

June 6th 2021

**Give us, O God, a vision of your glory,
that we may worship you in spirit and in truth,
and offer the praise of glad and thankful hearts; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Sing or Read

- 1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.
- 2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might —
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.
- 3 To all life thou givest, to both great and small ;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all ;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish ; but naught changeth thee.
- 4 Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight ;
all praise we would render : O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.
- 5 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Walter Chalmers Smith (1824–1908) Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 55

Let us call to mind our sins.

Silence

Lord, when our in-crowd is not your crowd: **forgive us, and help us to build community.**
When our words are harsh and our actions unkind: **forgive us, and help us to build community.**
When we judge others rather than join with others: **forgive us, and help us to build community.**
When we are set in our ways and not open to change:
forgive us, and help us to build community.

**God of truth and mercy, where we break down – you build up;
where we damage – you repair; where we isolate – you include;
where we go wrong – you put us right; where we confess – you forgive;
where we begin again – you are with us. In Jesus' name. Amen**

Mark 3:20-35

and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind."
And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of

the demons he casts out demons.” And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

“Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”— for they had said, “He has an unclean spirit.”

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

Let us pray

**God of all the world,
we praise you for calling us into your family,
for choosing us even though we are imperfect,
for trusting us even though we make mistakes,
for not giving up on us even when we give up on ourselves,
for offering so much more – even when we would settle for less.**

**God of all the world,
for drawing us into a deeper relationship with you and with one another, we praise you –
individually and together, we praise you. Amen.**

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—“I believed, and so I spoke”—we also believe, and so we speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Reflection on the Letter of St Paul to the church in Corinth

In the face of suffering and persecution, Paul encourages the Christians in Corinth never to lose heart and always to praise and trust God. He reminds them that this life is a preparation for the eternal glory of heaven.

We often have grandiose ideas of what will last. In Germany in 1933, Hitler boasted of a ‘Thousand Year Reich’. By May 1945, the system was in ruins. History constantly reminds us that human buildings, institutions and systems, however imposing, are not permanent.

What will truly last? What part can we, as a local Christian community, and/or each of us as individuals, play in creating a lasting Christian legacy?

In Jewish history, Solomon's Temple and its successors were places of meeting between a holy God and sinful humanity. Although the Jews knew that God did not dwell in a human-made building, it was the locus for their encounter with the holy. Paul, writing before the destruction of the Temple, was fully aware of this. Most Jews had a deep-seated attachment to the Temple, regarding both the holy space and its rituals as essential. Many Christians today have a similar reverence for buildings used for worship, while others see the gathering of the Christian community as the important thing. What can we learn from each viewpoint? When talking of such things, how do Paul's words help us shape our witness today?

Today, when many people don't believe in an afterlife or God, Paul's description of suffering as a momentary affliction could seem dismissive. Doesn't he know, or understand what some people go through? How might we answer such an accusation? Do Paul's writings elsewhere (e.g. Romans 8.18ff.) help? Is there any contemporary witness from someone who has found hope and strength in their faith during a time of suffering that might help? What can we say to those who have not found such hope and strength?

In the face of suffering and persecution, Paul encourages the Christians in Corinth never to lose heart and always to praise and trust God. He reminds them that this life is a preparation for the eternal glory of heaven.

Prayers for others

Loving and eternal God, our prayers for others challenge us and move us and bring us ever closer to your presence.

We pray for those so overburdened with wealth and belongings that their lives are a constant worry...

We pray for those so starved of food and deprived of comfort and even basic amenities that their lives are a constant worry...

We pray for those near to us who need our prayer because of illness, death, neglect or trauma...

Eternal God, you hear our prayers, you know our yearnings and desires and you know those for whom we pray.

We commit them and ourselves, our living and our dying, into your hands. **Amen.**

**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.**

Sing or Read

- 1 Lord Jesus Christ,
you have come to us,
you are one with us,
Mary's Son ;
cleansing our souls from all their sin,
pouring your love and goodness in ;
Jesus, our love for you we sing,
living Lord.

- 3 Lord Jesus Christ,
you have come to us,
born as one of us,
Mary's Son ;
led out to die on Calvary,
risen from death to set us free ;
living Lord Jesus, help us see
you are Lord.

- 4 Lord Jesus Christ,
we would come to you,
live our lives for you,
Son of God.
All your commands we know are true ;
your many gifts will make us new ;
into our lives your power breaks through,
living Lord.

Patrick Appleford (b. 1925) Verse 2 should be omitted when Holy Communion is not being celebrated. Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 594 Words and Music: © Josef Weinberger Ltd

We go in hope and expectation that the Lord our God goes with us.

We go to do God's will and not ours.

**We go seeking the eternal – not living for material things,
but living with them and using them to help all to see God.**

Amen.

The Blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with you, with those you love and with those you ought to love this day and forever more. Amen

