

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet – 25th October

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for you by Kat Bond.

Call to worship:

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced. He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. He remembers his covenant for ever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations.

(Psalm 105 vs. 1-5,7-8)

Today we are thinking about love - about God's love for us, and about our love for God - There can be few hymn writers who have expressed these things more clearly and more frequently than Charles Wesley - always addressing issues from a personal point of view, which I find adds great depth of involvement to worship. This opening hymn speaks of the overpowering joy of finding God's love, and the difficulties we find in expressing our love for Him

Hymn: What shall I do my God to love

To listen to the tune in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#).- Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 What shall I do my God to love,
my Saviour, and the world's, to praise?
Whose tenderest compassions move
to me and all the fallen race,
whose mercy is divinely free
for all the fallen race, and me!

2 I long to know, and to make known,
the heights and depths of love divine,
the kindness thou to me hast shown,
whose every sin was counted thine:
my God for me resigned his breath;
he died to save my soul from death.

3 How shall I thank thee for the grace
on me and all the world bestowed?
O that my every breath were praise!
O that my heart were filled with God!
My heart would then with love o'erflow,
and all my life thy glory show.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Prayer:

All I once held dear, built my life upon,
all this world reveres, and wars to own,
all I once thought gain I have counted loss;
spent and worthless now, compared to this.

Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you, there is no greater thing.
You're my all, you're the best, you're my joy, my righteousness,
and I love you, Lord.

(Graham Kendrick)

Dear Lord and Father we come to you now in the sure knowledge that we are truly loved by you - that you desire nothing but the best for us and that in your grace you are able to keep us close and help us to grow. We thank you and praise you that you are not a tyrant god who rules by punishment and threat, but, that understanding our weaknesses, you are willing to forgive us if we repent and ask your forgiveness.

We ask your forgiveness now for all the wrong things we have done during this past week - we do not mean to sin, Lord, but time and time again we find ourselves doing the things that we know we should not - and we are sorry.

We ask your help and your strength this coming week to stay on track on the path that you want us to follow. Help us not to give in to temptation - give us a firm foundation of love for you on which to build our lives and help us to reach out in love to those around us - we ask these things in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour - [Amen](#)

Our Old Testament reading today comes from Psalm 90 1-6 13-16

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway in a new tab press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

Lord, you have been our dwelling-place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turn people back to dust, saying, 'Return to dust, you mortals.' A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death – they are like the new grass of the morning: In the morning it springs up new, but by evening it is dry and withered.

Relent, Lord! How long will it be? Have compassion on your servants. Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us, for as many years as we have seen trouble. May your deeds be shown to your servants, your splendour to their children.

Let us pray to our Father God using the words that Jesus gave us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,**

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom,

the power, and the glory

are yours,

now and for ever.

Amen.

The Gospel reading for today is Matthew 22 vs 34-46

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway in a new tab press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?'

Jesus replied:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ‘What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?’

‘The son of David,’ they replied.

He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him “Lord”? For he says,

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

If then David calls him “Lord”, how can he be his son?’ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Reflection

Thanks to the current situation, over the past six months I have witnessed, first hand, what total commitment is. Our son is a cyclist, and, when I say cyclist, I mean CYCLIST! Big time! Every moment of every day is focussed on cycling - physical fitness, exercise, diet, bike maintenance (cleaning, renovating, waxing, oiling, enhancing - 3 bikes), weighing clothing and safety equipment, constant striving to improve speeds and break records. Trying out new routes - working out which transportable foods give the best ratio of energy to weight to size. Cooking specialist foods and cereal bars. The excitement, the buzz - never content to stay at the current level. The adrenaline and the freedom have been a lifesaver during these months, giving a purpose, a focus, an aim.

So tell me - - what is so special about sport that we happily talk about those whose lives are governed by it as people to be respected , revered , even envied? We see such total commitment as a good thing - a high, laudable calling. And yet , when it comes to total commitment of a spiritual nature , we feel awkward - we don't feel comfortable discussing it , sharing our thoughts , our experiences , our discoveries , we aren't altogether at home with the idea of 24/7 Christianity. I have even heard (in the church) those whose lives are transformed and demonstrating full commitment referred to as "too Christian" and "obsessive". We seem to criticise the churches which encourage more time-consuming involvement in worship, teaching, outreach, charity work and fellowship. Once or maybe twice a week is enough for us. - Why? - What are we afraid of? Do we think that if we fully commit everything to God our lives won't be our own anymore, we will cease to be ourselves, we will lose our personality? Perhaps we will start behaving in an embarrassing way, saying things that other people may find challenging or may disagree with. As a friend once put it - "I don't mind being a Christian, but I wouldn't want it to affect my life!"

Look at verse 37 again -

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

What is that if not all encompassing?

Jesus is saying that God wants all of us, every bit of every part of our lives - nothing held back - nothing unaffected.

This covers everything – check it out:

• **Love the Lord your God with all your HEART**

- Traditionally the seat of emotions, feelings, consciousness, literally as well as symbolically. The inner being - personality and character. Significantly - the part of us that we think of as belonging to another when we fall in love. In the Old Testament the heart is referred to as the place where God's laws and commandments are to be "written" (Prov 3 1-3, Ps 119:36) - It is also the thing that can prevent us finding God's Salvation - if we are "stubborn hearted" (Isaiah 46:12)

• **Love the Lord your God with all your SOUL**

- The part of us part that means we are alive here and now - The Greek psuche - what it is that makes us human.

• **Love the Lord your God with all your MIND**

- understanding - the ability to consider, the way of thinking - connected to the will and to feeling – the seat of logic, reasoning and intellect. The part of us we aim continually to keep under control.

To us this list may be quite daunting. We aren't too keen on full immersion. Don't we, if we're honest, prefer to paddle around in the shallows rather than jumping into deep water? But, so long as we are splashing about on the sand, we aren't going anywhere! It takes a good depth of water to be able to swim properly - and with depth comes risk! Will we be able to stay afloat? - What about currents? Will we be able to keep swimming in the direction we want? What if we lose control? What if we grow tired - run out of energy? We needn't worry - - if we commit fully to God - if we truly love Him with all that we are , then He will honour that - He will not only keep us afloat, but will carry us forward, giving us the strength we need to carry on .

Jesus' answer to the Pharisees would have been instantly recognised by the religious leaders and crowd alike, for he was quoting the Shema - the Law (as written in Deuteronomy 6:4-7) which Jews recited (and still recite) daily .

"Hear O Israel the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, and when you walk down the road, when you lie down, and when you get up"

Jesus is making clear to everyone, that he has *not* come to change or challenge the existing Law given by God - The Covenant God has made with His people still stands, and he, Jesus, is a part of it.

"All the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments" he tells them. Our love for God is not just important - it is absolutely vital - everything depends on it - literally!

And there is a second "commandment" which will automatically follow, if we love a God, and give ourselves to Him:

- **"Love your neighbour as yourself"**

Now *this* bit is new - this is the test, the outcome - the result for wholehearted commitment and love for God. Action - reaching out to others - caring - being aware - helping. This is Jesus' answer to the Pharisees, and they really do not like it! *This* is the very thing they are upset about - the reason they are out to discredit Jesus and bring him down. If we look back to chapter 21 and the start of 22 we see the suggestion that God's love is not reserved for the Pharisees, or for Israel alone - it is for *everyone*. But that is not what the Pharisees want the people to hear, and the accusations that go with it are enough to make them turn their thoughts to finding a way to get rid of Jesus once and for all.

But God's love *is* for everyone - that is the simple truth. It is given freely, and is there for *all* to find. It cannot be earned or bought. Jesus is saying that God loves everyone and if we love God then *we* will reflect His love to others - *we* will love our neighbours, our fellow men, *we* will share God's love with them. *We* will reach out to those around us just as Jesus did, giving time, effort, energy and ourselves.

Our love for God should never feel like a duty, a chore, a burden. Is *that* how God feels about loving *us*? And yet don't we sometimes look on our Christian ministry as a bit of a nuisance - breaking in on our daily lives - getting in the way? "Not today Lord - please!" - - - Is *that* how God feels about loving *us*? What we need is a daily renewal of our commitment - no holding back! We need an unconditional building up of our relationship with God – a deeper understanding of discipleship - as CS Lewis expresses it "Further up and further in" (The Last Battle).

Following this reply, Jesus asks the Pharisees a question of His own (vs 42) - and they cannot or dare not answer him.

"What do *you* think about the Christ?"

I wonder what *our* answer would be.

Now let's join together in prayer, even though we aren't able to join together in chapel – knowing that, wherever we are, our Father always hears and answers our prayers.

- **Father God, we pray for the growth and the spread of selflessness, and obedience in our communities – for the following of government guidelines and restrictions, for patience and understanding in the coming weeks.**

We thank you for all those who continue to work for the good of others – for emergency services, for teachers, for carers and hospital workers, for delivery workers and cleaners, shopworkers and all those whose everyday jobs put them at risk. We especially ask your protection and wisdom for all doctors and medical staff - give them strength both physically and mentally, to deal with all the distressing situations they will encounter and keep them from succumbing to depression, anger and feelings of inadequacy.

O Lord we ask you to hear, help and heal.

- **We pray for those we know who are suffering at this time – those who are physically ill – those who are weak and vulnerable – those who are in pain and discomfort – those who are scared of what may lie ahead – those who are isolated – those who are bereaved and grieving – those whose lives are filled with despair. Hold them close, Father. Help them to feel your presence and your strength – speak to them, so that they may realise that they are not really alone – that they don't have to face life's problems on their own.**

O Lord we ask you to hear, help and heal.

- **We pray for the Church – Your body here on Earth. Such strange times put a strain on our relationships, our fellowship, and our very faith itself. We face questions that we cannot answer – our own, and those of non-believers who challenge your wisdom, authority, compassion, and even your existence. We cannot understand all your plans for your Church, but we do know that everything you plan is for our good. We believe that you are a powerful, loving Father, who takes care of all those who give their lives to you. Build your Church, Lord, - keep us fixed firmly as living stones on the solid foundation of your love.**

O Lord we ask you to hear, help and heal.

- **Teach us to number our days aright
That we may gain a heart of wisdom
Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love,
Have compassion on your servants
May your deeds be shown to your servants,
Your splendour to their children.**

(Verses from Psalm 90)

**In the name of your Son our Saviour, Jesus Christ we ask all this –
Amen**

Hymn: Lord of all Creation

To listen to the hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 Lord of creation, to you be all praise!
Most mighty your working, most wondrous your ways!
Your glory and might are beyond us to tell,
and yet in the heart of the humble you dwell.**
- 2 Lord of all power, I give you my will,
in joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil.
Your bondage is freedom; your service is song;
and, held in your keeping, my weakness is strong.**
- 3 Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind,
rich truth that surpasses my knowledge to find;
what eye has not seen and what ear has not heard
is taught by your Spirit and shines from your word.**
- 4 Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart;
I praise and adore you for all you impart,
your love to inspire me, your counsel to guide,
your presence to shield me, whatever betide.**

**5 Lord of all being, I give you my all;
if I should disown you, I stumble and fall;
but, led in your service your word to obey,
I'll walk in your freedom to the end of the way.**

Jack Copley Winslow (1882–1974)

Blessing

**May the favour of the Lord our God rest upon us;
Establish the work of our hands for us –
Yes, establish the work of our hands.**

Amen.

(Psalm 90 vs 17)