

Worship@Home Sunday 29th March 2020

This is an offering for you to pick up and have a time of worship at home. This is being and doing Sunday's worshipping church – differently. It is based around a usual Sunday service for you to participate in as much as you can. Speak out loud, speak within your heart, sing aloud, hum or sing within your heart – pray out loud, pray inside – just join in 😊
If you wanted to keep to our community's regular rhythm of worship, then you are invited to use it as a devotional on Sunday morning starting at 9:30 am.

Welcome to worship.

Call to worship:

One: Wait and watch for God!

All: Even when we feel in the depths of death and despair?

One: Wait and watch for God!

All: Even when life seems like a night that never ends?

One: Wait and watch for God! In God there is constant love and kindness.

All: We will wait and watch with hope.

Opening prayer: Gracious God, in the midst of death, you offer life. In the midst of despair, you offer hope. In the midst of confusion and uncertainty, you offer a new way of seeing things, a new way of understanding things. Help us to remember this always. Amen.

Music: And Can it Be WOV #138
by [Charles Wesley](#), pub.1738

1. And can it be that I should gain
An int'rest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain—
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Refrain:

Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

2. 'Tis myst'ry all: th' Immortal dies:
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.

- 3 He left His Father's throne above—
So free, so infinite His grace—
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!
4. Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray—
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
- 5 No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th' eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

Prayer of Praise and Confession:

O Lord our God, we come to you, seeking to rise up from the depths and agony of despair. Please listen, our Saving God—we need your help and blessing.

Lord, through the tenderness of your mercy towards us we have learned to worship you—and to revere your Holy Name; therefore, we place our entire trust and hope in you, our Trustworthy God.

We gather to offer you our thanks, for we know that you offer us your unfailing love and mercy that is beyond our understanding. You know our longing for forgiveness, and you offer us your presence - which blesses us from God's overflowing store of mercy, hope, freedom and joy. Amen.

written by Joan Stott, and posted on **The Timeless Psalms**. If any part of these Prayers and/or Meditations is used in shared worship, please provide the following acknowledgement: © 2011 Joan Stott – 'The Timeless Psalms' RCL Psalms Year A. Used with permission.

Scripture for the day: Psalm 130 A song of ascents.

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD; 2 Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. 3 If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. 5 I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word, I put my hope. 6 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. 7 Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. 8 He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

Thoughts for Reflection: "Hope against Hope"

Prayer: There are so many reasons to give up, O God. Help us not to do that. Help us to know that in the midst of all the despair we encounter in multitude of daily newscasts, you are indeed present in our lives, daring to bring hope in the midst of it all, and challenging us to do the same. Amen.

Hope against all hope, against all rational / conscious / logical means –we hope. We're made that way, remember? Made knowing there is more to life than what we can sense: see, touch, hear, taste or feel. We are made knowing there is more and in faith we define that 'more' as the presence of our Lord, our God usually brought to fullness in us by the Holy Spirit.

Hope is one of the last if not the last thing? Feeling? Sense? Understanding power, we have that we let go in the face of death. We cling to it against all else and when it slips away – in my experience, so do we. Hope is also one of those things that



when life is sweet and bright – we don't need. So, it is not surprising that when our scriptures teach about Hope they tend to come from the place of our psalmist today.

OUT of the depths, I cry... for mercy, record of sins, who can stand?... A dark place seeking a better place, a life-less place seeking life and in church language it is to seek forgiveness and redemption, restoration and wholeness – and to wait, trusting, hoping for another chance, opportunity, day to get it right and make it better for 'God-others-self', just like Jesus taught. The psalm is so vivid, it pulses with life even as it speaks of darkness and failure.

Questions: What might be gifts from the Psalm for us today? What might the Psalm have to say into our current crisis?

One of the gifts it offers it seems to me, is the way we are easily drawn into recognising the 'depths' in our lives from which we too cry to the Lord. Another gift it offers us is the promise from the personal journey of the psalmist – yes we cry to the Lord – and the Lord hears! The personal testimony from this psalmist – the Lord becomes 'you', hear the person to person 'talking', the relationship of psalmist and God? Vs 4: "With **you** there is forgiveness."

This is a sorting our own, first as preparation for what is waiting 'outside'. This is real hope in action; this psalmist knows what it is to have their sins forgiven, the record wiped clean. This is why when they find themselves in the depths – they wait. In this psalm waiting cannot be separated from hope *because* in Hebrew the word 'to wait' ^{1*} can just as correctly be translated as 'to hope'. The hope gift's for us in this psalm only get stronger as we are told to wait-hope for the morning. To wait-hope for the presence of the Lord to restore, lift, redeem... to wait-hope as much as a night watchman (grave-yard shift worker!) does for the morning.



I can't help but think this psalmist was a wise one- beautifully crafted into the psalm is the teaching that to wait-hope for the morning – new light, fresh start - is given to us by the picture of a night watchman. There is no way this wait-hope time is to be one of 'sleep / inactivity / or sitting around 'twiddling the thumbs'. It is not 'down-time' but active watching for one we know is present in our lives to refresh / restore / forgive and give life – again.

Questions: With the refreshment and restoration that forgiveness settles upon you, what does it mean for you to wait-hope for the morning, a fresh start? With your internal settling with God, how might that empower you for the day (days) ahead?

This waiting-hope exists for us because – because the psalmist assures us; the **Lord is unfailing love** and with him is full redemption. This gift is for us to inherit, to claim through Jesus; whatever the circumstances in our lives/ even in deathly depths – wait-hope for the Lord hears our cry and will come.

Questions: Can you identify times when the Lord answered your cry, and how and through who? If you've not spent much thought on this- ask the Lord to show you. Have you used these touch-stones / signposts / memories to strengthen your faith walk in tough times? How?



If we only remember that this psalm is about our being able to cry to the Lord and we are heard; we are forgetting half of what it is teaching. An essential element is that it is not only that we **can cry** – but that it is **to the LORD**. Yes, the circumstances of our life matter, but the recognition of the presence of the Lord is a must! And what really helps us as we find ourselves maturing in faith is our ever-increasing understanding of how and recognition of when the Lord has specifically touched our life. I am aware the more times people see, touch, hear, taste or feel the presence of the Lord in their lives the quicker and easier it is to be pro-active in wait-hoping for the morning! The more we wait on the Lord, the stronger we are. Amen

Prayers for the World and Others: Make a list from the news you have been listening to... and obviously Covid-19 and its consequences is significant at this time. Make a list of family and friends that are on your heart in these times. Make a list of the international concerns on your heart. Share your regular concerns. Wrap all these into an offering to the Lord of all these.... Amen

Music: Great is Thy faithfulness

1. O God my Father
there is no shadow of turning with Thee
thou changest not
Thy compassions they fail not
As Thou hast been, thou forever will be.

Chorus:
Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy
faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
And all I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me

2. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside. Chorus:

Closing Prayer: Holy God, Creator of Life, you call us out of our dark places, offering us the grace of new life. When we see nothing but hopelessness, you surprise us with the breath of your spirit. Call us out of our complacency and routines, set us free from our self-imposed bonds, and fill us with your spirit of life, compassion, and peace, In the name of Jesus, your anointed one, send us out, your people in our world, we pray. Amen.

Music to close: Now Unto Him

Now unto Him who is able to keep,
Able to keep you from falling.
And present you faultless

To the only wise God our Saviour
Be glory and majesty,
dominion and power,
both now and forever. Amen

Before the Presence of His Glory
With exceeding joy.

Notices: 1. St Aidans, St Andrews and Zion Hill where we were to worship today, will, sadly, be closed till further notice.

2. Worship Online. Take this opportunity to use this service bulletin, prepared by Rev. Lorraine Francis, to continue to worship together, but online, a new way. Lorraine suggests starting "together" at 9.30am on Sunday morning. Apparently, in these disrupted times, it is a good idea to establish routine in our lives, so keeping to a usual worship time would be a good idea. But any time or many times could be helpful, too. Thank you, Lorraine.