

NIDD VALLEY CIRCUIT WORSHIP AT HOME - SUNDAY 5th July 2020

Welcome to our Sunday service of Worship at home. As the easing of lockdown for church services still seems some way away, may you feel blessed and comforted by our time together, fortunate indeed that we can freely share our faith, our prayers and our beliefs.

Psalm 45 verse 6-7

" God, your throne will last for ever and ever
You will rule your kingdom with fairness.
(*Youth Bible - New Century version 1993*)

Prayer of Adoration

Loving God, we pray to you lost in wonder,
lost in amazement and lost in awe of your greatness.
You are magnificent
You are glorious
You created the rainbows and kept evermore your promises.
You are the Almighty, you are our God and we worship you.
With out you we are nothing,
and can achieve nothing.
With you all is possible, you deserve our utmost praise and adoration. Amen

Hymn Singing the Faith 610 - "Best of all is God is with us"

Best of all is God is with us,
God will hold and never fail.
Keep that truth when storms are raging,
God remains though faith is frail.

Best of all is God is with us,
life goes on and needs are met,
God is strongest in our weakness.
Love renews, will not forget.

Best of all is God is with us,
hearts are challenged, strangely warmed,
faith is deepened, courage strengthened,
grace received and hope reformed.

Best of all is God is with us,
in our joy and through our pain,
till that final acclamation:
'life is Christ, and death is gain'.

Best of all is God is with us
as we scale eternal heights,
love grows stronger, undiminished;
earth grows dim by heaven's lights.

Andrew Pratt (b1948)
Based on John Wesley's final words.

Prayers of confession

Lord we are sorry for those things we have done, which would have been better left undone
for the words that we have said, that would have been better left unsaid.
we know you need to use each and every one of us for your tasks, but maybe we have been less than willing to work for you.
We are sorry for those times we are half-hearted
for those times we have let you down.
Forgive us our weakness, and renew again our strength in You. Amen

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Loving God, we thank you for today,
for the love you share so abundantly with each and every one of us.
For the love of your son Jesus Christ, willing to take up the yoke,
to share our burdens through life, helping us cope with life's problems.
We thank you for the times we see your hand at work in ordinary daily lives
and in the extraordinary times when people demonstrate such courage, such bravery to stand up for what is right.
We thank you for the gifts of family, of friends and helpers.
You knew that man could not live alone, but needed a helper,
a companion in the journey of life.
We thank you for the love we can share with others
We thank you most of all that you are a loving God. Amen

Reading : Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49,58-67 (New international version)
" Isaac and Rebekah"

Reflection

Most of us love a wedding, don't we. Indeed one of my nephew's is due to get married on August 10th and we are all hoping and praying that by then the lockdown will have eased enough for this joyful, happy occasion to take place.

Our Genesis reading today is the lengthy story of the quest for a bride for Isaac, Abraham's son, it is a love story with a happy ending. Both Isaac and Rebekah want to serve God, and both were concerned with obeying His wishes, but had no way of meeting each other, or had any knowledge of each other. Isaac is lonely, God knew this as Isaac spent time in silent contemplation, meditation and prayer. It was Abraham's servant (not even named in the story, but so important to the outcome) who was used by God to bring about His wishes. The servant was both prayerful and faithful, Rebekah is considered to be an answer to his prayers, and he was quick to praise God when God presented him with a solution to his quest.

When I first read this I was struck by how God is intimately involved with the lives of Isaac and Rebekah, and wanted them to be happy, the story made me smile. How lovely, to think that the God who just a few chapters earlier had been busy creating the universe and every thing in it, was now concerned personally with the lives of individual people, as is aptly expressed in the children's hymn:-

"Our God is a great big God, Our God is a great big God and he holds us in his hands"

Jo & Nigel Hemming (Singing the Faith 61)

Our God is a personal God, deeply dedicated and involved in our everyday lives. He considers human needs and answers our prayers, His love is steadfast. God brought Isaac and Rebekah together, they were essential to His plans. God had looked after Abraham and Sarah, He would look after Isaac and Rebekah. Finally in verse 67 we read that Isaac was comforted after his mother's death, he has the love of Rebekah to sustain him, his grief is shared, and there is promise of the next generation to come. God's love is unfaltering and continues from generation to generation, eternally.

Hymn Singing the Faith 503 - "Love divine, all loves excelling"

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Come almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love and Praise.

Charles Wesley (1707 -1788)

Reading Matthew 11:16-19, 25 - 30 (New International version)

In verses 16 -19 Jesus chastises those who refuse to be satisfied by either the witness of John the Baptist or of Himself; likening them to squabbling children who refuse to play with each other, saying they have not received God's message or His own. He points out that people will always find ways to criticise, and there would be no pleasing them. Sound familiar?

However, in verses 25 - 30 Jesus praises God as Lord of the universe (heaven and earth), and is delighted in God's wisdom in hiding the truth from those presumed by society to be wise and learned, but revealed the truth to those who would listen, the

unlikely, the ordinary folk, reminding us that we are those ordinary people that Jesus revealed himself to, if we respond to his message.

There is an exceptionally close bond between Jesus and God, the Father and the Son. there are no secrets between them, no-one knows the Son as well as the Father. Jesus in Verse 27 reminds us that we cannot know God as He does, we need Jesus' help to do that.

Wonderfully in verses 28-30 we receive this amazing invitation "come to me" - come not because we have to, not because we have been ordered to, but because we have been invited to. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" what a astonishing request. You can almost feel the hug in that invitation. As big a hug as all those grandchildren will be getting from their grandparents when they were allowed out of lockdown. As big a hug as a wife gets when her husband returns from months away on service overseas, or the hug from a friend you haven't seen for all the weeks of lockdown. We are all able to identify times when we have felt bone weary, bowed down with troubles, grief, or pain but there is Jesus arms out wide saying "come - I will give you rest"

This does not mean life with Jesus will be completely without burden, without trouble, without anguish, but that Jesus will be with us every step of the way with Him we can share the burden, things can become bearable, and more uncomplicated, easier when we are not alone. This does not mean we can have a slothful, idle, pleasure-seeking life expecting Jesus to pick up the pieces, we must accept His teachings and obey God's laws, there is still a yoke to bear, (verse 30) but with Jesus this is "easy and the burden is light"

Both our readings today give us insight into the nature of our Loving God, and that through Jesus we will be kept close, so close we are in His hands. From generation to generation this has been true. They also remind us about our role as the 'ordinary folk'. God used the servant to bring Isaac and Rebekah together. Jesus says he has more success with getting his message across to the ordinary folk than he did with the so called 'learned'.

Like the servant and Isaac we must respond to God's invitation, to come to Him, to be prepared spend time faithfully, quietly, prayerfully, humbly; awaiting his revelation of what is needed of us. We must trust God, and respond with courage and willingness., reading His word and listening for His wishes . We must trust Him implicitly, and seek out His work. We are God's ordinary people, may He use each and every one of us to his benefit and purpose always.

Prayers of Intercession

Servant Lord,
grant us both the opportunity and the will
to serve you day by day
May all that we do
and how we bear each others burdens
be our offering of love and service
to the glory of you name Amen

(The Methodist Worship book 1999, page 549)

Lord as we pray for your troubled world,
we wonder anew how we can make a difference.
We pray for the needs of the world.
For those who are hungry and with out their daily bread
for those discriminated against
for colour, creed, religion or sexuality.
We pray for the Church
for those unable to worship you openly for fear of persecution.
For those who are unable to gather and praise you due to Corona virus.
For those seeking you in their hearts,
help them to find the right love and guidance.

We pray for all in trouble or distress
for those ill and without healthcare to help them
for those ill in this country,
bless all the health care workers looking after them
For the bereaved and grieving, may they find some peace.

We pray for those who make a new beginning today
For those trying to break free from addictions, from harmful habits
For all of us trying to be more like you,
wanting to serve you more meaningfully.
In the Lord's name we pray.
Amen

(prayer order from the Methodist Worship book 1999, page 13)

The 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.

Hymn Singing the Faith 443 - "Come, let us sing of a wonderful love"

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came;
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;

seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
Why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
Home! weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O Thou wonderful love,
come and abide,
lifting my heart till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride:
seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of Thee.

Robert Walmsley (1831 -1905)

Blessing

We go into the world
to walk in God's light
to rejoice in God's love
and to reflect God's Glory.

May the Blessing of God,
the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with us all always
Amen

(The Methodist Worship book 1999, page 50)