

Morning Service 20th June 2021

Call to worship & Prayer Quiet time

- **Hymn** – ‘Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation’ – R&S 74

Prayers – Thanks and Lord’s Prayer

- **Hymn** – ‘As the deer pants for the water’ – WF 6

Readings – 1 Corinthians 2: 9-12; John 14: 7-14

- **Hymn** – ‘Open our eyes Lord’ – (Sung acapella by Thora, as a prayer)

Talk 2 – Seeing

- **Hymn** – ‘Be thou my vision’ – R&S 489

POI (for everyone)

Communion

- **Hymn** – ‘Amazing grace’ **not verse 5** - R&S 92

Blessing

POI (church people)

Call to worship & Prayer

1 Chronicles 29: 10-13 (NIV)

David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,

'Praise be to you, Lord,

*the God of our father Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.*

11 *Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the majesty and the splendour,
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.*

*Yours, Lord, is the kingdom;
you are exalted as head over all.*

12 *Wealth and honour come from you;
you are the ruler of all things.*

*In your hands are strength and power
to exalt and give strength to all.*

13 *Now, our God, we give you thanks,
and praise your glorious name.'*

Quiet time

- **Hymn** – ‘Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation’ – R&S 74

Praise to the Lord, the almighty, the king of creation!

O my soul, praise him, for He is thy health and salvation!

Come, ye who hear; brothers and sisters draw near, praise Him in glad adoration!

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth; bears thee on eagle's wings, and through all troubles sustaineth: Hast thou not seen all that is needful has been granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee!

Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee:

Ponder anew all the almighty can do, who with His love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him!

All that has life and breath come now with praises before Him!

Let the "Amen!" sound from His people again; gladly for aye we adore him!

Joachim Neander (1650-80), tr Catherine Winkworth (1827-78)

Prayers – Thanks and Lord’s Prayer

Dear Lord God

Thank You for giving each one of us a special relationship with you,

Thank You for loving each one of us in the way that's just right for us. Thank you that we can come to church and talk with each other and tell each other about what You've done in our lives this week.

Lord Jesus forgive us for ever thinking You don't care. Forgive us for blaming You when things are going wrong for us.

Thank You Lord that Your love for us never changes, never gets smaller, never leaves us even when we're hurt or upset or selfish or finding life a struggle.

Holy Spirit of God, help us to truly understand just how wide and long and high and deep Your love for us really, really is.

Lord, we join our voices together now as we say the prayer You taught us, saying:
Our Father, who lives in heaven.

Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your 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 evil.
For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.

• **Hymn** – ‘As the deer pants for the water’ – WF 6

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 want You more than gold or silver,
only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
and the apple of my eye.

Chorus

Chorus:

*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.*

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.

Chorus

Martin J. Nystrom.

Readings – 1 Corinthians 2: 9-12; John 14: 7-14

• **Hymn** – ‘Open our eyes Lord’ – (Sung acapella, as a prayer)

Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch Him, to say that we love Him.
Open our ears Lord, and help us to listen.
Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Robert Cull

Talk 2 – Seeing!

Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.
Seeing, our physical sight. I wear glasses, mine are varifocals so I have to wear them all the time. Without my glasses life could be unnerving to say the least, everything would be fuzzy to me. All sorts of ordinary things could be obstacles - like stairs, kerbs, overhanging branches or even reaching for my beloved cups of tea! I wouldn’t be able to appreciate the delicate or intricate beauty of creation or realise when my house needed a good clean; I wouldn’t be able to clearly see the faces of the people I love, and I think that could make me feel very lonely. My world, like so many with visual impairment, would be severely limited, my whole future could be a blurry soup of fuzzy images and daily pitfalls.
Life out of focus.

I thank the Lord for my glasses. With them I see potential obstacles more clearly so can avoid them and (potentially) don’t get so many bumps and bruises; I can marvel more fully at the incredible detail in every flower; I can appreciate my need to properly clean our home as the dirt becomes glaringly obvious, and I can know the joy of seeing more clearly the beautiful faces of the people I love. With my glasses I can walk more confidently into the new day. Life in focus.

And what of our Spiritual sight, our Godly vision?

Recap 1 Cor 2: 9-12. '*What no [physical] eye has seen, what no [physical] ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived – the things God has prepared for those who love him –these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit..... so that we may understand what God has freely given us.*'

And what God has freely given us is our Lord Jesus.

Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.

But where is He so we can see Him? In words of a recent hymn (R&S 619):

*'We meet You, O Christ in many a guise,
Your image we see in the simple and wise,
You live in a palace, exist in a shack.*

*In millions of people, at home and abroad,
Involved in our life You live down the road.
Imprisoned in systems You long to be free.
We see You Lord Jesus, still bearing Your tree.'*

Fred Kaan (1929-)

I don't know about you but often times Jesus can be a bit sort of fuzzy in my life - I know He's with me but I also know my knowledge of Him, my awareness of Him, my ability to see Him where He is, is often less clear than I'd like it to be. King David wanted to see God more clearly too and one of my favourite verses of scripture, my aspiration perhaps, is David's words in Ps 27 v 4, '*One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple.*' And then in v 8 he says, '*My heart says, "Seek His face!"*'

We read earlier that the disciple Philip also wanted to see God. In John 14: 8 Philip asked Jesus, "*Show us the Father and that will be enough for us.*" And v 9 Jesus responds, "*Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father.*"

Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.

How do we get to see Jesus more clearly so that we can, as the song said, reach out and touch Him and say that we love Him?

For me, I know I need prescription glasses for that too, just as I do for my physical eyesight. For me, this book (hold up a bible) is the most important pair of glasses I need through which to see our Lord and perceive our world. The bible, we call it 'The Word of God', yet *it* says Jesus is the Word of God, so could we say that this book is Jesus in written form? If the bible is the glasses I need through which to see the world clearly, then it must be the Holy Spirit who is my personalised, prescription lens which bring into focus the scriptures I read and thus how I can better see and understand Jesus, in my own life and in the world around me.

The more we read God's Word the more our eyes, both spiritual and physical are opened, and we can see and know Jesus, finding Him where He is in our own lives and in the beauty and brokenness of the world around us.

The Bible tells us Jesus was a craftsman, a carpenter. As an expert carpenter He knew how to pick up a piece of rough wood and picture the beautiful, intricately carved creation within it, just waiting for His skills with chisels and sander to craft it into being. And the more we read God's word the more we open ourselves to His craftsmanship, working within us to bring us more and more into the beauty He sees and knows there to be in each of us.

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.

Jesus is present here and now, but He's also already present in our future. Most of us can drive a car and I'd guess all of us have journeyed in one at some time. As a driver, I have to keep my eyes on the road ahead, but I also have the benefit of backward-facing mirrors to check what's behind me every now and then. Now I'm absolutely certain that if I spent more time looking in my rear-view mirrors and less time concentrating on the road ahead, pretty soon I'd crash.

Of course it is good and right to look back and see the goodness, mercy, love, and kindness of God in our lives so far, but I wonder sometimes whether some people, church people and churches included, live their lives that way, focussing on looking backwards to see the way forward? Is that the way I/you primarily see the future? or do you take each day as a journey into *your* unknown BUT into a future Jesus knows fully already, trusting your all-seeing, all-knowing, ever-present Saviour Jesus to be holding, leading, guiding, strengthening you in every moment of that future?

The more we seek God, the more our eyes will be opened by the Holy Spirit to who and where He is in our own lives and in His world around us. And what will our responses be?

In this nearly post-pandemic world, someone has said recently, "*The time to be a cautious church is over, gone, finished. Time now is to run with the inklings of the Spirit and be open to Him taking us where He wants us to go.*"

Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus - in our own lives and the lives of those around us.

To reach out and touch Him and say that we love Him - as we see Him in the needs of ourselves and others.

Open our ears Lord and help us to listen – to His call, to take a step of faith into our future with Him.

Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus. Amen.

Hymn – ‘Be thou my vision’ – R&S 489

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou
art -

Thou my best thought, in the day and the
night,

Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true
word,

Thou ever with me and I with Thee, Lord;
Thou my great Father, Thy child let me be,,
Thou in me dwelling and I one with Thee.

Be Thou my breastplate, my sword for the
fight,

Be Thou my dignity, Thou my delight,

Thou my soul’s shelter, and Thou my
strong tower,
Raise Thou me heav’nward, great Power of
my power.

Riches I heed not, nor earth’s empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only, the first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, Thou heaven’s bright
sun,
Grant me its joys after vict’ry is won;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Ancient Irish poem; tr Mary E Byrne (1880-1931)

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray:

Dear Lord, all seeing, all knowing, ever-present God,
We thank You for being with us here this morning.

Thank You that You are not confined to a building, or a particular people, but You are in all places and times, present in all lands and oceans, loving all people of faith and of none.

Dear Jesus,

We thank You for the G7 summit of nations, for its leaders seeking to find better ways forward for our world in pain. We pray Lord God, that the agreements made will be swiftly enacted, for the good of our world's poorest and the planet itself in this period of desperate climate emergency and pandemic.

We pray too for the people of this nation, especially those in the hospital, hospitality and entertainment sectors with the extension of Covid restrictions. So many people's livelihoods hang in the balance, so many hospital staff fearful of yet more exhaustion as they look in anguish at the covid case numbers rising.

Father God, as a nation we have ousted You as Lord, but Father we pray Your mercy upon our country and its people as we plead forgiveness for our errant nation, and seek for Your revival to come, and come quickly here Lord Jesus.

Father God, we thank You for Naomi our minister and all those in leadership within this congregation, for Your wisdom in their decisions, Your joy in their Spirit, Your unity of purpose, and Your shared vision for our future as a congregation of Your people in this place. Blessed Lord Jesus, we praise You with our prayers. In Your Name. Amen.

Communion

(including words from Nick Fawcett's book 'For you and for many p. 9, 19, 25, 53 and 55)

The communion table, what do you see?

The table is laid with little glasses of wine and wafers of bread of course, but is that all you see? Do you see

.... A bit of light relief from a long sermon once a month?

.... A sombre, passe church ritual?

.... An opportunity for quiet reflection perhaps?

.... Or do you see a reminder of God's only Son Jesus Christ, body broken, bloodied and dying, but now risen, glorious, radiant, beaming, arms wide in loving invitation to this feast of His grace?

Whoever you are, this table is spread for you.

Whatever you have done, this table is spread for you.

Whatever your faults or fears, your faith or doubt, this table is spread for you.

Christ recognised our weakness, and was still ready to die.

He knew we deserve nothing, yet He gave all.

Whoever you are, wherever your journey may have taken you, this table is spread for you.

Let's pray:

Loving God, no words can express the wonder of Your love,

The extent of Your goodness, the magnitude of Your grace

Or the breadth of Your saving purpose in Christ.

We thank You that this table says it all,

Speaking so simply, yet so eloquently,

Of how much You have done for us, and how much You will yet do.

So we come,

To receive from Your hands, and to give You our joyful worship in return,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In John 6: vs 35 & 40 Jesus said to His disciples,

'I am the bread of life; no-one who comes to Me will ever hunger,

And whoever trusts in Me will never thirst.'

The Father's will is this:

That all those who see and believe in the Son will enjoy eternal life,

For I will raise them up on the last day.'

.... And we read from Luke 22: 14-20 that on the night He was betrayed....

When the appointed hour came, He and His disciples sat down at the table. He told them,

'I have yearned to share this Passover meal with you before facing the suffering I must go through.

Taking some bread, and thanking God for it, He broke it into pieces and distributed it among them saying,

'This is My body, given for you. Do this to remember Me.'

Similarly, taking a cup after supper He said,

'This cup, poured out for you represents the new covenant, sealed by My blood.'

The congregation take their wafer....

The body of Christ, broken for us and for all. We eat this bread in remembrance of Him.

Everyone eats together, then quiet reflection moments.

The blood of Christ, shed for us and for all. We drink this cup in remembrance of Him.

Everyone drinks together, then quiet reflection moments.

Lord Jesus Christ,

We have shared this meal not in wistful nostalgia or sombre remembrance, but joyfully reminding ourselves of the enormity of Your love and the awesome sacrifice You made on our behalf.

We take bread and drink wine so that we might never forget all You have done, Your faithfulness instead staying fresh in our minds, colouring each moment of every day.

Above all though, we come with thanksgiving,

marvelling at the extent of Your love, revelling in Your grace revealed through Jesus, Exulting in Your gift of new life and everything that entails – peace, joy, hope, purpose, freedom and fulfilment.

Gracious God, gratefully we acknowledge You, not just in words but with thankful lives, lifting up heart, voice and soul in grateful adoration for all You are and all You have done through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn –‘Amazing grace’ not verse 5 – R&S 92

Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind but now I see.

As grace first taught my heart to fear
so grace my fears relieved;

How precious did that grace appear

The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares

I have already come;

God’s grace has brought me safe thus far,

And Grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,

His word my hope secures;

He will my shield and portion be

As long as life endures.

John Newton (1725-1807)

Blessing

Loving God, help us truly to see,
Not just with our eyes but more deeply, looking beneath the surface, beyond
appearances,
To the reality of Your presence, the wonder of who and what You are.
Help us to see Christ through Your Spirit,
In the world around us, in each other, in the life and witness of Your Church,
In Your Word, in the experience of prayer and in so much more;
Your light shining in the darkness, Your love illuminating our lives.
Give us insight to discern You,
Wisdom to know You,
Resolve to serve You,
And a heart to love You.

So may we go from here with eyes open to You Lord,
With arms willing to reach out with Your love to those in need,
And with ears open to listen to the music of the beauty of creation and play our part to
maintain its symphony of praise to You.
In Jesus' wonderful Name. Amen.

POI (for church people) - Jean

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