

Sunday 10th May 2020 10.30 am **Worship prepared by Hilary.**

Good morning everyone. Welcome to all who would normally attend the service at VPBC and welcome too to any visitors who might join us.

Today, we will have some songs of praise to God and opportunity to thank him for sending Jesus to be the Saviour of the World.

We will also have some quieter songs as we consider what it means to be holy and being in God's presence.

Lesley Wilson, who visited our church in September 2019, will be speaking to us from the book of Joshua and later, will also be leading us in communion. Please have bread and wine/juice available so you are prepared to take part.

After the service, Liz will invite us for 'coffee and a chat' via Zoom so look out for the link.

Let us start our service with a prayer.

Heavenly Father, we come into your presence as a church, worshipping together, although we are in our separate homes. Lord, we know that your presence is with us wherever we are, and we ask that your Holy Spirit will help us to praise and thank you for all you have done for us.

We ask that we can capture a glimpse of your glory and worship you for who you are. We know we are not worthy ourselves to approach your throne but through the sacrifice of Jesus, we can boldly enter your presence, knowing that you love us and welcome us.

We are sorry for every time we have forgotten you or put you lower in our priorities than we should, and we come humbly asking for forgiveness and seeking to draw closer to our Father.

Help us Lord, to live as we should. Help us in our thoughts and attitudes, in our words and actions, that everything we think, say or do, will glorify you.

We ask all this in the powerful name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

I love the phrase 'ponder anew' which appears in our first song. Maybe some of us don't ponder enough. It means to think carefully, to consider. Hopefully during this time of lockdown, we have more time to ponder. To think and pray - about God and what He means to us as individuals and as a church.

In Luke chapter 2, we hear how the shepherds visit Jesus having been told by the angels where to go and later Mary ponders on what has happened.

Luke 2

"So, they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and **pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."**

Let us join the shepherds as they praise God and ponder anew on what God can do in our lives and in the churches and give him the glory.

Our first song was written in the 17th Century by Joachim Neander who was born in Germany. There seem to be various versions of this song and although I like the singing in this version, it does miss out a line that has become important to Neil and I in recent weeks.

During lockdown, we have been praying for our family to come to know Jesus as their Saviour and we often pray 'brothers and sisters draw near' which encompasses our siblings as well as our own sons.

Maybe you are praying for specific people to open their hearts and lives to Jesus.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear,
Brothers and sisters draw near,
Praise him in glad adoration.

Song: Praise to our God the Almighty the King of Creation.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roxlm_qCb7c

"Worthy the Lamb all heaven cries, to be exalted thus.
Worthy the Lamb our hearts reply for He was slain for us."

Song: Praise God from whom all blessings flow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsCRZiKbaqM>

Lift up His name with the sound of singing
Lift up your voice
For He is worthy to be praised.

Song: Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWbubW6-yfg>

In John 15 we read about the vine and the branches and how God is the gardener. We have shared many examples this week, via the Care N Share group, of flowers, plants and trees that speak of God's love and his creation. Those of you who have gardening skills know that at time you need to prune the plants to make improvements. John 15 tells us that God will prune us to make us more fruitful.

This might not be a comfortable situation and one that might cause us concern, but we can trust that God loves us and he is in control.

The vine and the branches John 15

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: love each other.

Another picture of pruning is the refiners fire.

Let us come to God in worship and praise as we sing Purify my heart.

Song: Purify my heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ft1fG4PtT0Y>

Romans 12: 2

A living sacrifice

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

God is holy. We are not. For us not to be significantly different and not conform to the world; for us, to be part of the Vine, we will need to be pruned and refined. We cannot do this ourselves but with the help of the Holy Spirit we can become more like Jesus.

Lord, help us to come to you honestly and ask you to change us. Help us to give you the best of our time. Forgive us when we rush away. Help us to focus and to listen to you. Help us to desire to be in your presence. Forgive us when our desires are not focussed on Jesus, when we don't put Jesus first.

Song: To be in your presence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=typ7cueKdT4>

Reading: Joshua 2

Talk: Lesley Wilson <https://youtu.be/Z0gK1GG-0g8>

Song: Thank you Jesus

Thank you, Jesus, you set me free. Christ my Saviour you rescued me.
I love you Lord. I love you Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hDXqnCh3BU>

Communion – Come to the Lord's table.

Lesley Wilson will lead us in a time of Communion.
Please have ready, the bread and wine/juice so we can take part together.

We will have the opportunity to share the Lord's Prayer as well as take communion.

There are a few pauses in her recording. This is to give us time to take the bread and wine. You may want to use this time for your personal prayers of thanks and confession.

<https://youtu.be/GhbwgUuEZx8>

Song: Saviour of the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9zEjO-7Gf8>

Blessing

Rather than having a spoken blessing, I have chosen to use a song. Last week Neil reminded us about 1 Corinthians 14 v 26-40 and orderly worship.

1 Corinthians 14

“What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.”

During this week, Sandie was inspired to write a poem after singing this song.

Let's sing to one together to encourage one another.

'This is my story; this is my song. Praising my Saviour all the day long.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDeiy9-t2GE>

Refreshments - join Zoom. Look out for a message from Liz.