**Act of Worship – Sunday 26th July 2020**

**“Wisdom”**

*Service led by: Daniel Harris*

*Family address and preacher: Revd Richard Bradley*

**Words of welcome**

Welcome to this morning’s time of worship.

Do we ever feel that we are like a stuck record, going round in circles, and the needle continually slipping into the old groove playing the same repetitive tune?

God invites us to take a new path in life.

In the words of Psalm 40: “He put a new song in my mouth – a hymn of praise to our God.”

So let’s come into God’s presence, allowing him to change our lives, as we sing “Be Thou My Vision”.

**Opening Song: Be Thou my vision**

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| 1.. Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  naught be all else to me, save that Thou art.  Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light. | 2.. Be Thou my Wisdom, Thou my true Word;  I ever with Thee, Thou with me, Lord;  Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;  Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one. |
| 3.. Be Thou my battle-shield, sword for the fight,  be Thou my dignity, Thou my delight.  Thou my soul's shelter, Thou my high tower.  Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power. | 4.. Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,  Thou mine inheritance, now and always:  Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,  High King of heaven, my Treasure Thou art. |
| 5.. High King of heaven, after victory won,  may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!  Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  still be my vision, O ruler of all. | From *The Poem Book of the Gael* selected and edited by Eleanor Hull  ccli 169737  Streaming Licence 595811 |

**Prayers of Approach & Confession**

Sometimes we feel that life is going well as we break new ground

Other times life feels like we are going around in circles

Leaving us feeling dizzy and disorientated.

We don’t know which way to look

We struggle to navigate our way through life.

But you call to us from across time

You invite us to come to you.

A free gift of grace, if there ever was one.

That voice asks us to do one thing

That is to trust you, Father God.

To trust you with the direction that our lives take.

We might not know which way we are heading towards.

But all knowledge lies in your hands.

You have made this wisdom known through the prophets

And you make it known through your son, The Word,

And through the presence of the Holy Spirit leading us on.

Amen.

**Family Address**

When you think of someone who is wise who do you think of? It might be a family member…a friends…a teacher at school…a work colleague…your Mum/Dad…husband/wife…..

I want to invite you to watch a short video about someone in the Bible who is known to be wise….this person lived a long, long, long time ago……

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmDTuYEGmW0>

Solomon was about 20 years old when he became king. He was really quite young. But he responded to God’s request with great wisdom, Solomon knew he needed God’s help to serve God as king of Israel.

May we, like Solomon, be wise in what we pray for and ask for.

Let us pray….Loving God, give us wisdom like Solomon to ask for ourselves what is right and what we need not what we want. Amen.

**Song: Here is love vast as the ocean**

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| 1.. Here is love vast as the ocean,  loving kindness as the flood,  when the Prince of life, our ransom,  shed for us His precious blood.  Who His love will not remember;  who can cease to sing His praise?  He can never be forgotten  throughout heaven's eternal days. | 2.. On the mount of crucifixion  fountains opened deep and wide;  through the floodgates of God's mercy  flowed a vast and gracious tide.  Grace and love, like mighty rivers  poured incessant from above;  and heaven's peace and perfect justice  kissed a guilty world in love. |
| 3.. Let me all Your love accepting,  love You, ever all my days;  let me seek Your kingdom only  and my life be to Your praise.  You alone shall be my glory,  nothing in the world I see.  You have cleansed and sanctified me,  You Yourself have set me free. | 4.. In Your truth You do direct me  by Your Spirit through Your Word;  and Your grace my need is meeting,  as I trust in You, my Lord.  Of Your fullness You are pouring  Your great love and power on me,  without measure, full and boundless,  drawing out my heart to You. |
| William Rees ccli 169737 Streaming Licence 595811 | |

**Bible Reading: 1 Kings 3:1-14**

1Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the Lord, and the wall around Jerusalem. 2The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord. 3Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

4The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

5At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, ‘Ask for whatever you want me to give you.’

6Solomon answered, ‘You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

7‘Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. 8Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. 9So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?’

10The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. 11So God said to him, ‘Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, 12I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. **13**Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for – both wealth and honour – so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. **14**And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.’

(NIV)

**Sermon: “Seeking God and Acknowledging God”**

*A minister’s son observes his father each Sunday. His Dad goes onto the platform at the front of Church, sits down, and bows his head. Over lunch one Sunday the little boy says to his Dad, “Dad, why when you sit down on the platform in Church do you bow your head?” The Father says, “I am praying that God will give me a good sermon” The boy, looking puzzled, said, “Why doesn’t He then?”*

Out of the mouths of babes!

Friends as we think about this passage from 1 Kings chapter 3 this morning, I want to ask you a question – If God said to you what he said to Solomon in v5 what would you say? The question God posed was this: **“Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”** (1 Kings 3:5b – NIV)

Just imagine! You might feel like Annie in the modern adaptation of the film “Annie” who gets adopted by William Stacks a multi-millionaire and she goes to live in an amazing apartment and seems to get the best of everything!

Solomon in answering this question asks that God would give him ‘wisdom’ – or to quote the passage: **“So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong.”** (1 Kings 3:9)

***So, what can we learn from this passage of scripture today?***

As we think about WISDOM I want to make three points from the passage today about what we can learn…

**1: We must LOVE the LORD**

V3 tells us: **“Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statues of his father, David…”** (NIV)

The theme of love is picked up again in the New Testament when Jesus, in response to a question about the greatest commandment, said: Matthew 22:37: **“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”** (NIV)(originally in Deuteronomy 6:5)

Solomon’s father, King David, was known for having a close relationship with God. David loved God greatly and that was the example that Solomon wanted to follow too!

We, too, can show God that love by following his commands and what he teaches us in the Bible.

Many Christian songs/hymns that we sing say something of our love for God (especially newer ones).

Q: How do you tell God how much you love Him?

**2. We must WORSHIP the LORD**

*I was speaking to someone this week who has a family member who attends church. During lockdown they haven’t been able to attend Church and this person commented to the family member I was speaking to and said that they weren’t particularly missing the worship in their church but were missing the fellowship.*

And whilst I presumed this person lived alone, I did feel a sadness that this person wasn’t missing worship! I am missing fellowship with others in the churches across the Partnership….but I am missing corporate worship (gathered together worship). For me I feel there is something powerful about gathering together in Church to worship God with my sisters and brothers in Christ.

And Solomon in his response to God worshipped. We read in verse 4 **“The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on the altar.”** (1 Kings 3:4 – NIV)

That is some response to God in worship, that is a huge sacrifice for Solomon to make! It was an act of worship at the start of Solomon’s reign as king of Israel as he sought a blessing from God on him becoming God’s chosen king.

I believe corporate worship is important – gathering together to worship God. But so is worship in between the acts of corporate worship.

Q: How do you worship God in between acts of corporate worship?

**3. We must LISTEN to the LORD**

I think this is one of the hardest things to do. In listening to God we must be ready and attuned to His words to us. I believe God can speak in an audible voice. God can also speak in many different ways – some of them are:

\*God can speak through prayer – through us speaking to Him and Him speaking to us. (The listening part of that process can be the most difficult!)

\*God can speak through the Words of the Bible. I don’t know if you have ever had the experience of reading a passage of scripture and however familiar it is something new comes out of it for you? Or a word, verse or passage speaks to a situation you’re facing at that time. That is God speaking to you.

\*God can speak to us through other Christians!   
*Ill:* *I recall a conversation with my Mum when I was sensing a call to Ordained Ministry. I hadn’t told anyone about my sense of call and I had been wrestling with it for a while. And one day in the kitchen of my parents’ house my Mum turned to me and said, “I have been praying for you and I feel God is talking to you and you aren’t listening.”* I will never forget that conversation. It was not longer after that I shared my sense of call with others. And let me tell you God has never, ever let me down!

Friends, Solomon was a young king! One theory is that he was about 20 when he became King. He was a young occupier of the throne. And having no doubt witness his Father reign he responded to God in a way that I think is powerful. He knew the weight of responsibility and he sought God’s guidance and power to be able to do it.

As far as I know, no one listening to this, is an heir to the throne (although if you are, I would be fascinated to hear from you! 😊)

But we need the same wisdom from God in order that we can best live for Christ. That we can be faithful followers of Jesus.

So, friends, let our request to God be that we will be faithful followers of God, in Jesus Christ, as we LOVE God, WORSHIP God and LISTEN to God.

Amen.

I want to invite you to either sing along to the next song or simply let the music wash over you as you think about your LOVE for God…your WORSHIP of God and when and where you LISTEN to God.

**Song: Be still for the presence of the Lord**

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| 1.. Be still for the presence of the Lord  the Holy One is here.  Come bow before Him now  with reverence and fear.  In Him no sin is found  we stand on holy ground.  Be still for the presence of the Lord  the Holy One is here. | 2.. Be still for the glory of the Lord  is shining all around.  He burns with holy fire  with splendour He is crowned  How awesome is the sight  our radiant King of light!  Be still for the glory of the Lord  is shining all around. |
| 3.. Be still for the power of the Lord  is moving in this place.  He comes to cleanse and heal  to minister his grace.  No work too hard for Him  in faith receive from Him.  Be still for the power of the Lord  is moving in this place. | David J Evans 1986 ThankYou Music  ccli 169737  Streaming Licence 595811 |

**Prayers of Intercession**

We are not called to worship an impersonal god or distant deity,

But are invited into the very presence of God with our prayers and anxieties.

So, let’s come to God in prayer for our world, our community, our families and ourselves.

Please respond with the **bold type.**

Father God, we come to you at a time when the world is in crisis.

The CV-19 virus has confused the minds of the greatest health professionals and scientists.

We thank you, that in times such as this, we can call on a Higher Power for wisdom and understanding.

We pray for your wisdom to enlighten those who care for people living with CV-19, and for those looking for a cure.

We pray for your wisdom to guide leaders and politicians as they decide how to respond to the virus in matters of the economy and civic life.

Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth:

***Set your kingdom in our midst.***

Lord Jesus Christ, times such as this make us reflect on what we have done with your world.

We wonder if things should go back to how they were

Or if we should dream of a better world.

Our world is torn with disunity and division.

We confess that we are struggling to make this world a better place.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God,

***Have mercy on me, a sinner.***

But we want to see the birth of a new world, a better world.

Like the sun rising in the morning

We desire to see your love warm the land and our hearts.

We thank you that you have not left us alone and as orphans

But give us your wisdom to build your kingdom on Earth.

Holy Spirit, breath of the living God,

***Renew me and all of the world.***

Amen.

**Final Song: Tell out my soul**

We are eye witnesses to the fact that God is still present and active in this world.

We are not without hope.

Let’s bear witness to this as we sing our final song, “Tell Out My Soul, the Greatness of the Lord”.

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| 1.. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice; tender to me the promise of His word; in God my Saviour  shall my heart rejoice. | 2.. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name! Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done, His mercy sure, from age to age the same; His holy name-the Lord,  the mighty One. |
| 3.. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!  Powers and dominions lay their glory by Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight, the hungry fed, the humble lifted high. | 4.. Tell out, my soul, the glories of His word! Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord to children's children and forever more! |
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**Prayer for the week ahead**

As we head out on the road of life

May the Lord bless you and keep you;  
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.