**Home Service Sheet for 19th March 2023**

**Call To Worship                  Isaiah 9:6-7**

For to us a child is born,
    to us a son is given;
and the government shall be uponhis shoulder,
    and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
    Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and of peace
    there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
    to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
    from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**Prayer**

O Lord, our God, with You nothing is impossible. You created this world and everything in it, and without You nothing would have been made that has been made. In You alone is life that springs up to eternal life, and for that we give You our praise and thanksgiving. In Your great love, mercy and grace, You have sent Your Son to this world to reconcile humanity to Yourself through His death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. The Lord Jesus Christ is the King above all kings, and the Lord over all other lords, and of His reign there shall be no end. Reveal Yourself to us through Your Word today and help us to live as Your loyal subjects day by day, in love and repentance. This we ask in His Name, and to Your praise and glory, amen.

**Hymn                                     The Lord is King!**by ***Josiah Conder***

<https://youtu.be/MBltYW1bWkk>

The Lord is King! lift up your voice, O earth, and all ye heavens rejoice;

From world to world the joy shall ring: ‘The Lord omnipotent is King!’

The Lord is King! who then shall dare resist His will, distrust His care,

Or murmur at His wise decrees, or doubt His royal promises?

The Lord is King! child of the dust, the Judge of all the earth is just;

Holy and true are all His ways: let every creature speak His praise.

He reigns! ye saints, exalt your strains; your God is King, your Father reigns:

And He is at the Father’s side, the Man of Love, the Crucified.

Come, make your wants, your burdens known; He will present them at the throne;

And angel bands are waiting there His messages of love to bear.

One Lord and Saviour all secures; He reigns, and life and death are yours,

Through earth and Heaven one song shall ring, ‘The Lord omnipotent is King!’

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Bible Reading                    1 Samuel 16:1-13**

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you.” Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.”Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.”Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.”Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

**Reflection**

In less than two months time we will be enjoying an extra Bank Holiday for the coronation of our new monarch, King Charles III. Undoubtedly the ceremony and celebrations will be filled with great pageantry and the great and good of the Commonwealth will all be present. In our Bible reading today we read about a rather different kind of coronation, where the prophet Samuel anoints the young shepherd boy, David, king over Israel. It is particularly odd as the current king, Saul, is still alive and reigning from Jerusalem. Were it not for the direct command of God we would rightly say that Samuel’s act was one of treason!

Firstly we should note that God rejected Saul as king over Israel. God had initially directed Samuel to anoint Saul king, and in the early period of his reign he has led Israel to victory over the Ammonites and the Philistines, but then Saul had begun to think that it was down to his strategies and wisdom, rather than God’s. He had rejected God’s ways, and so God had rejected him. Disobedience to God (sin) has consequences, even though our sins may be forgiven by God when we come to Him today in prayer with repentance. We see this in the life of convicted American serial killer, Jeffrey Dahmer, who seemingly came to faith in jail, confessing his sins before God and repenting of them. He was still executed for his sins, even though he was forgiven by God in Christ (assuming his conversion was genuine).

Despite God’s rejection of Saul, He had not given up on Israel, but rather had a continuing plan for this people that He had chosen from among the nations. Samuel had continued to serve God faithfully, and it is through this prophet that God would raise up the next king. Samuel was clearly afraid of the consequences of his actions, but still obeyed God, who gave him a very good excuse for travelling to Jesse in Bethlehem. Obedience to God was important for individuals throughout the Bible, and is still essential for us today as followers of Jesus. We are not to pick and chose whether or not we obey some parts of God’s Word that still apply today. Some Old Testament laws related to temple ceremonies and purity that was needed to enter, and in the New Testament we are shown that these requirements were fulfilled through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The moral law, however, continues and is re-emphasised in the New Testament for us to follow in obedience to God.

Jesse had quite a number of sons and, on arriving in Bethlehem, Samuel invited him and his sons to join him for the sacrifice he was to make to God. From the descriptions that we read, some of the sons were physically impressive men, as Saul had been when God appointed him king over Israel. However, this was not the criteria by which God would choose the next king of Israel. God explains this to Samuel in verse 7, “man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” Today we might use the saying, ‘don’t judge a book by its cover’, which means something very similar. What matters is the inner reality, rather than how things appear on the surface.

David, who God had chosen, wasn’t even there for the sacrifice as he was Jesse’s youngest son who has been tasked with looking after the sheep for his father. The description we are given of him is rather interesting – “he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome.” (v.12) There is some scholarly debate about how we should translate this description, but suffice it to say that it is a mixture of positive and not so positive physical attributes! Although this is primarily about the fact that God sees what each person is truly like beneath the surface, there is also a point for us to takeaway about not letting outward appearances overly influence our opinions of people. God chose David, the young shepherd boy, to lead His people because God knew that beyond his physical appearance, David was “a man after his own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14).

David would go on to become the greatest king of Israel, getting many things very right, and yet he got things very wrong on occasions, also. Note one little detail that is mentioned in verse 13 of our Bible reading, “the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.” The Holy Spirit empowered David to be a good king, granting him wisdom and strength to rule well. However, there is another King, who the prophet Isaiah saw coming, who would be even greater than David. This future King’s “name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6) This King is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and ancestor of David. Through His reign God’s Kingdom will be fully established and all God’s people will be fully reconciled to the Father. His Kingdom will never end, and He alone will be glorified forever! Amen!

**Prayer**

Loving Father, may we heed the warning that we have read in Your Word today, that we are not to rely on outward appearances. Indeed, as the Scriptures remind us, the heart of man is deceitful above all other things. Thank You that You look through our outward appearances and see us as we truly are, and still love us and care for us. You even know our motives before we speak or act. Thank You that nothing is hidden from You. Help us to keep our eyes and minds fixed on Jesus in all that we say and do, so that it may be the life of Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that flows out from us day by day. May Your help us to encourage and support one another in our walk with You. We ask this in Jesus Name, and to Your glory, amen.

**Benediction**

Send us out, O Lord, in the power of Your Spirit to live in obedience to Your Word. Grant to us wisdom and strength to follow You all the days of our lives. In Jesus’ Name we pray, amen.