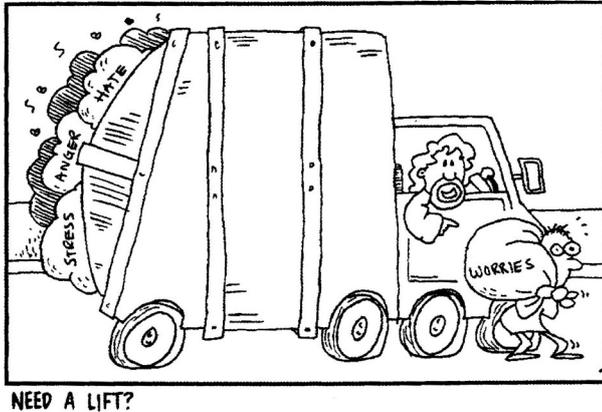


**Worship for the Sunday after Ascension Day -
16th May 2021**

from Brian & Clare Kennard

Call to worship: "O worship the Lord with me,
and let us exalt His name together" (Psalm 34:3)



Suggested Hymn: *Sing we the King who is coming
to reign*

Sing we the King who is coming to reign:
Glory to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain!
Life and salvation his empire shall bring,
Joy to the nations when Jesus is King:

Come let us sing: Praise to our King,
Jesus our King, Jesus our King:
This is our song, who to Jesus belong:
Glory to Jesus, to Jesus our King.

All shall be well in his kingdom of peace;
Freedom shall flourish and wisdom increase.;
Justice and truth from his sceptre shall spring;
Wrong shall be ended when Jesus is King:

Souls shall be saved from the burden of sin;
Doubt shall not darken his witness within;
Hell has no terrors, and death has not sting;
Love is victorious when Jesus is King:

Kingdom of Christ, for thy coming we pray;
Hasten, O Father, the dawn of the day
When this new song thy creation shall sing;
Satan is vanquished, and Jesus is King:

Opening Prayers

In the beginning, God made everything and saw that
it was good.
God of all, we come before you today just as we are,
We lift to you the joy of being alive,

We praise you that we are part of your amazing
Creation.

Plant in us an ever-growing love for you,
Let worship and praise burst from our hearts,
Let the fruitfulness of our lives bring glory to you.
Amen.

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.*

Prayer for today ("Collect"):

O God the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is
gone before,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

If you have a Bible of your own, please read **Psalm
98.**

Reading: Romans 3:23-31

Righteousness Through Faith²¹ But now apart
from the law the righteousness of God has been
made known, to which the Law and the Prophets
testify. ²² This righteousness is given through
faith in **Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is
no difference between Jew and Gentile,** ²³ for all
have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and
all are justified freely by his grace through the
redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God
presented Christ as a sacrifice of
atonement, **through the shedding of his blood—to
be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate
his righteousness, because in his forbearance he
had left the sins committed beforehand
unpunished—** ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his
righteousness at the present time, so as to be just
and the one who justifies those who have faith in
Jesus.

²⁷ Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. ²⁸ For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. ²⁹ Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, ³⁰ since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. ³¹ Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

Reflection: Three 'B's

Not the pollinating sort, you understand, but rather three words beginning with the letter 'B'. They all illustrate to us the nature of, and the danger of what the Bible calls 'SIN'.

The first is BLOT. In my schooldays, a fountain pen was the only acceptable pen to write with. However, as those who use them will know, they have an unfortunate habit of stopping - the remedy for which is a vigorous wrist movement forwards. This usually has the desired effect, but sometimes a blob of ink splats mercilessly onto the exercise book, desk or clothing. Spoilt work, damaged clothes, in other words: TROUBLE. God's wonderful world is spoilt by human greed and stupidity, whether the result of carelessness or deliberate policy, the result is the same: wasted, spoilt, polluted lives. The essence of the Good News of Jesus is that God has not left us to our own devices, but has given us Jesus to clean up our lives: "The blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanses us from all sin"

The second is BURDEN. Perhaps you have worked as a builder or in some other line of work needing muscle to move things around. Sometimes it is a struggle! Each of us has a conscience, and every time we disobey its voice two things happen. The first is that we get hardened and it becomes more and more difficult to discern between right and wrong. The second is that we get progressively more weighed down with guilt (see the cartoon above). We all know that we ought to be better people than we are. John the Baptist pointed others to Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

The third is BARRIER. Sin makes God seem far away, distant and unknowable- and indeed there are those who say that God isn't even there at all. As Isaiah the prophet says, "Your sins have made a separation between you and your God, and have hid His face from you." The Good News is that God does not wait for us to make amends, or to be good enough: "While we were still sinners, Christ died

for us."

In Christ, the BLOT is removed, the BURDEN lifted and the BARRIER between God and man removed. Praise the Lord!!

Prayers of intercession

In your own words, remember before God...those in authority in this country and around the world grappling with the present crisis, especially just now in India,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....and the many other difficult problems humanity faces...and for yourself and your family. 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.

Song suggestion: *The splendour of the King (v.1 and chorus)*

THE SPLENDOUR OF THE KING,
Clothed in majesty;
Let all the earth rejoice,
All the earth rejoice.
He wraps Himself in light,
And darkness tries to hide,
And trembles at His voice,
And trembles at His voice.

*How great is our God, sing with me,
How great is our God, and all will see
How great, how great is our God.*

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.