

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT HOME

12th July 2020 at 10.30am

Good morning all, I really appreciate being joined with you in this way. I see you all in my mind's eye and thank God for you.

LET'S BEGIN WITH A PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, we take this time now to draw nearer to your ever present Spirit.

You are strength when our own fails

You are hope where our hope is gone

You are love when we feel cold and empty

You are forgiveness when we do wrong

You are peace when we are afraid

We come to worship you, Jesus Christ, in all, with all, through all and for all. **AMEN**

let's sing this beautiful hymn reminding us that we have a wonderful story to tell of God's love for us..

Blessèd assurance, Jesus is mine:
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God;
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture burst on my sight;
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blessed;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

**TODAY WE ARE CONSIDERING OUR OWN STORIES,
OR TESTIMONIES AS THEY ARE OFTEN CALLED.**

LET'S READ THE BIBLE READINGS

Acts 22 vs 1-21 - Paul's story

"I'm a Jew. I was born and raised in the city of Tarsus in Cilicia and received my education from Gamaliel here in Jerusalem. My education was in the strict laws handed down by our ancestors. I was as devoted to God as all of you are today. ⁴ I persecuted people who followed the way of Christ: I tied up men and women and put them into prison until they were executed. ⁵ The chief priest and the entire council of our leaders can prove that I did this. In fact, they even gave me letters to take to

the Jewish community in the city of Damascus. I was going there to tie up believers and bring them back to Jerusalem to punish them.

⁶ "But as I was on my way and approaching the city of Damascus about noon, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around me. ⁷ I fell to the ground and heard a voice asking me, 'Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?'

⁸ "I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"I'm Jesus from Nazareth, the one you're persecuting.'

⁹ The men who were with me saw the light but didn't understand what was said. "Then I asked, 'What do you want me to do, Lord?'

"The Lord told me, 'Get up! Go into the city of Damascus, and you'll be told everything I've arranged for you to do.'

¹¹ "I was blind so the men who were with me led me into the city of Damascus.

¹² "A man named Ananias lived in Damascus. He was a devout person who followed Moses' Teachings. All the Jews living in Damascus spoke highly of him. ¹³ He came to me, stood beside me, and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' At that moment my sight came back and I could see Ananias.

¹⁴ "Ananias said, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the one who has God's approval, and to hear him speak to you. ¹⁵ You will be his witness and will tell everyone what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ What are you waiting for now? Get up! Be baptized, and have your sins washed away as you call on his name.'

¹⁷ "After that, I returned to Jerusalem. While I was praying in the temple courtyard, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw the Lord. He told me, 'Hurry! Get out of Jerusalem immediately. The people here won't accept your testimony about me.'

¹⁹ "I said, 'Lord, people here know that I went from synagogue to synagogue to imprison and whip those who believe in you. ²⁰ When Stephen, who witnessed about you, was being killed, I was standing there. I approved of his death and guarded the coats of those who were murdering him.'

²¹ "But the Lord told me, 'Go! I'll send you on a mission. You'll go far away to people who aren't Jewish.'

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY Often when we hear the word 'testimony' we think of stories like Saul/Paul's. There are bright lights, voices, clear directions, and huge life-changes. I often hear people say 'nothing like that has ever happened to

me in my life'. Yet the Lord doesn't just come to us in light and thunderbolts, but in still small whispers too.

We have all been in our homes, and most have spent more time just with our household or alone than ever before. We might be thinking we haven't been to church, or been anywhere different for God to speak to us. It's in our homes and gardens that the still small whispers of God can come to us.

I am wondering if any of you have had stirrings from God during this time. One moment for me was when I looked out of the window last week. Last year I bought and planted a passion flower plant. It didn't bloom then, and it's grown somewhat, but I suddenly noticed a flower. What beautiful, intricate, delicate flowers these are. I remember looking and asking, "how can this be an accident? Thank you God"

Christ didn't send a lightning bolt, but gave me a silent, strong reminder of His presence, his love for all things, and especially for us His children.

Matthew Chapter 6 vs 26

"look at the birds of the air, they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

Do you have a story to tell? Perhaps a moment when your heart has been 'strangely warmed' over these past weeks. If you do please write your story down, then when we are able to move around move freely and meet I'd like to gather your stories together into a booklet, to remind us of how Christ travelled with us because

What God is bringing you through at this very moment will be the testimony that will bring someone else through too.

Only
God can turn
a mess into a message
a test into a testimony
a trial into a triumph
a victim into a victory

LET'S SING OR SAY THIS SONG TOGETHER -

reminding ourselves that every day is a gift from God and of how blessed we are every day

This is the day, this is the day
That the Lord has made, that the Lord has made
We will rejoice, we will rejoice
And be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day that the Lord has made
We will rejoice and be glad in it
This is this is the day that the Lord has made
© Les Garrett 1967

Our offering Lord we hold out our hands to you, reminding ourselves of all we have. We give and lay gifts aside for your Kingdom work. AMEN

AND NOW WE PRAY:- *please pause & take time.*

Ever present God pour out your Spirit on the peoples of the world, leaders of nations.....

All powerful God change hearts and minds from hate to love, from bitterness to forgiveness.....

Healing God touch the lives of those suffering and hurting, lonely and sad.....

Universal God unite us all together as one.....

Eternal God with all the saints in a place greater than this earthly life, bless us with your peace.....

AMEN

The Lord's prayer Our Father.....

NOW LET'S SING ...

LORD, FOR THE YEARS Your love has kept and guided, Urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way, Sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided: Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us, Speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze, Teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us: Lord of the word, receive Your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation, Spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care: For young and old, for commonwealth and nation, Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world where men disown and doubt You, Loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain, Hungry and helpless, lost indeed without You: Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us – Self on the cross and Christ upon the throne, Past put behind us, for the future take us: Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

A BLESSING You stay with us through ever hour, Lord God, our strength, comfort, guide, peace and inspiration. We've a story to tell to the nations - "Lord help me as I write my story of You and me" AMEN