

Worship for Sunday 22nd August 2021
from Brian & Clare Kennard

“The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shore rejoice.” (Psalm 97:1)

Suggested Hymn: *Come, now is the time*

Come, now is the time to worship
Come, now is the time to give your heart
Come, just as you are to worship
Come, just as you are before your God
Come

One day every tongue will confess You are God
One day every knee will bow
Still the greatest treasure remains for those
Who gladly choose You now

Come, now is the time to worship
Come, now is the time to give your heart
Come, just as you are to worship
Come, just as you are before your God
Come

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.

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”):

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves. Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reading: If you have a Bible of your own, please read **Psalm 84**

Reading: Ephesians 6: 10 – 20

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Reflection: Equipped for service: “The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world...” (2Corinthians 10:4)

The Christian life is not a walk in the park, but a warfare. We are called to be God’s agents in changing the world, and challenging the Status quo (the way things are) always brings on opposition. Just one example: Samuel Plimsoll (lived 1824-1898), a Christian politician, was concerned that so many ships were being lost and sailors drowned because shipowners would overload their vessels. Plimsoll devised a system to show the safe loading of a vessel by a mark on its hull – the Plimsoll line. Did everyone welcome such a humanitarian idea with open arms? They certainly didn’t, and Plimsoll had to fight very hard to get his idea adopted! The people Paul was writing to in Ephesus knew all about opposition – read Acts 19 if you want to know more.

And now for the good news! God has provided the believer with the equipment we need for the struggle. What we have in today's passage is not to be seen as another list of what we ought to do, but rather as a reminder of all that God has provided for us in Jesus, Praise the Lord!

We look briefly at the equipment ("armour") in turn: v.14..*the belt of truth*. We call this "integrity". Just as the belt kept the clothing together to enable freedom of movement, so honesty ("walking in the light") in our dealings with our neighbours, ourselves and God brings us "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

v.14..*the breastplate of righteousness*. Identified with Christ, joined to Him by faith, we have not our own righteousness, but His. (see Romans 3:21-22)

v.15..*readiness*. The Christian cannot be content to sit it out until Christ returns. On the contrary, we must be active in spreading the message of salvation, the good news of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

v.16..*the shield of faith*. We are called to a life of faith, meaning dependence on God. Only a firm trust in God can uphold us in the trials and tribulations of life. Arrows would be covered in tar and lighted to cause maximum damage. We have a fierce enemy – but a so-much-greater Saviour, Hallelujah!

v.17..*the helmet of salvation*. "Salvation is of the LORD", as Jonah found in the belly of the great fish. We are not working our way towards salvation so much as working out (putting into daily practice) our salvation. Salvation is the great theme of the Bible. Christ has accomplished it, now we need to avail ourselves of "so great a salvation" (Hebrews 2:3)

v.17..*the sword of the Spirit*. To know the mind of God, get familiar with the Bible! It's not an easy book, but it repays careful and prayerful study

v18..*pray*. Soldiers need to keep in touch with their commander, to receive orders and to be aware of the progress of the battle. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Of course it's not enough to know about the "armour" or to read or even write sermons about it – we must (what?).....**put it on. Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

In your own words, remember before God...the present chaos and bloodshed in Afghanistan and other places..those in authority in this country and around the world grappling with the unprecedented

weather events, and not forgetting the Covid-19 crisisall those "on the front line" whether NHS staff, transport workers, shop workers, the emergency services...those most personally affected by the 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.

Hymn suggestion: *Soldiers of Christ, arise* (selected verses)

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies,
Through His eternal Son;
Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in His mighty pow'r,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror

Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul,
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.
To keep your armor bright
Attend with constant care,
Still walking in your Captain's sight
And watching unto prayer.

Pray, without ceasing pray,
Your Captain gives the word;
His summons cheerfully obey,
And call upon the Lord:
To God your every want
In instant prayer display;
Pray always; pray, and never faint;
Pray, without ceasing pray.

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.