

Worship At Home

3rd March 2024

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 19 about God's Glory in Creation

- ¹ How clearly the sky reveals God's glory!
How plainly it shows what he has done!
 - ² Each day announces it to the following day;
each night repeats it to the next.
 - ³ No speech or words are used no sound is heard;
 - ⁴ yet their message goes out to all the world
and is heard to the ends of the earth.
- God made a home in the sky for the sun;
- ⁵ it comes out in the morning like a happy bridegroom, like an athlete eager to run a race.
 - ⁶ It starts at one end of the sky and goes across to the other. Nothing can hide from its heat.



Take a moment to be peaceful.

If you are able you may like to stand and concentrate on your body being still (if this is hard then do just sit quietly and comfortably). Notice how you feel and what you are thinking about and let those things float away giving thanks for each even if they are difficult feelings or thoughts.

When you are ready: Raise your hands open before you and give thanks for the moment you are in. Pause

Place your open hands on your lap and consider all that's happened this week and what you might want to lay down before God asking for help or offering thanks Pause

Lift one hand high in the air and think about what you will offer of yourself as you worship today. Pause

Lower your hands

If you feel able offer the following prayer: Loving God, I am here in this moment to worship you. Amen.

[Prayer comes from Vine at Home,
3rd March 2024]

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 192 All my hope on God is founded

¹ All my hope on God is founded,
all my trust he will renew;
safe through change and chance he
guides me, only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

² Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray God's trust;
though with care and toil we build them,
tower and temple fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

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³ God's great goodness lasts for ever,
deep his wisdom passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springing out of naught.
Evermore, from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

⁴ Still from earth to God in heaven
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Hear Christ call one and all:
those who follow shall not fall.

Let us pray,

Loving God we acknowledge you, as creator and as liberator. You are the One who brought the captives out of Egypt and delivered them from the oppression of slavery. You gave laws which shaped how people were to relate to you, to each other and to the whole environment. You implored people to worship only you, knowing that whatever was put in your place would become the object of idolatry - would become the priority of people's lives. In this time of worship, help us to focus on you, O God, as the priority of our lives. Remind us of your steadfast love revealed so clearly in the new commandment of love which Jesus disclosed with his life and, as we especially remember in this period of Lent, with his death. Speak to us anew as we offer this prayer and our worship in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen

Reading: *John 2:13-22* – [Click for reading](#)

Reflection: The Temple

In today's Gospel reading from John's Gospel, we witness Jesus' powerful act of cleansing the temple in Jerusalem. This passage invites us to reflect on the righteous anger of Jesus and the significance of the temple in our lives.

Righteous anger: Jesus displayed righteous anger as he overturned the tables of the money changers and drove out those who were buying and selling. What can we learn from this about the appropriate expression of anger and indignation in the face of injustice?



Reverence for God has to be one of life's fundamentals. In protecting that principle, Jesus would not compromise or evade the issue. He was unbending, and to show how non-debatable the issue was, he made a whip out of cords, drove the profaners out and scattered their coins.

Injustice was being exercised, people were being exploited all of which was diametrically opposed to these covenant regulations set down so long ago. Jesus acted out of righteous anger as we ought to when we perceive injustice exercised or people exploited. And Jesus acted as he did, because the writing on his heart was inextricably woven into his actions. He lifted heart-inscribed laws out of the abstract by creating a God-shaped space where people can relate to one another.



The Temple was supposed to be a God-shaped space where the religious leaders served God and the people. Where people came for worship and prayer, to join with like-minded people and to experience some of this God-shaping in their own lives. But, the priests and scribes and Pharisees had turned the concept around so that they were the ones who were served - by their unjust actions - they determined that the response of the people was shaped by them, rather than by God.

The commandments pointed towards a society permeated by justice and Jesus embodied that justice, God's justice, by living a life of love. The religious leaders of his day demonstrated their concern for justice through their 'external' righteousness. It was this understanding of righteousness which Jesus condemned because it did not issue from the heart and so, was neither heart-shaped or God-shaped..

The extent to which we have gone beyond the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees is seen in how much our lives demonstrate the 'internal' working of God on our hearts as we grapple with the fundamental issues of life.

It really is only as we are captivated by Christ, that we are freed to live the laws of God's kingdom and empowered to apply them so that others are freed to live them also.

The Temple as a symbol: In the Old Testament, the temple was the centre of Jewish worship and God's presence. What does the temple symbolise in your life? Are there "temples" or sacred spaces in your heart or community that need cleansing and renewal?



Turning points: This event marked a turning point in Jesus' ministry. What turning points have you experienced in your faith journey? How have they shaped your relationship with Christ? If you are in the midst of a turning point today, then perhaps you need to pause at this point and spend some time in prayer and reflection.

Faith in action: After witnessing this event, the disciples remembered and believed in Jesus.

How does witnessing Christ's transformative power in your life inspire your faith and actions?

Challenging tradition: Jesus' actions challenged traditional practices and beliefs. How can we discern when it's necessary to challenge tradition or cultural norms in the pursuit of righteousness and justice?



Reverence and worship: What steps can we take to cultivate a spirit of reverence and true worship in our lives, recognising that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?

As you delve into John 2:13-22, consider how Jesus' cleansing of the temple speaks to the need for authenticity, purity, and reverence in your relationship with God. How can you apply these lessons to your own faith journey and daily life?

Here are some questions for you to reflect on as you think about what the gospel reading might be saying to you today:

1. *Can you think of an example of destructive anger?*
2. *What about examples of righteous constructive anger? Are they harder to find?*
3. *What injustice makes you angry? What can you do constructively with this anger?*
4. *How can you be courageous in bringing about God's Kingdom?*

[Reflection comes from Vine at Home, 3rd March 2024]

Let us pray

Lord God, we thank you for the many places of worship around the world today. From ancient cathedrals to tiny island churches, from tin huts to newly built multi-purpose buildings.

Thank you, Lord, for the creativity you have given us to design such amazing places where people can gather to worship you.

Thank you that we have the freedom to go to a place of worship whenever we choose. We pray for the people who do not enjoy such freedom, who fear to worship in public, or who do not have a place to go.

Thank you for the people who give of their time to maintain these buildings and look after them. We pray for churches who are struggling with financial or specialist difficulties and

whose buildings are in need of expensive repairs and upkeep. Thank you for Jesus, who reminds us that our bodies are also temples, holy places.

We pray for people who abuse their bodies due to addiction, for those whose bodies are abused by others, for those who have no money to pay for medicine and for those whose and for those whose bodies are riddled with disease or chronic disability.

Thank you for the people who teach us to be more like Jesus, who show us, through their daily lives, a generosity that is for all people. In a world where consumerism is king, help us to turn things around and to focus on the we instead of the I. In a world that encourages us to take all we can and give nothing back, help us to turn things around and to focus on sharing rather than taking.

In a world that demands our attention and time to divert us and distract us from you, help us to switch off and slow down so that we might pay more attention to you.

In a world that often neglects the vulnerable, the lonely, the bereaved, the young, the old, the poor,
help us to turn the tables and actively seek out the people who need us the most.
May we learn to become generous with our time, our money and our talents, sharing our best with all people and giving our best each day.
Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers this day, we wait patiently for your answers, and we humbly offer your our thanks. Amen.

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 519 Love divine all love's excelling

- ¹ Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.
- ² Come, almighty to deliver; let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never, never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.
- ³ Finish then thy new creation: pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee,
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

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<https://youtu.be/o-dl3Dx-qpA?si=D10niB1zD9rVZWZN>

May I go out disrupt all that is wrong, unjust and hateful in this world.

May I nurture and plant seeds of love.

May I celebrate your coming into this world - then, and now, Immanuel.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore. **Amen.**

Thank you to those who have taken the time to contact me. Take care out there this week.

May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and each day.

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If you choose to email me, please can you tell me who you are and where you live. Thank you.