

Service at Home 24th May 2020 – Rev Arthur Cowburn

Holy Spirit of God,
We watch for you, we wait for you,
we look for you, we long for you.
come Holy Spirit, renew us, refresh us, restore us and inspire us, that we
may live and work to your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you, oh spirit, are with the father,
one God forever. Amen

from David Adam: Radiance of His Glory

StF 94 To God be the glory

To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son
who yielded his life in 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 has done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to every believer the promise of God!
And every offender who truly believes,
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives:

Praise the Lord!....

Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:

Praise the Lord!...

Frances Jane van Alstyne (Fanny Crosby) (1820-1915)

Let us pray

Loving God, we seek to glorify your name. We recognise the wonder of your works in creation, we feel the presence of your spirit in our lives, we see the example you have set before us In Jesus, and we marvel at your love. Help us to be open to see your love in the world around us, in each other, and in you.

We are sorry that we often seek glory and failed to give you the glory which is yours by right.

We are sorry that we fail to love others as we live ourselves.

We are sorry that we allow ourselves to become complacent and failed to seek new ways of worshipping and serving you.

Heal and forgive us we pray. Help us to hear the voice of Jesus saying, “go in peace, your sins are forgiven.”

As we receive your love, help us to praise your name now and always.

Amen

John 17: 1-11

17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

⁶ “I have revealed you^[a] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of^[b] your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

StF 6 Father we love you

Father, we love you,
We worship and adore you:
glorify your name
in all the earth.
glorify your name,
glorify your name,
glorify your name,
in all the earth.

Jesus, we love you,
We worship and adore you:
glorify your name
in all the earth.
glorify your name,
glorify your name,
glorify your name,
in all the earth.

Spirit, we love you,
We worship and adore you:
glorify your name
in all the earth.
glorify your name,
glorify your name,
glorify your name,
in all the earth.

Donna Adkins (1940-)
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Sermon

The heading for the above reading in the Bible which I regularly use is “Jesus prays to be glorified.” If we hear of people in modern day lives seeking glory, we see that as an undesirable thing, as somebody perhaps seeking to be thought of as better than other people. With Jesus it’s different!

It’s different because of who he is. He is God in human form living out a human life here on earth. A few people have seen glimpses of God’s glory around him at his baptism and in the events on top of a mountain when Moses and Elijah appear alongside him. People have recognised him as a great teacher and healer and there have been questions as to whether he really is the one that the Jewish nation have been waiting for. Peter has recognised him as such, perhaps echoing the thoughts of the other disciples, although completely failing to see the true nature of what Jesus’s Messiahship is about. He has attracted fame because of what he has done but, apart from that he’s an ordinary person in the street.

When I was a teenager, I took part in a youth service that was attended by Martin Dobson, the Burnley, Everton, and England footballer. At the end of the service we crowded round him in awe when a man tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me, are you Mr.?" I can't remember the surname he used but it certainly wasn't Dobson. We were horrified that somebody had failed to recognise him. I suspect many people were like that with Jesus. They saw bits, but not who he really was. He prays that he might be glorified, that people might fully recognise him.

It's different because of when it happens. At the wedding at Cana in Chapter 2 of St. John's Gospel Jesus says, "My hour has not yet come," and this theme is repeated throughout the Gospel until in Chapter 16 he says "A time is coming and in fact has come." He is referring in this to the disciples being scattered and leaving him alone, but the implication is that this is the moment. It can't be put off any longer. Anything which previously might have given him glory is nothing compared with what's to come.

It's different because of how it's going to happen. For John, the crucifixion is not a piteous ending but rather a moment of triumph as Jesus cries from the cross, "It is finished!" It's a cry of we've accomplished what I came for, we've done it! To the world the cross is an object to be feared, an object of torture, a place where criminals go to die but for Jesus and subsequently for Christians it's a place where he is glorified and from which we are able to receive his glory.

So, God turns the world upside down in a way that only God can do, and I believe that is happening again. I don't believe that God sent the virus, but I believe God is taking this opportunity to shake the Church from its complacency. Everything that we thought was secure has been turned upside down and isn't going to be put back the right way up in the near future. But we have found new ways of doing things, new ways of worshipping which are enabling far more people to join in worship than was previously the case. People are being brought together whilst the world is forcing them apart. Let us continue to seek new ways of being Christians in whatever sort of world we might find ourselves and, through that, bring glory to God by what we do.

Let us pray

We pray for a fresh outpouring of your spirit in all areas of the church, till our lives and our church's life are so changed for good that people notice and are drawn to seek you for themselves.

We are your people: and you are our God

We pray for godly leaders and advisors all over the world that they may have the wisdom to lead us in this current crisis and that they may have courage to speak out against injustice and evil.

We are your people: and you are our God .

We pray for those who are struggling with loneliness. We pray that we would reach out and touch them through our conversations and through our actions. May they receive encouragement by the things that we do.

We are your people: and you are our God.

We pray for those who are sick. Those fighting COVID-19 and those struggling with other illnesses. May they know your presence, your healing touch, and your love.

We are your people: and you are our God.

We pray for the dying. Especially for those who cannot know the comfort of family at this time. We pray for the bereaved. Especially those who cannot mourn as they would have wanted.

We are your people: and you are our God.

We pray for those who are encountering God again in these difficult times and we pray for your church that we would have the wisdom to guide them as they discover you afresh. Help us to build your church in accordance with your wishes that it might be prepared to face the challenges of a new reality.

We are your people: and you are our God. Amen

StF 272 From heaven you came

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled,
not to be served but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the servant King.*

There in the garden of tears
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
“yet not my will but yours,” he said.

This is our God...

Come see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God...

So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone him,
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we are serving.

This is our God...

Graham Kendrick (1950-)

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