

## Worship for 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—  
where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip—  
he who watches over you will not slumber;  
indeed, he who watches over Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord watches over you—  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;  
the sun will not harm you by day,  
nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep you from all harm—  
he will watch over your life;  
the Lord will watch over your coming and going  
both now and forevermore.

Psalms 121 (NIV)

### **Prayer:**

Lord we come into Your presence this morning with hope and expectancy. Within a world of confusion and disagreement You offer us certainty, purpose and love.

We come this morning with reverence and expectancy, we bow down before Your throne of grace, lift from us the spirit of dissension and uncertainty and replace it with a garment of praise. May all we do and say this morning be pleasing in Your sight and may it all be to Your glory. **Amen**

### **Songs of Fellowship 466: Praise my soul the King of heaven.**

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,  
to his feet your tribute bring;  
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
who like you his praise should sing?  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
praise the everlasting King.

2 Praise him for his grace and favour  
to our fathers in distress;  
praise him, still the same as ever,  
slow to blame and swift to bless;  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
glorious in his faithfulness.

3 Father-like, he tends and spares us,  
All our hopes and fears he knows;  
in his hands he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes:  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
widely as his mercy flows.

Henry Francis Lyte.

4 Angels, help us to adore him;  
you behold him face to face;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
praise him all in time and space.  
Alleluia, alleluia!  
praise with us the God of grace

### **Confession:**

*if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear them from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14*

Let us pray: Loving and forgiving God, we confess to You our errors, our pride, our self-reliance and our lack of love. Your word says we must love You and my neighbour as myself, we are sorry for the times when that does not happen. For the times when our good intentions are not followed by the sacrifice of self. Father forgive, **Christ have mercy.**

For the times when we have made being a Christian a comfortable status, a statement of attendance or belonging instead of a way of living my life for You and helping others to do likewise. Forgive us for the times when we have not been a good witness to others. Father forgive, **Christ have mercy.**

For the times when we have believed or not highlighted the false teaching that salvation is something to be achieved, a rule to be kept, a hoop to be gone through or a hurdle to be jumped over instead of a beautiful sacrificial gift that by Your blood You freely give. Father forgive, **Christ have mercy.**

For the schemes and plans of man, our use of the worlds techniques, thinking that they will result in the growth of our gatherings instead of a prayerful obedience and seeking of Your will. For the sins of our world, for the aggression, the pollution, the selfishness, the racism, the greed and the immorality. Father forgive, **Christ have mercy.**

*Pause*

Father, I name the specific things for which I come to You, asking Your forgiveness today....  
Father forgive, **Christ have mercy.**

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

God of love and power, thank You for the forgiveness and freedom You have given me from my sins, heal and strengthen me by Your Holy Spirit so that I may walk in step with You today a path of righteousness with my past life behind me. I am reminded that, as a believer,

You are the redeemer and I am Your redeemed child, bought back into relationship with You for a price. **Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer.**

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.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours  
now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Matthew 22: 15-22** Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. <sup>16</sup> So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. <sup>17</sup> Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" <sup>18</sup> But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? <sup>19</sup> Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. <sup>20</sup> Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" <sup>21</sup> They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." <sup>22</sup> When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

This is the Gospel of the Lord , **Praise to You O' Christ.**

Plotting, twisting words and manipulation for one's own ends has existed since the very beginning, read the words uttered by the serpent in the garden (Genesis 3) and you will realise that a little truth mixed with a big dollop of deceit and ulterior motive amounts to a very sour and dangerous concoction that depicts humanity at its worst. The Pharisees and the Herodians were not natural allies in anything, one group staunchly against anything Roman as unclean and unholy, sticklers for the law and the other, very happy to collaborate and assist the Romans in the support of king Herod. What united them was the threat that they perceived was coming from Jesus and his followers, the change of the status quo -the upturning of the current order- would have severe personal implications for them all, their power, influence and cosy arrangements would end. Verse 16 is such a clear "battering-up" before the hammer blow falls, the soft velvet interior of an iron glove. How I long to hear these words said of Jesus, "sincerity, absolute truth, Godly teaching and no partiality or deference" apply to our fellowships. Perhaps you do also.

Jesus has their exact measure, of course He does, He knows their hearts. Can anything be hidden from God?

The wisdom and meaning of His answer is an important lesson that is not just for that day to those who were seeking to entrap Him in His answer, it is teaching that opens for us an understanding of the temporal and the eternal, the earthly and the heavenly. As followers and disciples of Jesus (Christians) we have a dual citizenship – of earth (Caesar) and of heaven (God). Jesus instructs us to be salt and light, a city on a hill (Matthew 5:13-16). This is a dual citizenship that exists now, the apostle Paul spoke of our citizenship of heaven (Phil. 3:20) and us being ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20) to the world in which we live. If Christians are absent from the public sphere (the marketplace) and the Government (the emperor) then all of those things are poorer for it. The integrity, humility, honesty and compassion that are the marks of our faith must be outworked in our presence and participation in the world. Jesus does not say “pay only what you can get away with” or “avoid it if possible”. Give to the state (the emperor) what are the state’s rightful possession and to God the things that are God’s.

Some believe that our role as Christian is disruption, revolt and the extreme non-cooperation to our system of government. When Archbishops are being very critical and outspoken, when clergy are getting arrested at well know marches or demonstrations, how does this fit with this response from Jesus to this band of trouble makers and malcontents or from the words of the apostles Peter “fear God and honour the emperor” (1 Peter 2:17) and Paul “petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:1-2, Romans 13:1)? Please do not think that these scriptures are a reason for us not to speak out against injustice from wherever it may come and it is correct that we must not condone or cooperate with systems of hate or oppression (Nazism, terrorism, Racial segregation etc.) In the words of the popular hymn “I vow to thee my country”, we recognise that there is another “country” which is “most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know” and that is God’s Kingdom.

Those that heard the answer Jesus gave were “amazed”, may we be continually amazed at God’s love for this world and that His offer to us of renewal and eternal life is just awaiting our acceptance. **Amen** Phillip Dixon

### **Prayers of Intercession:**

Lord, we bring to you the schools, colleges and universities throughout the country, that both teachers and children may be kept safe. All of them have to accept a new way of education. Protect them and their families. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for everyone in our fellowships who are recovering from, or waiting for, operations. We pray for those who are unwell: place your healing hand on them all, that they know your presence with them. We pray for all who are housebound, frail and elderly, who rely on carers. We thank you for the dedication of all carers, whether family members or

NHS staff, who sometimes have to cope with very difficult situations. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Lord, we pray for your world: for peace to come to all places where there is fighting, wars and disagreements. We are saddened when we see the results of man's destruction of your beautiful earth with plastic pollution and deforestation, natural disasters of earthquakes, hurricanes and raging fires which have wiped out complete villages. Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

*A time of silence for our own prayers.*

Lord, accept these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts. **Amen.** Pam Sturtridge

### **Singing the Faith 41 Blessed be Your name**

#### 1. Blessed Be Your Name

In the land that is plentiful  
Where Your streams of abundance flow  
Blessed be Your name

Blessed Be Your name  
When I'm found in the desert place  
Though I walk through the wilderness  
Blessed Be Your name.

#### *Refrain*

Every blessing You pour out, I'll  
Turn back to praise  
When the darkness closes in, Lord  
Still I will say:

Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be Your name  
Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be Your glorious name

Matt and Beth Redman

#### 2. Blessed be Your name

When the sun's shining down on me  
When the world's 'all as it should be'  
Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name  
On the road marked with suffering  
Though there's pain in the offering  
Blessed be Your name

#### *Refrain*

Every blessing You pour out, I'll  
Turn back to praise  
When the darkness closes in, Lord  
Still I will say:

You give and take away  
You give and take away  
My heart will choose to say  
Lord, blessed be Your name

### **Blessing:**

We thank You, Lord, for re-igniting the flame of hope within us, for filling our hearts with light and removing the darkness, and for giving a new vision of Your glory. **Amen.**

Benediction from John van de Laar.