

## **Sunday worship at home**

**5<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

### **Welcome everyone.**

Lord, still our hearts and minds as we sense your presence and prepare ourselves to worship You together in song, prayer & to listen to Your Word.

### **Let's sing together**

**TO GOD BE THE GLORY!** great things He hath done!  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,  
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear His voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father through Jesus the Son;  
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!  
To every believer the promise of God;  
The vilest offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,  
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son:  
But purer and higher and greater will be  
Our wonder, our worship, when Jesus we see!  
(© Fanny Crosby)

### **And we pray**

Loving God, we bring our thanks and praise.  
For a moment we rest in your presence, feeling  
your love around and within us, and let our love  
flow back to you .....silence  
Thank you for all we have. For coming to earth in  
Jesus Christ and showing us what love is.  
For your Holy Spirit in, around and for us. **AMEN**

### **GOD'S WORD - selected verses from Genesis 8**

*But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals  
and the livestock that were with him in the ark...*

*After forty days Noah opened a window he had  
made in the ark and sent out a raven, and it kept  
flying back and forth until the water had dried up  
from the earth. Then he sent out a dove to see if  
the water had receded from the surface of the  
ground. But the dove could find nowhere to perch  
because there was water over all the surface of the  
earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark.*

*He waited seven more days and again sent out the  
dove from the ark. When the dove returned to him  
in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly  
plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water  
had receded from the earth. He waited seven more*

*days and sent the dove out again, but this time it  
did not return to him.*

*By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the  
earth was completely dry. Then God said to Noah,  
"Come out of the ark"*

*So Noah came out and built an altar to the LORD  
He sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The LORD smelled  
the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never  
again will I curse the ground because of humans,  
even though every inclination of the human heart is  
evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy  
all living creatures, as I have done.*

In this story, Noah and his family were in isolation for 370 days but unlike us, with them were all the smells of a floating zoo, and when Noah came out, he entered a whole new world.

### **So how did Noah know when it was safe to enter this new reality?**

He had the report of the raven, the reports of the dove but still didn't leave the ark till he had the report of the Lord.

I wondered if perhaps this is a picture of what we need to consider at this time, to determine when it will be safe to enter the new world that awaits us on the other side of the pandemic.

Some around us are desperate to get back to 'normality', to gather together as people called 'church' in the buildings, to travel & spend time with family and friends. Noah's tests and data collection came from 2 birds. We are listening daily to news, data, guidelines, scientific reports.

Ravens are scavengers who will settle for anything and pinch food and resources from anywhere they can, even in hostile surroundings.

Doves are wise, sensitive, strategic, and won't settle for anything, or put themselves in danger.

When the raven didn't return Noah could have relied on just that, and thought it was ok to get out the ark. But he then sent out the dove and waited for confirmation that the time was right.

I think we need the spirit of the dove, not the raven. Let's not scavenge for a sense of normality but wait with wisdom to protect ourselves and others, making sure things are safe & secure.

But Noah didn't just act after he had data from the birds, he waited for God to say come out.

And what did Noah do first – built an altar and worshipped God. We hope that worshipping God together is one of the first things we do, whenever that is. God deserves our worship, praise, adoration for faithfulness through this.

Noah then built a vineyard. There was fruitfulness after the flood. We know God continues to be faithful during this time. Sale of Bibles is up by 55%, people turn to prayer, 25% of the population are watching church service on-line. God is moving in hearts of people, so, we need to be ready to meet others on the other side of the pandemic. Let's pray for fruitfulness when we are able to meet in some form in the future.

As Noah entered a different world, we need to be ready perhaps for a different way of being Church. Maybe not so reliant on buildings, but reliant on people who love the Lord, perhaps building on the relationships made in this time of isolation. Praying for those who have reached out to God during this time and making ourselves ready to be available to them in some way in the different world around us.

God goes before us. God will see us through to the other side, we must be faithful to His calling.

**A PRAYER OF CONFESSION** - Merciful God, we are not always aware of our mistakes and bad habits, so help us in this prayer.  
We are sorry that often we look back and want things to stay as they were  
We are sorry that we can't always see beyond what is comfortable for us  
We are sorry that far too often we don't see beyond the present moment, but you see from beginning to end  
We ask You to forgive us.....  
We receive your forgiveness. Help us by your Holy indwelling Spirit to look for your way, for new opportunities, help us to be brave and faithful, and give us strength in this world of change, to move forward with You. AMEN

**We say the Lord's prayer** Our Father.....

**The words of this hymn from the 1800's are so meaningful today, please use them as a prayer:-**

**IN HEAVENLY LOVE ABIDING,**  
No change my heart shall fear;  
And safe is such confiding,  
For nothing changes here:  
The storm may roar without me,  
My heart may low be laid;  
But God is round about me,  
And can I be dismayed?

Wherever He may guide me,  
No want shall turn me back;  
My Shepherd is beside me,  
And nothing can I lack:

His wisdom ever waketh,  
His sight is never dim;  
He knows the way He taketh,  
And I will walk with Him.

Green pastures are before me,  
Which yet I have not seen;  
Bright skies will soon be o'er me,  
Where darkest clouds have been;  
My hope I cannot measure,  
My path to life is free;  
My Saviour has my treasure,  
And He will walk with me.

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**And we pray** - please take your time.....  
for people through who today followed God's way  
and risk their lives....  
For those struggling to cope with changes.....  
For people making life-changing decisions.....  
For folk whose lives have changed through loss...  
For our families and friends.....  
For ourselves.....  
For those who are now in heaven. ....  
IN Jesus name we pray. AMEN

**OUR OFFERING** - we offer and lay aside again our  
lives, and our resources. Bless them now. AMEN

**AND WE SING.....**  
Take my life and let it be, consecrated, Lord, to Thee;  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move  
at the impulse of Thy love;  
Take my feet, and let them be  
swift and beautiful for Thee

Take my voice, and let me sing always only for my king  
Take my lips, and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold  
Take my intellect, and use  
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine,  
It shall be no longer mine:  
Take my heart, it is Thine own;  
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord,  
At Thy feet its treasure store:  
Take myself, and I will be ever only, all for Thee.

**The Blessing** of God the Father, God the Son and  
God the Holy Spirit, be with us, those we love &  
those we pray for, evermore. AMEN