

At Home Service 18th April 2021

As we join together in Spirit to worship today let us think quietly for a moment on the words of the Psalmist: 'As the deer longs for the flowing streams, so my soul longs for you O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God'. (Psalm 42: 1-2).

In the year of the pandemic, one good thing is that we have had to slow down. Hopefully helping us to appreciate what we have, to be more content and giving us quiet to listen. To listen to God's voice.

Singing the Faith 544 As the deer pants for the water

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.
<i>You alone are my strength, my shield,
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.</i> | 2 | I want you more than gold or silver,
only you can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
and the apple of my eye. |
| 3 | You're my friend and you are my brother,
even though you are a king.
I love you more than any other,
so much more than anything. | | |

Martin J. Nystrom (b. 1956). Words and Music: © 1983 Restoration Music Ltd / Sovereign Music UK

Prayers of praise and thanksgiving

Father God we come to you praising and thanking you for all the blessings that you have given us. While we are aware of so many who are suffering, we can still praise and thank you for so much, Lord God Creator, Sustainer and giver of all good things.

We praise and worship your Holy Name.

As we look around the world, we are so grateful to be living in this part of your creation. We thank you for the healing power of the Gospel of Jesus. For the faith that in your gracious love you have bestowed upon us. Creator God, Lord of heaven and earth, from you is life and breath.

We praise and worship your Holy Name.

We are all your children, whatever our nationality or colour. Fill our lives with your love and speak to each one of us in this short time of worship. We ask these prayers in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

Psalm 16

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."

As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight.

Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names upon my lips.

The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.

I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.

I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.

For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.

You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Luke 24: 36b – 48

While the eleven and their companions were talking about what they had heard, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you - that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.'

Singing the Faith 347 Crown him with many crowns

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless King
through all eternity. | 2 | Crown him the Son of God,
before the worlds began;
and ye who tread where he has trod,
crown him the Son of Man,
who every grief has known
that wrings the human breast,
and takes and bears them for his own,
that all in him may rest. |
| 3 | Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing,
who died, and rose on high;
who died, eternal life to bring,
and lives, that death may die. | 4 | Crown him the Lord of peace,
whose power a sceptre sways
from pole to pole, that wars may cease,
absorbed in prayer and praise.
His reign shall know no end,
and round his piercèd feet
fair flowers of paradise extend
their fragrance ever sweet. |
| 5 | Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side —
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise and glory shall not fail
throughout eternity. | | |

Matthew Bridges (1800–1894) and Godfrey Thring (1823–1903)

Dedication of gifts and talents

Lord we bring our lives, our talents and our gifts in whatever way we give at this time. We thank you for what you have given to us, for what you have done for us. So, Lord accept the love and gratitude of our hearts, in Jesus name. Amen.

Prayers of Confession and Intercession

Father we come humbly before you asking for forgiveness for all our shortcomings, our sins. Sometimes our thoughts are not as they should be, we think of past hurts, the sting of words and the forgiveness that we should feel is not so easy. Help us Father to live as Jesus lived, facing with grace those who misunderstood him. On the cross Jesus said, 'Father forgive them, they know not what they do'. As we forgive help us to pray for others with understanding.

We pray for all who are still without work, those who live in crowded conditions. We lift to you Lord those who are in sorrow, those whose lives will never be the same again because of the loss of loved ones. We lift to you all who are ill at this time. We pray for our own families wherever they may be. Speak to their hearts Lord and keep them safe. We bring these prayers in the name of Jesus, who gave his life for all. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | What kind of love is this
that gave itself for me?
I am the guilty one,
yet I go free.
What kind of love is this,
a love I've never known;
I didn't even know his name —
what kind of love is this? | 2 | What kind of man is this,
that died in agony?
He who had done no wrong
was crucified for me.
What kind of man is this,
who laid aside his throne
that I may know the love of God —
what kind of man is this? |
| 3 | By grace I have been saved;
it is the gift of God.
He destined me to be his own
such is his love.
No eye has ever seen,
no ear has ever heard,
nor has the human heart conceived
what kind of love is this? | | |

Bryn Haworth and Sally Haworth. Words and Music: © 1983 Bella Music Ltd, 37 The Spinney, Epsom Downs, Surrey, KT18 5QX

Reflection

Stay in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven. The words of Jesus to his disciples. They had been with Jesus, following him during his ministry on earth. He had taught them and tried to prepare them for his death and resurrection. With Jesus appearing to them again their human reaction was a mixture of doubt and disbelief yet filled with joy and wonder. After Jesus had been given something to eat, he went on to remind them of his previous teaching, everything that was written about him and the law of Moses and the Prophets. That this was being fulfilled. The disciples were witnesses to these things and they were told to wait.

Is God still saying 'wait, be still and know that I am God'?

Unless we are still, we cannot listen.

Susannah Wesley, the mother of John Wesley, had a large family. When she wanted to find a quiet moment for prayer, she sat down and put her apron over her face. The children came to learn that they did not interrupt at that time.

The reading from St. Luke:

Firstly, it stresses the reality of the resurrection. Jesus who died on the cross and rose again, giving us all the promise of life after death if we repent and believe on him.

Secondly it stresses the necessity of the cross, that scripture looked forward to. The cross was part of God's plan, for the cross is the one place on earth wherein a moment of time we can see the eternal love of God.

Thirdly it stresses the urgency of the task and the offer of forgiveness. The church was not left to live forever in the upper room. It was sent out into the world. The tidings of joy must be taken to all people.

Fourthly it stresses the secret of power. Not as the world sees power. The disciples were told to wait in Jerusalem until power from heaven came upon them. Wait until Pentecost.

A verse by Fay Inchfawn, when she laid aside her work for a moment with God. 'With leisured feet and idle hands, I sat, I, foolish, fussy, blind as any bat, sat down to listen and to learn, and, lo, my thousand tasks were done the better so'.

The quiet times we spend with God are never wasted. Those of us who are older have the privilege of being able to take times of quiet with the Lord. It does not mean being on our knees, we can talk to God anywhere. It is a very important ministry. We have a duty to pray for the souls of those who do not want to know. A Minister once said 'how can I be happy in heaven if my loved ones are outside?'

So, what does it all mean for us today?

We have all been through a very worrying and stressful year. How do we think of what is normal? Is it teaching us to wait upon the Lord? A time to rethink our priorities. God is still in his heaven; he is still on the throne. He will still bring good out of evil, if we listen. Amen.

Singing the Faith 313 Thine be the glory

1	Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son, endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won; angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away, kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay: <i>Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son, endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.</i>	2	Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb; lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom; let the Church with gladness hymns of triumph sing, for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting:
---	--	---	---

3 No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of Life;
life is naught without thee:
aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors
through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above:

Edmond Budry (1854–1932). translated by Richard Birch Hoyle (1875–1939)

Blessing

Lord bless and guide each of us, that your will be done. Let your presence be around us and our families. May the blessing of God and the love of the Lord Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.