

Worship for Sunday 14th February 2021
from Brian & Clare Kennard

Opening sentence: “I will praise You, O Lord, with all my heart” (Psalm 138:1)

Hymn suggestion:

I DELIGHT GREATLY IN THE LORD,

My soul rejoices in my God.
I delight greatly in the Lord,
My soul rejoices in my God.
For He has clothed me with garments of salvation,
And arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.
He has clothed me with garments of salvation,
And arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.

Prayer time:

Be still and focus on the awesome God we serve: great beyond all words, but revealing Himself through His Word, and most clearly through the Word who became flesh - the Lord Jesus Christ. Express your adoration, worship and praise in whatever ways you can.

Confession

The Bible says, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 4: 8-9)

Let God speak to you about the attitudes and actions that need changing in your life. Confess to Him your weaknesses and failures, and receive His cleansing and forgiveness as He has promised.

Bible readings: getting dressed properly

Isaiah 61:10 - 11

I delight greatly in the LORD;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
¹¹ For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,

so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

Matthew 6: 25-34 *Jesus teaches:*

²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Meditation

“Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh” (Romans 13:14)...in other words, Get dressed properly!

What to wear? Not too much of a problem for most of us, I guess. The Bible in numerous places uses clothing as a picture of our relationship with God, and so we have to be very careful about how we are “dressed” before God.

We must put on **righteousness and justice:** “I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and turban” (Job 29:14). The believer must be concerned for society to be ordered according to God’s ways, and to exemplify that way of living ourselves.

We need to be **eager to do good:** “.we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to

do good works..." (Ephesians 2:10). Christian faith must have a practical outworking - it must be visible to a watching world.

Our great need is **Salvation and the robe of righteousness**: "He (God) has clothed me with the garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10). This is a reminder that any goodness we have is a gift from the loving, merciful hand of God. Many people, especially religiously-minded people, try to earn God's favour by prayers, pilgrimages, gifts to the poor and so on. That's "putting the cart before the horse" in the old-fashioned phrase - a sure recipe for getting nowhere!

So, to put the horse in front of the cart and get moving, we are to **put on the Lord Jesus Christ**: Romans 13:14 as I started with. Our only means of being right with God and useful to His Kingdom is to be united with Christ.

Finally, let's be clear that a response from us is needed. You can have the most amazing waterproof, fleece-lined, breathable fabric Winter coat...but unless you actually put it on, it won't protect you one bit from the cold and ice: **put on the Lord Jesus Christ...every day! Amen.**

Prayer time. In your own words, remember before God...those in authority in this country and around the world grappling with the present crisis and the many other difficult problems humanity faces....all those "on the front line" whether NHS staff, transport workers, shop workers, the emergency services...those most personally affected by the Covid-19 outbreak: the bereaved, those seriously ill, those who have already lost their jobs.. the Church of Jesus Christ as together we seek to witness to the love and care of God in word and action....that people everywhere would recognise that those of every race and language are made in the image of God and that we are all one in Christ...and for yourself and your family. Pray for Owen O'Neill, previous Catholic chaplain here, who is seriously ill in hospital. Remember, too, thankfulness!

The Lord's Prayer (traditional version):

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name;
thy kingdom come;
thy 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 Thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN SUGGESTION: AND CAN IT BE?
(see especially verse 5)

AND CAN IT BE that I should gain
An interest 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?

'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies:
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine!
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

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.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

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 the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

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.