

Sunday February 19th 2023
A service of worship for use at home
Prepared by Phil Colbourn,
local preacher ex Burton Joyce

Nottingham North East
Methodist Circuit
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Charity number 1134226

Hymns in Singing the Faith (StF)

Call to worship Psalm 99

⁴ O Lord, our God, you love what is right.

You establish justice and fairness in Israel.

⁵ Praise the Lord our God and worship before his throne!

The Lord our God is holy!

Hymn StF 136 - Morning has broken

1 Morning has broken
like the first morning,
blackbird has spoken
like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
fresh from the Word!

2 Sweet the rain's new fall
sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall
on the first grass.

Praise for the sweetness
of the wet garden,
sprung in completeness
where God's feet pass.

3 Mine is the sunlight!
Mine is the morning
born of the one light
Eden saw play!
Praise with elation,
praise every morning,
God's recreation
of the new day!

Prayers of Adoration and Thanksgiving

My soul will rejoice in the Lord and delight in his salvation

Let none of God's wonderful works keep silent. Day and night the heavens rejoice; the earth gives honour to the Lord of glory

I will sing a song of worship and thanksgiving to our loving Lord

Praise and honour, glory and power be unto you, O Lord our Lord

All good things come from you and of your own we give you. **Amen**

We continue in worship as we sing

Hymn StF 338 - There is a Redeemer

There is a Redeemer
Jesus, God's own Son
Precious Lamb of God
Messiah, Holy One

Jesus, my Redeemer
Name above all names
Precious Lamb of God
Messiah, O for sinners slain

Thank You, O my Father
For giving us Your Son
And leaving us Your Spirit
'Til the work on earth is done

Our First Reading - Exodus 24, 12-18

¹² The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction.”

¹³ Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. ¹⁴ He said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them.”

¹⁵ When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, ¹⁶ and the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from within the cloud. ¹⁷ To the Israelites the glory of the Lord looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. ¹⁸ Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Paul writes, in his second letter to the church at Corinth, that Moses’ face shone when he came back down the mountain and suggests that, when we meet with God in our own lives, then our faces will shine too, because we have been face-to-face with God. Can you remember times in your life when you felt that you had met with God? Do you remember the glow?

Our Second Reading - Matthew 17: 1-9

After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³ Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴ Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love and with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” ⁸ When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Peter writes, in his first letter to the churches, that they (the disciples) were eye witnesses, that they did not make up stories but only reported what they had seen. Peter, James and John were there on the mountain. Have you ever had a ‘mountain-top’ experience? What was it like? What did you feel?

Hymn StF 55 - *Immortal, invisible, God only wise*

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of
Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we
praise.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness
and love.

3 To all life thou givest, to both great and
small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the
tree,
and wither and perish but naught changeth
thee.

4 Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

Reflection - *On the mountain*

Two mountains. Two different occasions, many centuries apart.

One and the same God.

At least one person (Moses) was there both times.

In one case, Moses is given the law and, now, in this second encounter, Moses (and the three disciples, and Elijah) is given an affirmation of Jesus as the Christ. In both cases, Moses encounters the transcendental glory of God, first in the deepest darkness and then in brilliant light.

From darkness to light. From night to day. From law to grace.

Has God changed? No. Have people changed? Probably not. Had the world changed? Not so that you'd notice. So, what had changed? I don't know.

Time had passed, it's true, but God is not bound by time. For one reason or another, the time was right and Jesus had come. Jesus fulfils both the law and the prophets as the incarnate Christ. He is here, favoured by God, showing us how it is done, how to fulfil the law and the prophets.

An encounter with God is a life-changing moment; a shining face; a sense of wonder. These moments are precious but they can happen every day. We will have 'mountain top' experiences all the time if we are sensitive to the Spirit of God in our lives. God's Spirit is at work in the world around us.

Snowdrops. The first crocus. Two small, yellow narcissus flowers. These are some of the special moments I had this week. A sunrise. A sunset. A robin. A song-thrush singing. Blue tits examining a nest-box. A green leaf on a clematis. Catkins on a hazel bush. Silver on the tree.

An encounter with God. A life-changing moment. A sense of wonder.

Let us go up to meet with God on the mountain again.

And we shall be changed. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

We pray:

For those in need

For those in our hearts

For our neighbourhood and our community

We pray:

For refugees displaced by war and weather

For young women and for mothers

For people who cannot afford food and fuel

We pray:

For ourselves

For all who give tough love in tough times

For the church and your people everywhere

Silence

Let us share together the prayer Jesus taught us: *Our Father ...*

Dear Lord and Father, help us go up with you on the mountain every day, to receive your law into our hearts and to shine out with the light of your presence, and with the light of your love, for the sake of our world and for the glory of your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 34

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

1 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him the Lord is his name.

2 Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for you,
comfort your sorrows and answer your prayerfulness,
guiding your steps in the way that is true.

3 Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth you would count as your own;
truth in its beauty and love in its tenderness
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.

4 These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,
he will accept for the name that is dear;
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.

5 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him the Lord is his name.

Closing prayers

Heavenly Father, in your grace, may we catch a vision of your kingdom and live it out together and with you, every day of our lives. **Amen.**

Blessing

The blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you and all you love and care for, now and always. **Amen.**