

Sunday 26 July 2020

HYMN: CH4 97

O God, you search me and you know me.
All my ways lie open to your gaze.
When I walk or lie down, you go before me:
Ever the maker and keeper of my days.

You know my resting and my rising.
You discern my purpose from afar,
and with love everlasting you besiege me:
In ev'ry moment of life or death, you are.

Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,
you have known its meaning through and through.
You are with me beyond my understanding:
God of my present, my past and future too.

Although your Spirit is upon me,
still I search for shelter from your light.
There is nowhere on earth I can escape you:
Even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

For you created me and shaped me,
gave me life within my mother's womb.
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you:
Safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

Prayer of approach to God

Heavenly Father, we thank You that, even when we do the things that are not Your will, You still don't let us go. Help us to stay close to You; to love You and others with the Love You first loved us.

Bible Readings: Jonah 1:1-6;
Psalm 139: 1-10; 1 Corinthians 13

Reflection:

Jonah "rose to flee to Tarshish *away from the face of the Lord* (1:3). Then, in the same verse, it says again: "So he paid the fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, *away from the face of the Lord.*" Jonah is a prophet sent by the Lord; but one who responds by going his own way.

Does Jonah not know, or does he choose not to know, the words of the Psalmist, that tell of God's awesome, unwavering presence, even, or especially, during attempts to escape Him. The fact that Jonah finds a ship is encouraging for him as it seems to serve his purpose. However, through the storm, Jonah will learn that he, despite his efforts and determination, is being held within a plan bigger than his. What is so for Jonah, in his story, is so for us, in our story.

*If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me".
(Psalm 139:9-10)*

Prayer for others

Loving God, we bring before You all who find themselves in the darkness of their grief, anxiety, pain. May Your unwavering love be felt by them and so be the hope that gives them strength. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you, now and evermore.

Sunday 2 August 2020

HYMN: CH4 448

Lord, the light of your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth you now bring us
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine
Fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze
Set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow
Flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word
Lord, and let there be light.*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence
From the shadows into your radiance
By the blood I may enter your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness
Shine on me, shine on me...

Chorus...*Shine, Jesus shine...*

Prayer of approach to God

Heavenly Father, we thank You that we can live in the light of Your love; especially when we find ourselves in darkness. Help us never to forget that we are always held within Your Love.

Bible Readings:

Judges 4:4-5: 1; Kings 19:9-13;
John 1: 1-5

Reflection:

In the Bible, the meaning of a person's name is often reflected in the personality of the person.

The Name of our Lord Jesus is actually Yeshua, which means, 'He saves'. The name of the Hebrew judge Deborah means, 'bee'. Moreover, you can hear in her name the sound of the Hebrew word 'Dabar', which means 'word'. It is as if in the book of Judges, through her, God's word 'zooms' as a bee does, sounding not in an overpowering, loud manner, but closer to the sound of the whisper that came to the tired and discouraged prophet Elijah. In the darkness of his distress, he did what God *said*, "Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD." The same God *said*, on the first page of the Bible, in the midst of chaos, 'Let there be light', and there was light. God Himself appeared as light in the world. He does not keep Himself at a distance from what He created. He wants connection, partnership, dialogue, yes, intimacy. All these things are possible through Jesus, Yeshua. His voice still sounds, quietly. Therefore, we need to put effort in hearing it, in recognizing it, as Elijah did.

Prayer for others

Gracious God, thanking You for what You have done for us through Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, we ask You for faith, hope and love for those who don't know You.... yet.

The Lord's Prayer

The Blessing

The peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

HYMN: CMP 52

God sent His son they called Him Jesus
He came to love heal and forgive
He lived and died to buy my pardon
An empty grave is there to prove my
Savior lives

*Because He lives I can face tomorrow
Because He lives all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living just because
He lives*

How sweet to hold a newborn baby
And feel the pride and joy he brings
But greater still the calm assurance
This child can face uncertain days
because He lives
Chorus..... *Because He lives*

And then one day I'll cross that river
I'll fight life's final war with pain
And then as death gives way to vict'ry
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He
lives
Chorus..... *Because He lives*

Prayer of approach to God

Heavenly Father, we thank You that we
can be sure, that what we find too
difficult to share with others, is known by
You and is safe with You. Help us to let
You take from us what holds us back
from loving You, with all our heart, soul
and mind.

Bible Readings:

Exodus 2: 16-22; John 4:1-42

Reflection:

The Bible has its stories of meetings that
happen at a well. These stories are
actually wedding stories. At a well,
Abraham's servant found Rebecca for
Abraham's son Isaac; Jacob found his wife
Rachel and Moses found his Zipporah. In
John we have the story of the meeting
between Jesus and the Samaritan woman.
What is happening here? Is it another
wedding story? An exchange happens
here. Realizing that Jesus knows
everything about her, the woman leaves
her jar and goes into town. And so she
gives Jesus the water he asked for, while
being given the living water by Jesus. Jesus
knew the woman had had five husbands.
The one she had, when she was speaking
to Jesus, wasn't her husband. Jesus knew
the woman's deep longing for love. In
Jesus, she found the water that quenched
the thirst she had felt for so long. So yes,
again a bride was found at a well. The
Biblical wedding continues, with Christ the
Groom and His Church, His bride.

Prayer for others

We pray for Your suffering world, that Your
comforting, soothing, healing touch may be
felt by those who feel so much pain.

The Lord's Prayer

The Blessing

Find your strength in the Lord, in His
mighty power.

HYMN: CH4 158

1 God moves in a mysterious way
his wonders to perform;
he plants his footsteps in the sea,
and rides upon the storm.

2 Deep in unfathomable mines
of never-failing skill
he treasures up his bright designs,
and works his sov'reign will.

4 Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
but trust him for his grace;
behind a frowning providence
he hides a smiling face.

5 His purposes will ripen fast,
unfolding ev'ry hour;
the bud may have a bitter taste,
but sweet will be the flow'r.

6 Blind unbelief is sure to err,
and scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
and he will make it plain.

Prayer of approach to God

Heavenly Father
We are challenged in many ways,
together, through the pandemic and in
our individual lives. We thank You that we
can come before You, with all that we
carry, with our hopes and fears. We thank
You that there is nothing that is not
covered by Your Love. Amen.

Bible Readings: Exodus 2:1-10;
1 Corinthians 16:13

Reflection:

*'And his sister stood at a distance to know
what would be done to him.'*

See this girl, standing there, the sister of
the new baby boy. What does she feel...?
Fear? That is not what the text says. What
it actually says (in Hebrew) is that she
stands 'firm'. How can she stand firm in
her circumstances? What is she looking
at? She must be watching intensely the
basket that holds her brother, floating on
the water...Miriam stands firm in hopeful
anticipation, not because she is an
exceptional young woman, but because
she is an ordinary girl who knows her God:
the God who chooses life, in the midst of
death. God hopes that we too stand firm
in our faith and trust in Him.

Prayer for others

Gracious God
We pray that the light of Your Love,
through Jesus Christ, Your Son, may shine
on all those who feel their suffering is
unbearable. That they may know that You
are with them and feel Your presence as a
peace that passes all understanding.

The Lord's Prayer

The Blessing

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
Love of God and the Fellowship of the
Holy Spirit is with you, now and evermore.