

Worship for Sunday 12th September 2021
from Jeanne Moore

Hello everyone. So Sunday Services are to begin again ! What marvellous news and what a joy it will be for you to worship in God's house together. Praise be! You are, as always, in my thoughts and prayers. How I miss you all. God bless you.

Rejoice in the Lord you who are righteous and praise His holy name. Ps 97 : 2

Psalm 97 : 6 - 12: ⁶The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all peoples see his glory. ⁷All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols- worship him, all you gods! ⁸Zion hears and rejoices and the villages of Judah are glad because of your judgments, LORD. ⁹For you, LORD, are the Most High over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. ¹⁰Let those who love the LORD hate evil, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked. ¹¹Light shines on the righteous and joy on the upright in heart. ¹²Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name.

The Psalmist tells us to forsake our idols. People today may not worship idols of bronze statues, but that's not to say idols don't exist. They do, although in other forms such as money and materialism which of course don't last forever. Our worship needs to be focused on something lasting, and when we believe in Christ, God's Spirit dwells in us and with that comes a deep and lasting joy that is very different to material 'joy'. It is a joy that makes its home in the heart of those who know God and live in His ways.

Father God, so many things distract us from following you as we should, many worldly invitations entice us to want the latest, the fastest, the best that technology can bring. But none can bring the sweet and lasting joy and peace of living in harmony with you. Amen.

The Lords Prayer

A new life begun

In youth you were my Lord, my Saviour and my friend.
I felt so loved and so secure, on you I could depend.
I spoke to you as Father and read your living word,
I felt you had a special plan from which I'd never be deterred.

As years went by, worldly matters had the upper hand.

My career took off, life looked good, another way seemed planned.

I drifted from my love of you, you didn't seem as near

I had such a busy lifestyle, little time to hold you dear.

Even when the problems came I did not lean on you,
My work, it failed, bills piled high and so my sorrows grew.

I struggled on, tried to cope alone, nothing was the same

But I hoped that you still loved me, so I called upon your name.

From then on you came to be the centre of my life.
I now know that you are in charge, helping me deal with daily strife.

And so you have healed me, of my worries, doubt and sin.

And I turn to you in thankful love, a new life to begin.

A hymn: **A new creation**

I AM A NEW CREATION,

No more in condemnation,
Here in the grace of God I stand.
My heart is overflowing,
My love just keeps on growing,
Here in the grace of God I stand.

And I will praise You Lord,
Yes, I will praise You Lord,
And I will sing of all that You have done.

A joy that knows no limit,
A lightness in my spirit,
Here in the grace of God I stand.

In today's reading Jesus asks his disciples about their perception of him. There are questions about identity and expectations. He predicts His death and tells the way of the cross.

I believe he is saying is 'You say you are my followers... Are you following me ? Are you walking my way? It's not going to be easy but there really is no other way.'

We read **Mark 8 : 27 – 38**

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"²⁸ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."²⁹ "But what about

you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Predicts His Death

³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

The Way of the Cross

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

Why didn’t Jesus simply tell his disciples who he was? I think it was because his message was not about himself. His message was about the Kingdom. He never promoted himself. Also of course, there are many truths that people have to discover for themselves. At that time the truth about Jesus was not clear. Even the disciples who lived with him were very slow to discover the truth. By asking the question ‘Who do people say that I am’ Jesus was encouraging them to go on discovering. He asked them to decide for themselves, which is exactly what he does today.

It doesn’t really matter what other people think about Jesus, we have to make up our own minds, decide for ourselves. Once we have made that decision to follow Jesus as Lord we can stand firm.

The disciples had so much more to learn about Jesus and many people today are in that same position. They make a start in following him but that’s not enough. Because with Jesus, there is always more to be had.

In verses 36 – 37 Jesus teaches about the value of one’s soul. He says it is pointless to gain the world

but lose your soul. Our soul is worth more than ‘the whole world’. It is the most valuable possession we could ever have so why would we want to trade it off with what the world offers – temptations and attractions which are only temporary. We may want to have a career which gives us a comfortable lifestyle. OK fine. Nothing wrong with that. Jesus doesn’t say we can’t. What he does say is that it must not be at the expense of denying the call of God on our lives. We cannot afford to ignore God. Whatever the cost it must be ‘no’ to self and ‘yes’ to God. Our comfort and security is one thing but Jesus’ priorities and purposes must come first. Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth, and guide me,
For you are the God of my salvation
And my hope is in you all the day long.
(Psalm 25 : 4 – 5.)

Perhaps you would like to spend a short time in prayer, naming before God those who are in special need at this time, maybe through illness or bereavement, so that he can hold them in his healing arms of love.

Hymn : King of Kings, Majesty

KING OF KINGS, MAJESTY,
God of heaven living in me.
Gentle Saviour, closest Friend,
Strong Deliverer, Beginning and End:
All within me falls at Your throne.

*Your majesty, I can but bow;
I lay my all before You now.
In royal robes I don't deserve,
I live to serve Your majesty.*

Earth and heaven worship You,
Love eternal, faithful and true,
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls,
Brought this sinner near to Your throne:
All within me cries out in praise.

The blessing: Now may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with and remain with us always. **Amen.**