**Home Service Sheet Sunday 3rd March 2024**

**Call To Worship                  Psalm 19:1-6**

The heavens declare the glory of God,  
    and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.  
Day to day pours out speech,  
    and night to night reveals knowledge.  
There is no speech, nor are there words,  
    whose voice is not heard.  
Their voicegoes out through all the earth,  
    and their words to the end of the world.  
In them he has set a tent for the sun,

   which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,  
    and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.  
Its rising is from the end of the heavens,  
    and its circuit to the end of them,  
    and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

**Opening Prayer**

Lord God, Creator of the heavens and the Earth and everything in them, we come before You today with our worship and thanksgiving. If we did not proclaim Your glory, the creation would sing Your praise, the heavens would speak out and the creatures would make melody to You. As impressive as the great mountains are, and as majestic as the sky with all its stars and planets is, they are nothing compared with You! Creation points us towards You and reveals Your presence and handiwork to us. Help us to join in that glorious symphony of praise today and every day so that we might bring You the praise and glory You deserve. This we ask in Jesus’ Name, amen.

**Hymn                                     O Worship the Lord**by ***John Samuel Bewley Monsell***

<https://youtu.be/ytBTMr0K__I?si=MJ_lJYSBAMw_9Drs>

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.

Low at His feet lay thy burden of carefulness: high on his heart He will bear it for thee,  
Comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness, guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

Fear not to enter His courts in the slenderness of the poor wealth thou wouldst reckon as thine:  
Truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness, these are the offerings to lay on His shrine.

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.

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**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                     John 2:13-22**

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, “Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.”His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

So the Jews said to him, “What sign do you show us for doing these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

**Reflection**

If you take the time to watch the television news, read the news in print or online, you cannot help but be aware of the awful state of this world in which we live. Whether it’s the wars in Ukraine and Israel/Gaza State, stories of human suffering and abuse or the latest ecological crisis that is apparently just around the next corner, they all point to things getting worse rather than better. Was this the outlook of the people of Israel in Jesus’ day as they attended the Jerusalem temple under the watchful eye of the ruling Romans? We cannot be certain, but it certainly wouldn’t have been an historical high point. God has also revealed to us in His Word that things will get worse before Jesus returns, and surely that is what we are seeing in our time!

In our Bible reading today, Jesus’ attention was drawn to the trade and commerce going on inside the temple. In one sense this trade was necessary in order for people to bring the offerings proscribed by the law. People would travel for many miles to reach Jerusalem, and then they would need a blemish free animal to sacrifice, but this business should not have been taking place inside the temple courts. This was not the kind of holy activity for which God’s temple should have been used, and so Jesus responded with righteous anger.

John, in fact, quotes from the Old Testament, stating, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” Zeal, or great passion, for God’s temple was an essential part of who Jesus was, and to see the things of God misused and defiled was horrific. The original text is from Psalm 69:9, where the whole verse reads, “For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.” Certainly, the whole of this verse could foreshadow what Jesus would experience at the hands of the Jewish leaders. They thought that what they were doing was honouring God but was in fact rejecting Him and His Messiah.

Jesus’ actions and words show how seriously God takes purity and holiness. That which is dedicated to God must be perfect and without blemish in any way. This was revealed through the requirements laid down for sacrificial animals in the law. It is also shown to be required of God’s people, but this could only be achieved through God’s intervention. He revealed this in advance through the prophet Isaiah, “Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” (Isaiah 1:18) We cannot wash ourselves – only the blood of Jesus could make us clean in God’s sight.

Clearly the Jewish leaders were unhappy with Jesus upsetting the system that they had allowed to build up (maybe even encouraged) in the temple. They asked Jesus for a sign, but the only sign that Jesus offered to them for His authority was a promise to rebuild the temple in three days. Jesus, however, was not referring to the great building erected by Herod, but rather to His own body. At the time they grumbled amongst themselves about the impossibility of what Jesus promised. How could this man, as they saw Him, rebuild their magnificent temple in just three days? He couldn’t, as far as they were concerned, and so they were unimpressed.

Little did they realise that Jesus was giving them a sign for the future when they would be responsible for His being put to death on the cross. Yet the disciples would remember these words, likely with the help of the Holy Spirit, and come to realise that Jesus had indeed told them in advance about His resurrection. Not only was Jesus raised from the dead in the third day, but He also knew about this because it was always God’s plan. It would be the ultimate sign of Jesus’ victory over sin, death and hell. All of this points us towards who Jesus is, and what He achieved for us through His death and resurrection. Beyond that we are to look forward to His coming again to judge the living and the dead and to establish His Kingdom in all its fullness. Let us give Him the praise and honour that He deserves as the risen Lord of glory who even now dwells in us as His temple through His Spirit. Amen!

**Prayer**

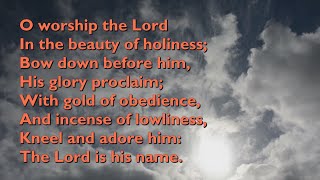
Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word, and for the way in which You have revealed Your Son to us through its pages. As we have read of Your Son cleansing the temple, we ask that You cleanse our hearts today, O God, that our bodies may be living sacrifices for You. May Your presence within us shine through us, revealing the light of the Gospel to those around us. We pray today, O Lord, for Your Church, asking that You will grant Her a passion for Your holiness and righteousness. Where we may have an impact on oveurning what is wrong and bringing evil into light grant us the boldness and courage to do this. We pray too for those who have not yet come to realise that Jesus is Your Son, the promised Messiah. We ask that Your Spirit work in their hearts that they might receive Your gracious gifts of faith in Jesus and eternal life. In Jesus’ Name we pray, amen.

**Benediction**

Gracious God, during this season of Lent enable us to walk in boldness, as a beloved child of God; walk in peace, under the shelter of the Most High; walk in faith, knowing that Your Son, Jesus Christ walks with us.Amen!

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[Preview YouTube video O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness (Tune: Was Lebet Was - 5vv) [lyrics for congregations]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytBTMr0K__I&authuser=0" \t "_blank)

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