



Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

Sunday 20th September 2020, 10:30am, Romans 8:1-11 and 18-25 "Creation Groans"

Prepared by Deacon Paul Wayne and Rev'd Phillip Dixon

This written worship has been prepared to bless you and help bring us closer together, as a physically separated fellowship, into the presence of God to worship Him in Spirit and Truth. We gather in separate places, some in our homes and others in chapel but united in love by the Holy Spirit for our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bransgore morning gathering will today physically share in God's gift and grace of Holy Communion, I encourage you to participate with us in whatever way you feel is right and proper to bring us all closer together, as a family of believers and followers of Jesus Christ.



Good morning church!

Opening Prayer:

Loving God we gather with joy and faith this morning as we continue our celebration for Your glorious creation. Unite us by Your Spirit so that we may be of one accord with our faithful brothers and sisters.

We are separated by distance but not in our desire, love and devotion to You. We welcome Your Holy Spirit into our lives afresh this morning as we worship You.

We give thanks for all of Your promises which continue to assure us of Your peace, love, truth, grace and power over this sinful and broken world. Thank you Lord that You entered into Your own creation to establish the foundation of Your kingdom. We long for Your return in glory. We give thanks that in You that we stand forgiven and are set free from the bondage of sin. May all be said and done today for Your glory. **Amen.**

Proclamation:

Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Amen. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Song: My hope is built on nothing less

(Cornerstone) Sing/read /pray/proclaim.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3HH-1Zbs&ab_channel=TheCommissioned

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesus' name

Christ alone

Cornerstone

Weak made strong

*In the Saviour's love
Through the storm
He is Lord
Lord of all*

When darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil
My anchor holds within the veil

*Christ alone
Cornerstone
Weak made strong
In the Saviour's love
Through the storm
He is Lord
Lord of all*

When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless stand before the throne.

Hillsong Publishing/kingswaysongs

Prayer of Confession:

God said "let there be light" and there was light...God said "let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..." God created man...in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them... God saw everything He had made, and indeed it was very good. Extracts from Genesis 1

"Where are you?", "Who told you...?" and "What is this you have done?" are the three questions God asks of the humanity He created. Therefore, the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden...God said to Adam: "cursed is the ground for your sake". Extracts from Genesis 3

We pray: Creator God, Your world is full of darkness. We have blackened the waters with oil, we have darkened and choked the environment with poisonous fumes. We have burnt, and continue to burn, down the forests that You gave to provide habitat for Your creatures. Humanity has plundered and squandered what You gave us in trust.

Lord, speak light into darkness, **Lord let there be light.**

Creator God, Your world is full of darkness. Sorrow hangs over the suffering people, the sad and anxious feel their way through the gloom. We struggle through dark and difficult times and the shadow of death looms over us all.

Lord, speak light into darkness, **Lord let there be light.**

Creator God, Your world is full of darkness. Our lives are dismal and full of selfish desires, overcast by guilt and despondency. Deeds of darkness, violence, abuse and neglect threaten and destroy all that You made good.

Lord, speak light into darkness, **Lord let there be light.**

Creator God, Your world is full of darkness. We have perverted that which You gave us for fruitfulness and faithfulness into personal lust and self-satisfaction. We have accepted the affirmation of many different interpretations to darken the light that you gave us.

Lord, speak light into darkness, **Lord let there be light.**

Creator God, Your world is full of darkness. We worship the image of ourselves, our pride, our positions and our ego rather than submitting everything to You. We take your creation and subvert it in the gloom of dingy and cruel animal markets, abusing it for our own ends for potions or dark crafts.

Lord, speak light into darkness, **Lord let there be light.**

Pause

Loving and forgiving God, I name the specific things for which I come to You, asking Your forgiveness....

A time of silence to hear what the Lord may be saying to each of us today.

God of love and power, thank You for the forgiveness and freedom You have given me from my personal sins and the sins I bear by being part of the corporate humanity that abuses Your beautiful and perfect world. Heal and strengthen me by Your Holy Spirit so that I may walk the path of righteousness. I have died to the old life and have been raised, new, refreshed and redeemed. As a redeemed child I am no longer under condemnation. I pray that Your Holy Spirit will fill me afresh today with Your miraculous light so that I may always reflect Your wondrous glory. **Amen.** Prayer of confession is based on a prayer from Companion to the Lectionary Volume 5.

Preparation for the reading and preaching of scripture:

Lord, prepare our hearts like fertile soil for the reading of Your Word. Help us to understand the meaning of what You are saying to us through the writing of the apostle Paul and in our current day, the

message You have given Deacon Paul in his preaching notes. May Your Holy Spirit, who inspired these words, come to us now in power and truth. **Amen**

Reading: Romans 8: 1-11 and 18-25

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead

will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

²² We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

A time to pause, read the scripture again, perhaps noticing something not seen the first time, what is it saying to me? Pray, and reflect on its message.

Preaching notes:

The two passages in Paul's letter to the Romans that make up our theme today, both speak about liberation. Chapter 8:1-11 looks at the struggle of sin and the liberation of human nature from the power of sin and condemnation. In Chapter 8:18-25 Paul emphasises the groaning of creation under frustration and hopelessness and in the hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its

bondage to decay and brought into a glorious new future.

In the 7 chapters leading up to and including Chapter 8 Paul deals with the problem of righteousness. When Paul uses the word righteousness, he means a right relationship with God. For Paul the centre of the Christian faith was that we can never earn or deserve the favour of God, nor do we need to. The whole matter is one of grace and all we can do is accept it in love and gratitude and trust. He highlights the struggle with sin and ends Chapter 7 with the personal cry and the question in verse 24, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?", which leads into Chapter 8. Verse 1.

The liberation of our human nature from the power of sin through the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit motivates us through our groaning, that we might have a hunger for a deeper relationship with God. The Holy Spirit produces discontent in us with the way things are, pointing us to what will be.

Not only is humankind in bondage but the creation itself is in bondage to decay says Paul in verse 21. It is caught in a continuous cycle of death and decomposition. Creation and humanity are frustrated, their groans waiting to be given words and meaning. Paul assesses the situation; having heard the same groans we hear. He takes an accounting of the health of the world and God's people. Nature groans in the hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage of decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We are saved in hope, "But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."

We listen to Paul's words to the Corinthian church: 4:16-18:

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

We know all our best days lie ahead and all our painful days will lie behind us then. And so, even on our worst days and in our hardest moments, we know this: *It is worth it.* Deacon Paul Wayne

Song: Creation is awaiting: Methodist Hymns Old and New #163 Sing/read or proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWeLDXQVJPU&ab_channel=ChrisBowater-Topic

Creation is awaiting the return of the King.
The trees are poised to clap their hands for joy.
The mountains stand majestic to salute their God;
The desert lies in wait to burst into bloom.

*The King is coming, the King is coming,
The King is coming, to set creation free.
The King is coming, the King is coming,
The King is coming to set creation free.*

The church is awaiting the return of the King.

The people joined together in his love.
Redeemed by his blood, washed in his word.

As a bride longs for her bridegroom the church looks to God.

*The King is coming, the King is coming,
The King is coming to receive his bride.
The King is coming, the King is coming,
The King is coming to receive his bride.*

The world is awaiting the return of the King.

The earth is a footstool for his feet.
Every knee will bow down, every tongue confess,
That Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth.

*The King is coming, the King is coming,
The King is coming to reign in majesty.
The King is coming, the King is coming,
The King is coming to reign in majesty.*

Chris Bowater and Ian Taylor © Sovereign Lifestyle Music 1998.

We pray together our 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 the evil one.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession:

We pray for the persecuted church, our brothers and sisters around the world who are undergoing imprisonment, lack of aid in the current crisis, torture, threat and unfairness in jobs, education and medical treatment because of their decision to follow the Lord Jesus. We are all made one in the Lord, when one part of the body suffers so do we all. Lord give strength to overcome and may they know our love and prayers for them in their time of need.

Lord we bring to You the country of Yemen, we pray for its people caught up in a violent and long running civil war. We pray for the innocent and vulnerable children who are suffering hunger and a lack of education. Lord we pray for the protagonists to cease their war-making and for a peaceful and just resolution to be found. May food aid reach those who need it the most and those who try to profit from misery be unsuccessful.

We pray for our Government as they find ways to meet the demand for virus testing. Father give courage, strength and determination for each person involved in building, equipping and staffing the new laboratories which will process the tests.

For all of those people who are living under tighter restrictions we pray for patience and a resolute response to all work together to keep those most at risk from the virus safe and healthy.

We pray for our church leaders as they work with their congregations to plan for meetings, to recognise the need for inclusion whilst keeping all safe from risk of being infected. Lord help us be good witnesses to those we care for.

Loving God, we bring to you those who we know are suffering the pain of illness, those awaiting operations and those recovering from surgery. Be with them Lord in their times of trouble and pain and give them Your peace in the waiting. We pray for Your comfort on those who are grieving the loss or experiencing an anniversary of loss of a loved one. For the lonely and the anxious, Lord bring Your peace. We bring all of these prayers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Song: StF 487 You shall go out with joy

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OH0XbpNY2g8&ab_channel=TTMEnglish

You Shall Go Out With Joy
And Be Led Forth With Peace
The Mountains And The Hills
Will Break Forth Before You
There'll Be Shouts Of Joy,
And All The Trees Of The Field
Will Clap, Will Clap Their Hands

*And All The Trees Of The Field
Will Clap Their Hands
The Trees Of The Field
Will Clap Their Hands
The Trees Of The Field
Will Clap Their Hands*

While You Go Out With Joy

Stuart Dauermann and Steffi Geiser Rubin

Blessing: As followers of Jesus Christ, we have not received a spirit of fear, but one of hope and confidence. For we are children of God, members of God's own family, and heirs with Jesus Christ himself. So go out with joy to love and serve the Lord. **Amen** Phillip Dixon September 2020

YouTube links are external resources and are provided to help you engage with the songs. Singing the Faith and Hymns and Psalms resources are provided under license: CCLI 178182