

Worship For Sunday 22nd November 2020

Prepared by Neil, talk by Steve Latham on Joshua 5 v13 to 6 v21. The theme is “Overcoming”. Prayers for the World has been prepared by Hilary.

Let us pray:

The world belongs to God, the earth and all its people. How good it is, how wonderful, to live together in unity. Love and faith come together, justice and peace join hands. Open our lips, O God, and our mouths shall proclaim your praise. Hear our Confession Holy God, maker of all, have mercy on us. Jesus Christ, servant of the poor, have mercy on us. Holy Spirit, breath of life, have mercy on us. At the centre of our faith is the belief that God' goodness is at the heart of humanity, planted more deeply than all that is wrong. Let us in silence confess our faults and admit our frailty.

SILENCE – LET US SPEND A MOMENT IN REFLECTION.

For the dullness of our vision, Father forgive.

For the weakness of our faith, Jesus forgive.

For the joylessness of our living, Spirit forgive.

Blessed Trinity have mercy upon us; forgive us our sins, help us to seek, help us to see, help us to serve you. Listen to the words of Jesus, words that we can trust: “Don't be afraid, your sins are forgiven. I love you. Come and follow me”. Amen. Iona style prayer from the Diocese of Hereford website.

Be still, I won't be afraid, you silence all my fear.

Still – Hillsongs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zcHHp0GTuc>

Be still for a few moments before moving on.

**Let us Worship the one True God, The Living Word, The great “I am”,
Yahweh.**

Psalm 100

A psalm. For giving grateful praise.

¹ Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

**² Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.**

³ Know that the LORD is God.

**It is he who made us, and we are his;^[a]
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.**

**⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.**

**⁵ For the LORD is good and his love endures for ever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKF7sBxv1-o>

Romans 8 v28-30

**²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those
who love him, who^[1] have been called according to his
purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be
conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn
among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he
also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he
also glorified.**

Let us remember that “All things work together for good”!

Isaiah 63

**“The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon Me,
Because the LORD has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me to ^[a]heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;
²To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn, To ^[b]console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”**

To give them beauty for ashes,

**“Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.”**

The prayer of Saint Patrick

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qz_oad9XZ0o

Prayers for the World – North Korea, prepared by Hilary



How many Christians are there in North Korea?

The population of North Korea is 25.7 million. Open Doors estimates there are around 300,000 secret Christians in North Korea, courageously choosing to follow Jesus over the Kim family.

It's very difficult to know exactly how many believers there are because they must keep their faith completely secret.

From that 300,000, Open Doors estimates that 50,000-70,000 Christians are currently imprisoned in terrible labour camps for their faith. It is unlikely that they will ever be able to leave.

Why are Christians persecuted in North Korea?

Anybody who believes in a higher authority than the dictatorial Kim family is considered an enemy of the state. Kim Jong-un and his family are worshipped as gods, and posters of Kim Jong-Un must be hung in all homes and schools.

Followers of any faith are at great risk of being killed or imprisoned as political criminals – and, if discovered, their families are imprisoned too.

How does the Workers' Party of Korea affect life in North Korea?

As this is the only political party in North Korea, the whole of society is controlled by it. The national system is built on the bloodshed and persecution of anyone who dares to question the authority of the Kim family, including tens of thousands of Christians.

Millions of North Korean people have lost their lives under this party's rule - either directly through punishment for disobedience, or indirectly through starvation due to the party's poor stewardship of the nation's resources.

What's life like for Christians in North Korea?

North Korea has been at the top of the World Watch List since 2002. It's still the most dangerous place in the world to follow Jesus. Many believers must keep their faith secret even from their own families

It's difficult to overstate the reach of North Korean authorities and the obedience and leader-worship they demand. Police raids to identify and arrest citizens with 'deviating thoughts' have increased, and the whole country is deliberately controlled through an atmosphere of intense fear.

And yet, despite all this, the church in North Korea is not only surviving but growing! One Christian has shared: "One day the borders will open, and we will unite with the South Korean and the Chinese church to bring the gospel to some of the darkest places on this earth."

Kim Sang-Hwa didn't realise her parents were Christians until she found their hidden Bible when she was 12.

"I threw the book across the room. I had shivers throughout my body. And I was so very afraid. I thought: 'Wow, we're all dead now.'"

Terrified, she put the Bible back where she'd found it. Sang-Hwa was left with a tremendously difficult choice. Should she do her 'patriotic duty' and tell the police, or should she find out more about Christianity from her parents – and risk her own life?

Thankfully, she chose the latter and made the courageous decision to follow Christ.

Now she lives in a neighbouring country, but there is evidence that North Korean spies are sent into these countries to kidnap and kill refugees and those working with them, particularly Christians.

Open Doors supports the underground church through its local networks and safe houses in China. Many thousands of Christians receive food, medicines, clothes, Bibles and other Christian materials.

Even more believers can listen to Christian radio programs, which are broadcast into North Korea during the middle of the night, when it is safest for them to listen.

How can I help North Korean Christians?

The scale of the persecution in North Korea can make those of us in the West feel hopeless. How can it possibly change? But we have a powerful and sovereign God, and we know that He uses all the gifts and prayers that Open Doors supporters offer. So please keep praying and supporting our brothers and sisters in the world's most dangerous country to be a Christian. They know that choosing Jesus is worth the cost. And together we can help carry the burden.

Lord, we can barely imagine what it's like to follow You in a country so oppressive as North Korea – but thank You that You are sovereign and victorious despite this.

Please continue to grow Your church and give help to Christians who are in prison, courage to those who are secret believers and protection to Open Doors secret workers providing Bibles and vital support.

Break the power of evil in North Korea, we pray.

Lord, we ask that you strengthen and provide for the secret Christians in North Korea.

And we ask that the authorities repent and turn to Jesus.

We pray in Jesus' mighty name.

Amen.

Our talk today is given by Steve Latham – Overcoming.

The reading is from Joshua 5 v13 to 6 v21

<https://youtu.be/t5Hhw2lWHLM>

Amen

We can do nothing of this without our God the three in one.

Without Jesus who died to save us

Without the Spirit whose power is within us.

The power that was given on the day of Pentecost is in each one of us and we have the potential to release it as directed by that same power. To use it to further God's Kingdom as we have been commanded, to go in to all the world, heal the sick and bring the gospel to all.

In John 7, we read.

“Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water”.

Let us boldly reach out to each of our family and friends that we yearn to see turn to you, pray for them. We long for them to come to a “knowledge” of God. In Hebrew, the word is Yada, “to know”. The word that is used in the Bible, as Ric reminded us last week, is an intimate knowledge as of a man and wife. What a mystery this is. That we can enter into this relationship with the God who made ALL things and who holds all of creation together by His power.....

Name them before the Lord. It doesn't matter how old or young they are, whether they are our children sitting right next to us or our grandchildren far away. Let us pray.

Lift up your heads you gates, you ancient doors, that are blocking the spirit from coming into these hearts. I command you in the mighty name of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to open and let Jesus in.

I pray that you would lift the scales from their eyes and unblock their ears so that would see your glory and hear you speaking to them. So that they would enter in to a true knowledge of God.

I pray this in Jesus Holy name

Amen.

**Our final song, Guide me O our great Jehovah
From Saint David's cathedral Wales, shown on Songs of Praise last week.**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p08bf3vl>

The Blessing, I pray for you. Pray it for each other.

May God the Father, who made you, keep you

May God the Son, who died for you, protect you

May God the Holy Spirit, guide you, every step of the way

Amen.

Why not send today's Worship on to the person or people you prayed for?