

## Worship at home for Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Prepared by Rev. Brian Kennard

**Opening sentence:** "O worship the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together"  
(Psalm 34 v. 3)

### Call to worship:

Praise your Maker, all you nations;  
And extol him, all you people.  
Everlasting is God's favour;  
Strong and constant love surrounds us  
Praise the Lord! Alleluia! Amen!

### Hymn suggestion:

#### STF 82 *How great Thou art!*

YouTube link for hymn (words differ slightly):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GKhDCsLrUg>

### A prayer:

How great Thou art!

As we draw near to worship, we recognise again that all of our words, all of our thoughts cannot do justice to your greatness, goodness and majesty.

You are so different from ourselves - You are immortal, we fade away. You are holy, we are at best people with mixed motives and muddled-up ideas.

You are wise, we are ignorant. And yet you call us to spend time with you, indeed you delight over us with singing as the prophet declares.

So, today, while we seek to understand you and your ways more, even more we would spend time in adoration, awe, wonder, love and praise.

How great Thou art! Amen.

### A prayer of confession:

God, you heap your love upon us like a mother providing for her family's need, embracing her child with tenderness. Forgive us when, like spoilt children, we treat your generosity as our right, or hug it possessively to ourselves. Give us enough trust to live securely in your love and to share it freely with others

in open-handed confidence  
that your grace will never run out. **Amen.**

### A version of Psalm 65:

*Let the people praise you, O God,  
Let all creation praise you.  
Those who dwell at the ends of the earth  
are held in awe at your wonders:  
the dawn and evening sing your praise.  
You tend the earth and you water it,  
you make it rich and fertile.  
Your clouds are full of water,  
they provide rain for the swelling grain.  
You refresh hearts withered and dry,  
you bring to life land parched with drought.  
You crown our years with good gifts,  
the fruit trees drip with abundance.  
The alpine pastures shimmer with green,  
the hills are wreathed with dancing clouds.  
The meadows are clothed with sheep,  
and the valleys mantled with corn.  
Loving God, ceaselessly redeeming and  
creating,  
astonish us with your abundant generosity,  
and still our hearts in awe and wonder.*

### Bible reading: Matthew 13: 3-9

(if you can, read the whole of verses 1 - 43)

<sup>3</sup> Then Jesus told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. <sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. <sup>8</sup> Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. <sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear."

**Link to 'Never Alone' video on YouTube:**

<https://youtu.be/FIROpgKbaXg>

**Meditation:**

“One sows, another reaps, but it is God who makes it grow” (1 Corinthians 3:6)

A seed is a small thing with great potential. The Gospel is that seed which God has planted in you, and it is good seed (v24)! Who could have imagined, when Jesus spoke these words, that the Gospel would one day be having an impact all over the world? And who can count the testimonies of Christian people through the ages of what God has done in their lives through believing the Good News? Little beginnings can grow to be significant (see vv 31-32), as long as the seed is planted in the right soil. Notice, too, that even the best seed is useless unless it is in the growing medium of the soil. Jesus told us we were to be “in the world” (active in the community) but not “of the world” (accepting blindly the values and ways of operating of society). The famous Baptist preacher of Victorian days, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, famously stated (using a very different analogy), “The time to worry is not when the boat is in the water - that’s what boats are for. The time to worry is when water is in the boat!”

As we all know, there is a lot of work the farmer has to do if the seed is to fulfil that potential. We have to open ourselves to receive the sunshine of God’s love, the watering of His word and the fertilising effect of fellowship and support. A lot of work, but **God makes it grow!** At the end of the day, the Christian life and fruitfulness are not a d-i-y self-help or even a mutual aid programme, but something God does in those who are relying on Him.

Then we have a serious warning from Jesus: not every seed, even good seed, comes to fruition or lives up to its promise. Keep

God’s seed in your heart safe. Out with the weeds! on with the fertiliser! Scare away the birds! Watch the soil of your life! Grow up! Mediate on what these slogans might actually mean in your life, in your family and in the church.

What small thing can you do today? What minor change in your routine? What little actions can our churches take in the present circumstances to enable us to “serve the present age” as Charles Wesley put it. It is a great mistake, because we cannot do everything, to do nothing. “Despise not the day of small things” said the prophet Zechariah (ch. 4 v 10). Who knows what great things God may have in store if we remain faithful?

“One sows, another reaps, but it is God who makes it grow.” Amen.

**Prayer time.** We are especially asked to pray for the work of **Action for Children** (formerly National Children’s Home) today.

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 all people 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.
- 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: STF 63 *Over all the Earth***

YouTube link for hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILVJSJCL-m4>

**Blessing:**

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