

Worship for Sunday 29th August 2021
from Jeanne Moore

Good Morning everyone. I can hardly believe this is the last Sunday in August. When was Summer? Did I miss it? It must have been hiding behind the rain clouds! I pray you are well. An update ! I have recently had a meeting with my Consultant and he said he was very pleased with my progress, which of course was very good news. Returning to Gartree hopefully draws nearer. So I thank you dearly for all your prayers.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them. (1 John 4 : 16b)

We pray:

Loving God, thank you for the gift of this and every day. Thank you for the priceless treasure of your word in the Scriptures. Teach us to make time to read them so that your voice may speak again, offering light to our path and the way to life in all its fullness. Teach us to count our blessings and to welcome this day as your gift, offering it to your service in grateful praise. **Amen.**

A hymn: Only by grace can we enter

ONLY BY GRACE can we enter,
Only by grace can we stand;
Not by our human endeavour,
But by the blood of the Lamb.
Into Your presence You call us,
You call us to come.
Into Your presence You draw us,
And now by Your grace we come,
Now by Your grace we come.

Lord, if You mark our transgressions,
Who would stand?
Thanks to Your grace we are cleansed
By the blood of the Lamb.

Psalm 119 : 1 - 8

¹"Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. ²Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart- ³they do no wrong but follow his ways. ⁴You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed. ⁵Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! ⁶Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands. ⁷I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws. ⁸I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me".

This is the longest of all the psalms and tells of the writer's love for God. All through the psalm you can read declarations of that love and how he wants to live in God's ways. In verse 5 he wants to reflect God's decrees. He is learning to do that he says – doing his best but that he hasn't learnt everything yet. I don't know about you, but that's me. I do what I think is my best, but I know there is always more, so (v8) I will obey your decrees, please don't give up on me – which of course God will never do.

A prayer.

Lord, thank you for your laws; your loving blueprint for our lives. Thank you that in following them we grow nearer to you and find the deepest joy and peace. On the days when we waver from that path, steer us back Lord. Help us to live your way, guided by the spirit, because our desire is to be a true reflection of your love. Amen

The writer of today's reading is James, the brother of Jesus who lead the council of Jerusalem. He didn't automatically believe in Jesus, indeed at first he challenged him because he misunderstood Jesus' mission. However later he became an ardent believer who Paul called 'the pillar of the church'.

James addresses the recipients as brothers and sisters. The blood of Jesus unites Christ-followers. We have unlimited access to our Father because of the sacrifice of Jesus. We have been given new life. Once given that new life, we must be receptive to God's word. James presents a list of do's and don'ts to help us do that.

We read James 1 : 19 - 27

¹⁹My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. ²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it-not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it-they will be blessed in what they do. ²⁶Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and

their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”

So, listening and doing. God’s word is alive and powerful and we must make sure that our hearts and lives welcome that word. That’s the way God has planned for our lives. James says in verse 21 that we are ‘ to humbly accept the word planted in you’. He also says that we deceive ourselves if we only hear the word but don’t act on it. There are many people who hear the word but never put it into practice. James compares that to someone looking in a mirror. Usually when we look in a mirror it is so that we can make changes to our appearance in some way. and having done so look away. Looking into the Word of God is like looking in a mirror but it reveals the truth of who we are, not how we think we look to ourselves on the outside. God’s mirror reflects what is on the inside. God’s mirror reveals our inner self. We can try to change our outward appearance but that will not affect what God sees of us inwardly – the mirror of the soul. It is not our outward appearance God’s mirror reflects back at us, it is the heart of us. It shows the numerous imperfections and sins in our lives and that is what we should be facing up to. Look at our true reflection in the spiritual mirror, acknowledging it, confronting it, not walking away into darkness but out into the light of truth . God is light and to walk with Him in the light is to see our life as it really is. The truth about ourselves and our need for salvation.

Ps 119 v 35: Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. And v105 : Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

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.

Suggested hymn :I see the King of Glory

I SEE THE KING OF GLORY

Coming on the clouds with fire;
The whole earth shakes,
The whole earth shakes.
I see His love and mercy
Washing over all our sin;
The people sing,
The people sing:

Hosanna,
Hosanna,
Hosanna in the highest.
(Repeat)

I see a generation
Rising up to take their place,
With selfless faith,
With selfless faith.
I see a near revival
Stirring as we pray and seek;
We’re on our knees,
We’re on our knees.

Heal my heart and make it clean;
Open up my eyes to the things unseen.
Show me how to love
Like You have loved me,
Break my heart for what breaks Yours;
Everything I am for Your kingdom’s cause,
As I walk from earth into eternity.

A prayer.

Almighty God,
We pray for this planet you have given us, once seeming solid and secure but exposed now as all too vulnerable, ravaged by years of plunder and abuse. We live in a fractured world, scarred by many wounds. We see problems to which there seem no solutions, needs to which there seem few answers. We pray for reconciliation in a world of so much division, for the breaking down of barriers of fear, hatred and suspicion that overshadow so many lives. Help us to learn from the past and so build for a better future. In the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

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.**