

Welcome to the Written Worship

for the week of the 11th July 2021



We pause at this point; and open our hearts and minds to the presence of the Holy Spirit, wherever we might be.

Hymn: Singing the Faith #21 Born in Song (H&P 486)

And so we **pray** -

In the beginning there was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

And in time, the word became words, and the words became sentences and became pages and books, and poems, and emails.

And the words became knowledge and the words became laws, and agendas and instructions.

And the words became Times New Roman and Arial and Comic Sans and 9 point font on jam jars and 10 foot high on abandoned city walls.

And the words became English, and German and Spanish and dialect and slang and txts and tweets.

But all of these words came from God, all of these words are rooted in creation. We therefore offer our words back to God now. We offer words like thank you and praise you, and holy, and loving and present. We give words of hope and kindness and confidence and wisdom. We give words from the finite to the infinite, we give quiet words, and words in bold. From the scrabble bags of letters that are our lives, we bring all the words that we can muster and we offer them to our almighty God.

And we reflect on those words that have not been worthy of you, Lord. Words of spite and anger, words that turn someone away, words that hurt and belittle. If we could take these words back, we would. But we know they have escaped us. So we simply ask that we may be forgiven.

We ask that we might be given a chance to find new words, and words that can rebuild and heal. We ask that you will give us new words, the right words, so that we can live the example of Christ Jesus in all that we say, and in all that we do.

Amen

We share now in the **Lords Prayer**, common words said in many ways and in many languages.

Lord, bless us as we read together these words of scripture.

Reading: 2 Samuel 6:1-5,12b -19

Hymn: Singing the Faith 432 O the bitter Shame and Sorrow (H&P 538, MP 524)

How many of you watched the England football games this summer? Throughout these games, the 40,000 or so fans in Wembley Stadium have joined together to sing, and the chorus of "It's Coming Home" has reverberated around the stadium. There is a very real sense of national celebration and joy even among people who do not normally follow football, and there is also a feeling of hopeful expectation.

As we read in 2 Samuel of the Ark of the Covenant being taken to Jerusalem, here we find a similar number of people celebrating, cheering, and singing as they take the short journey which is about a days' travel from Baale-Judah to Jerusalem. Although a short journey, I imagine the organization for this celebration is much more like the sort we would see with something like Trooping the Colour. The point is the Ark returning was reason for a great celebration and seemed to bring a sense of joy and hope to people. Why was this? The Ark represents the presence and power of God, and throughout Saul's reign the Ark did not get a mention. Essentially while Saul was king, God had not been

present. However, now that David was king God had returned and was once again central to Israel's story. Maybe a more contextual way for us to understand this in our current circumstances is God was returning from isolation and Israel was rediscovering the hope they have in God.

So how does this relate to us? At the moment I feel that there is genuinely a sense of optimism, not just because of the football although for some, like me, that is amplifying it. We are now in a situation where some of the doom and gloom of the last eighteen months is starting to fade a little, some of the restrictions are being rolled back and in a few weeks we should be hearing about the plans for the final restrictions to be eased. In person worship in church has also resumed. In the same sense that God's presence had been missing in Israel, perhaps for some of us over the lockdowns we had struggled to meet and engage with God outside of the experience of worship we find in the Sunday service. In the same way God's presence returned to Israel, we are now returning to God. So we have a cause for celebration and joy.

Looking back into the scripture when David brings the Ark back he builds a cart for it to travel on. This was actually in breach of the instructions given for how the Ark is to be carried, (Exodus 25:13-15). This shows that in the time where God has not been present or part of the life of Israel some of the traditions of how the Ark is to be treated have been forgotten. However, neither David nor the Israelites are punished for this. I believe the reason for this is because what was more important than observing the rules and instructions was the worship itself. David's desire to bring the Ark to Jerusalem and to have God at the center of everything for Israel and the heart and devotion he had for God was more important than the traditions that had previously been held. As we return to Sunday worship we will find that some of the old traditions we held are not able to be followed. At the moment this includes singing although hopefully that will change. We may also find that some new traditions and ways of worshipping have developed. Perhaps some of the old ways of worship will come back and some of the new ways may stay. However, what is most important is not the tradition or new expression of worship, but, that our heart and devotion is for Jesus who is at the center of our worship.

Let us pray together for God's power in the world.

To those in need of healing, and comfort

Come Holy Spirit Come

To those who feel lost and lone

Come Holy Spirit Come

To those who feel they are outside, and beyond hope

Come Holy Spirit Come

In all of the situations in the world that seem to be beyond fixing

Come Holy Spirit Come

For all of those people that seem to be beyond reaching

Come Holy Spirit Come

To us, in all of our needs, and doubts, and questions

Come Holy Spirit Come

We raise these prayers to our merciful and always faithful God, knowing that, in compassion and in love, You will answer us.

Amen

Hymn: Singing the Faith 255 The Kingdom of God (H&P 139)

***The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, evermore, amen.***

Reflection by Chris Coleman, prayers by Rob Moore June 2021