



Leeds South and West Methodist Circuit
Written Service for Sunday 19th June 2022
Bible Month Week 2 'Light to the World'

Call to Worship

Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts:

The whole earth is full of his Glory.

Hymn StF 11, H&P 7, MP 237 – Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.

Prayers of Praise and Confession

From the moment we awake

to face the day ahead,

you are with us,

through good times and bad,

Your presence enough for our needs.

Every day I will praise you

And extol your name for ever

Through the hours of the day,

in our travels and work,

you are with us;

in decisions we must make,

Your wisdom enough for our needs.

Every day I will praise you

And extol your name for ever

As we lay down to rest

at the end of the day,

you are with us,

as we lay our fears at your feet,

Your peace enough for our needs.

Every day I will praise you

And extol your name for ever. Amen.

God of healing, God of wholeness,

we bring our brokenness,

our sinfulness,
our fears
and despair,
and lay them at your feet.

God of healing, God of wholeness,
we hold out hearts and hands,
minds and souls
to feel your touch,
and know the peace
that only you can bring.

God of healing, God of wholeness,
this precious moment
in your presence and power
grant us faith and confidence
that here broken lives are made whole. Amen.

Reading – Isaiah 6:1-6

Reflection

I'm sure some of you at some time in your life have been out walking the hills, valleys and dales of this beautiful part of the country. I spent a lot of time on the moors around Sheffield where I grew up and down into the Peak district of Derbyshire, in particular the High peak area, I would walk or sometimes cycle, past the reservoirs and over into Bamford, then turn into to the villages of Hope and Castleton. Sometimes I would walk over the moors from Rivelin Valley and down into Hathersage, picking and eating bilberries as I went. In the holidays I would go camping with my little Two-man ridge tent that my uncle gave me, it was twice as old as I was, but I didn't care, I loved it. Looking back the days were so sunny, and the warm rays felt so comforting as I tramped across the fields, up and over hills, jumping across rivers (usually falling in) but it didn't matter the hot sun would soon dry me off and warm me up again.

I often look back to those days with such fond memories, but when I stop romanticising over it, and really think about those days, I start to remember that I was only 15 years old around this time, I used to spend so much time away from the house because I didn't feel safe there. My little tent and my adventures were a great escape for me in every sense of the word. I also remember the time I was camping in a valley in the Peak district and there was a massive storm, all night, the wind was ferocious and the rain was relentless, my tiny tent and I were battered and bruised, so much so that after numerous attempts to put my tent back together as the wind tried to rip it from my hand and the rain whipped my cold

fingers and face, I decided to grab all I could and run to a small cave I knew of. I made it to the cave after several attempts because it was so dark I couldn't initially find it and kept slipping and sliding down the hill. I watched the rain shooting sideways across the cave mouth, as I huddled shivering, soaking wet, muddy and cold, with the immense roar of the wind filling my ears, hugging my knees surrounded by various bits of tent canvas and poles that looked as sorry for themselves as I did.

I remember thinking to myself, 'I hate camping...I hate rain...I hate wind, why do I come here it's 'orrible. I knew I couldn't go home, I felt trapped, lonely, frightened and angry, and to add to that my torch had gotten all wet and didn't work, so I was sat in the cold pitch darkness of a tiny cave, on a hillside miles from home in a huge storm.

The storm eventually died down in the early hours of the morning, I climbed down from the little cave, shivering and wet. I eventually managed to put up my tent, and I sat in the doorway looking out over the valley. Slowly over the hills a light seemed to spread over the tops, as it grew I realised that the sun was rising, I watched it's rays move silently across the hills and fields closer and closer until they reached out and touched me. Warming my feet and moving with a comforting warmth up to my head. I felt a little better so decided to get out my little camping stove, by some miracle it still worked, and I placed on it my little cast iron frying pan, put in a small knob of Lard (it was lard in those days none of that extra virgin olive oil), I then added two rashers of bacon. The warm sun now beat down on me and I was dry in no time, I made a cup of tea, and sat and ate my bacon straight from the pan. The valley was beautiful, every shade of green, and yellow, the purple heather on the moors I had walked across to get here, and the sun crowned the trees with a golden brightness. As I sat there I felt like the luckiest person alive. I couldn't imagine ever leaving that place. The night's fear, loneliness, cold and anger had all gone, completely evaporated like the rain. I felt warm, comfortable, happy, loved.

Isaiah tells us 'Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.' 60:1.

When we look at the Hebrew word for light, we see that it translates as 'Early morning sunshine; a bright, clear day. So it is not just a light so you can see what you are doing, like switching the cellar light on so you can find your tools. God's light is the early morning sunshine, a bright and clear warmth that comforts you, makes your way clear, helps you to see and warms you through. A light that banishes the darkness, the fear and storms of the night and bathes you in God's loving embrace. No one can hide from it and no one is excluded from it.

God's light radiates straight from his heart and straight to ours. It not only illuminates us, it radiates from us also, others are able to see clearly and feel the warmth of acceptance and value when we act in God's light, when we travel in it, when we share it.

So many people live in darkness, in fear, loneliness, anger and misery, it affects their lives, their families, their health and their outlook on life. Like a kid scrambling around on a dark, muddy hillside searching for a cave in a storm, the darkness can blind people to what they need.

But there is hope, the night will pass, the storm will ease, and the light will be bright, you will rise and you will shine.

Through Jesus Christ the light of the world, you can bathe in the warming rays of God's glory, you will see his glory touching everything in view, turning the cold darkness into a fresh new bright, morning, full of promise, hope, opportunities, acceptance and love, I pray that you receive it, feel it and share it, in the mighty name of Jesus Christ our saviour, Amen.

Hymn StF 15 – The Splendour of the King

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for the Church: that we may be a sign of God's light and goodness in our world, and a beacon of hope for the most vulnerable.

Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for world leaders: that, moved by the Holy Spirit, they may speak out against the scandal of hunger. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all those who hunger, in our own community and around the world. May God grant them the hope, strength and support to lift themselves out of poverty. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all those who fear for their children's future. May God grant us the courage and love to reach out to our neighbours, giving them hope for the future. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for ourselves: that through our faith journey of prayer, and almsgiving, God will deepen our love for our sisters and brothers living in poverty. Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for the Church around the world: may the passion, death and resurrection of Christ inspire us to transform our world.

Lord, in your mercy...

Lord's Prayer

Hymn StF 706 – Longing for Light

Grace

Prayers from Faith and Worship.com and Cafod. Com.