Redeemer--Jesus,
God's own Son;
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.

Chorus

Thank You, O my Father, for
giving us Your Son,
And leaving Your Spirit till the
work on earth is done.

2 Jesus, my Redeemer, name
above all names;
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Hope for sinners slain.

3 When I stand in Glory, I will see
His face;
There I'll serve my King forever in
that holy place

When you think of God,
what/who do you picture? For
many it will be the man with a
beard sitting on a cloud with a
lightning bolt in hand ready to
strike as they think of God as

the one who will punish them for
their mistakes, sins and failures,
thinking it is just a matter of
time before it all catches up
with them. Is that really God?

Surely there is a much better
way to know what God looks like
- to look at Jesus! Jesus himself
said on a number of occasions,
he who has seen me has seen
the Father.

Most of us will have heard the
phrase, *he's the image of his
father, peas in a pod!* Well, here
is the most divine example of
that! We read about it in
Hebrews where Jesus is
described as the exact imprint
of God, just as Paul also wrote in
Colossians, 'He is the image of
the invisible God' Colossians 1.15

Let's ponder on these 3
verses from Hebrews 1:1-3
(NIV)

God's Final Word: His Son

*1 In the past God spoke to our
ancestors through the prophets at
many times and in various ways, ² but
in these last days he has spoken to
us by his Son, whom he appointed
heir of all things, and through*

whom also he made the universe.³ *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation (exact imprint) of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.*

Exact representation - imprint - the same, yet distinct.

When Christ stills the storm
you see God, when he heals the sick
you see God, when he tells stories that challenge,
when he stands up for the poor and the oppressed
and weeps tears of frustration at the injustice
meted out by those who should know better,
you see God.
When he washes feet, when he prays in the Garden,
when he is wrongly accused. When he gives of his life...
you see God.

He who has seen me has seen the Father

Praise God that we see him in resurrection too!

Prayers of Intercession

Loving Father, we pray for the world asking to see it with your eyes, especially where it is hard to believe that the hungry will be fed, that there will be justice and freedom, and that

wars will cease. **Open our eyes, may we remember that when we see Jesus we see you.**

We pray for humankind, asking to see them with your eyes on days especially when it is hard to believe that love is stronger than hatred, that those who are sick will be made well, and that death has been destroyed.

Open our eyes, may we remember that when we see Jesus we see you.

We pray for the church, asking to see it with your eyes, especially when we are concerned for the future. **Open our eyes, may we remember that when we see Jesus we see you.**

Lord's Prayer 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; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory For ever and ever . Amen.

So how many days until Christmas?
82!!!

Hymn – STF 331 King of Kings

King of kings, Majesty
God of Heaven living in me
Gentle Saviour, closest friend
Strong Deliverer, beginning and end
All within me falls at Your throne

*Your Majesty, I can but bow
I lay my all before You now
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve Your Majesty*

Earth and Heaven worship You
Love eternal, Faithful and True
Who bought the nations, ransomed
souls
Brought this sinner near to Your
throne
All within me cries out in praise.
*Your majesty, I can but bow
I lay my all before You now
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve Your Majesty*

A prayer of blessing

May God our Father, strengthen us,
May Christ Jesus show us the way to
serve,
May the Holy Spirit make us fruitful
in all we do. And May the peace and
love of our God
be always with us. Amen
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