

Bath Methodist Churches Worship

Sunday 25th October 2020 led by Student Deacon Janet Amey

CALL TO WORSHIP

Gracious God, guide of all who put their trust in you: grant us in all our doubts and uncertainties the grace to seek your will. That your Holy Spirit may save us from all false choices and that in your light we may see light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
(William Bright 1824 - 1901)

Singing the Faith 50

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 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) CCL167911

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

PRAYERS

Glorious God,
We gather in your name to worship and celebrate your presence in our lives.
In the morning sun – we feel your light on the world.
In the wind – we are guided by your Spirit.
We join with all creation in worship of you.
In our lives we live in your presence, of love, of wisdom, of life.
And in our hearts, we turn to you,
Glorious God – we adore you.
Amen

We bring our prayers of confession before God – take a moment to bring to mind the times, words and moments that burden your heart.

Faithful God,
We are called to be a people of love.
We bring before you the times when we have not acted in love.
The times that we have not cared for one another.
The words we have spoken that have caused harm.
The actions that we have chosen that have caused pain.
Refresh us, and renew us in your cleansing love, and forgive us.
In God we are assured of forgiveness and love.
Thanks be to God,
Amen

READING

Matthew 22:34-46 NRSV

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵ and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷ He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

⁴¹ Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴² “What do you think of the Messiah?^[a] Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” ⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit^[b] calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet”’?

⁴⁵ If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶ No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

REFLECTION

This reading is loved by many of us, it is a reminder of our true focus. It's like a full circle in learning, a humbling or re-focussing of our faith.

I have never been up in a hot air balloon, but I imagine the sight as you slowly rise. From the ground you see the grass, a few trees, the people, the buildings around you, all the details, the expressions, even the litter. Then as you rise up and up, the view changes. That what seemed complicated and difficult to understand or comprehend becomes insignificant – and all you can see is the shape of the town, the river, or sea, maybe a big landmark. And then of course if you could go higher still you would see the shape of the land, then the curve of the earth, the whole world.

This I imagine to be a humbling focussing of who you are in such a big planet.
Created in the image of God, we are sent to love God and love others. Simple.

As we learn, read, experience, join a church, develop expectations, duties, procedures, rules, develop preferences, get hurt, get shaped, make friends, live, see things, hear things... we can become bogged down by so many things. All these things become so preoccupying, and added to that - this pandemic still claws its way across the world, bringing fear, sickness and worry - adding to loneliness and hardships. It is good for us to hear these words of Jesus, to refocus on these two commandments.

The second part of the reading reminds us of the depth of this love.

As we come to know Jesus, we come to know God and we come to know love. In all the circumstances, emotions and situations we find ourselves in let us be reminded of this power and that love endures all. And that it is love that we are called to do and called to be.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

Love your neighbour as yourself.

Hymn: Here is love vast as the ocean

Here is love, vast as the ocean, Loving kindness as the flood,
When the Prince of life, our Ransom, Shed for us His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember? Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten Throughout Heav'n's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion, Fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the floodgates of God's mercy Flowed a vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love, like mighty rivers, Poured incessant from above.
And Heaven's peace and perfect justice Kissed a guilty world in love.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

We are called to love God and love others as ourselves;
we pray for the situations and places that are on our hearts.

For the lost,

For the hurt,

For the bereaved,

For the sick,

For the broken,

For the hungry,

For the broken,

May God's love surround those that we pray for and bring comfort and peace.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Singing the Faith 545

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me,
save that thou art -
Thou my best thought, by day or by night;
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom,
and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father; thine own may I be,
Thou in me dwelling and I one with thee.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and thou only first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys,
O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.
*Irish 8th Century tr by Mary Elizabeth Byrne
(1880-1931)*

BLESSING

**May we live with bliss, strength, love and peace in our hearts, as we go in God's presence.
May the blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us today and always.
Amen**