

Ripon & Lower Dales

Worship at Home

19th February 2023

The Transfiguration of Christ

Call to Worship

Let us draw near to our awesome God.
Let us bring our praise and adoration.
Let us bring ourselves, our memories
and our hopes, in expectation of
meeting with our Lord, whose
presence is all around us.

Lord, we see, we hear, we believe,
and we have come to worship. Amen.

Hymn 134 Christ, whose glory fills the skies

- 1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
triumph o'er the shades of night ;
Day-spring from on high, be near ;
Day-star, in my heart appear.
- 2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
unaccompanied by thee ;
joyless is the day's return,
till thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart,
glad my eyes, and warm my heart.
- 3 Visit then this soul of mine ;
pierce the gloom of sin and grief ;
fill me, radiance divine ;
scatter all my unbelief ;
more and more thyself display,
shining to the perfect day.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Prayers of praise, confession and thanksgiving

Most mighty and exalted Lord, we
come today to praise and worship you.
We thank you for your glory,
for your power and your majesty
that transforms our lives into your
likeness.
You shone like the noonday sun;

as you revealed your glory on the
mountaintop,
reveal yourself and shine on us today.
We worship you, most beloved Son of
God.

Transforming Jesus,
we come to the foot of your cross
and say sorry when we don't listen.
We are sorry when we miss you in the
midst of our lives,
when we fail to glimpse you,
even when you are shining so bright
before us.

We are sorry when we are afraid and
don't trust you,
when we fall asleep, absorbed in our
own lives,
when we make our own conclusions
and don't involve you,
when we think we know best.
Help us to always seek refuge in you,
to be transformed by your brightness,
and draw closer to you.

Awesome God, we thank you that we
are your beloved and our home is in
you.
Thank you that we are forgiven and
transformed into your likeness.
You make us whole.

We thank you that we can be
completely changed by you.
We thank you that you have called us
to yourself, to be transformed
and made whole.

Thank you that we can draw aside and
spend time in your presence,
worshipping you and praising you for
your love.

You transform us day by day.
You draw us closer to you,
so that we can shine bright and be
your children of light. Amen.

Hymn StF 15 The splendour of the King

1 The splendour of the King,
clothed in majesty ;
let all the earth rejoice,
let all the earth rejoice.
He wraps himself in light
and darkness tries to hide,
and trembles at his voice,
and trembles at his voice.

*How great is our God, sing with me,
how great is our God, and all will see
how great, how great is our God.*

2 And age to age he stands,
and time is in his hands ;
beginning and the end,
beginning and the end.
The Godhead, Three in One,
Father, Spirit, Son,
the Lion and the Lamb,
the Lion and the Lamb.

*How great is our God, sing with me,
how great is our God, and all will see
how great, how great is our God.*

Name above all names,
worthy of all praise ;
my heart will sing :
how great is our God.
Name above all names,
worthy of all praise ;
my heart will sing :
how great is our God.

*How great is our God, sing with me,
how great is our God, and all will see
how great, how great is our God.*

Chris Tomlin (b. 1972), Ed Cash and
Jesse Reeves

Bible Reading Matthew 17:1-9

The Transfiguration

17 After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³ Just

then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴ Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

⁵ While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” ⁸ When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Word

Transfiguration. It’s a strange word isn’t it. One of those theological words that non-believers struggle to understand – and probably some of us believers too. For young children hearing this word for the first time, it’s a nice long word to practice saying – we don’t use many with 5 syllables. Trans-fig-ur-ray-tion. But children won’t know what it means.

They will, however, probably know all about Transformers. Transformers are toys, usually cars, which can be opened up so that the side panels become arms and legs, and the engine the head of a robot. The car is transformed into something completely different.

When Peter and the brothers, James and John, climb the mountain with Jesus they see him changed, but not into someone different. Transfiguration

means Jesus is transformed into his true self – but he remains the friend they have come to love. They can still see his face, even if it is shining brightly like the sun. His divinity - his godliness, is revealed in the dazzling bright white of his clothing at the same time as his humanity is seen in his face.

But, no wonder the 3 disciples fell to their knees. Peter has already declared that Jesus is the Messiah, now he sees the truth he believes.

But we shouldn't look upon the transfiguration as just a means of proving who Jesus is. There is more evidence in what happened next. As the fearful disciples lift their heads, peep through fingers covering their eyes, they see Jesus is not alone. Somehow, they immediately identify that Moses and Elijah are standing beside Jesus.

Moses, the first great prophet, whose face also shined after being in the presence of God, as we read in Exodus 34.29. Moses, the prophet chosen by God - who spoke to Moses upon a mountain, from within the fire of a burning bush; chosen to lead the Israelites from slavery, to set them free and establish a new Covenant with His people; the man chosen to give the people the Law that they should follow. That Law, the Ten Commandments, given to Moses on top of a mountain.

Then Elijah, one of the most famous of the prophets, the one who God sent to confront and challenge the people to return back to The Law, the Covenant way. The prophet, who on a mountain top, challenges the prophets of Baal and Asherah in a show-stopping confrontation (which you can read about in 1 Kings 18 . Elijah who on a mountain-top hears God speak, not in the earthquake, wind or fire, but in a gentle whisper.

We are also told in the Reading that the mountain was covered in a bright cloud – as Mount Sinai was when Moses spoke to God. From within that cloud, Peter, James and John hear the voice from heaven, which repeats the words spoken at Jesus' baptism, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased "adding the imperative, 'Listen to him!' As the way of the cross draws ever nearer, they will need this instruction more than ever.

Some people feel that the offer of Peter to build three dwellings or shelters (akin to the sukkah built for the festival of Sukkot) is a bit absurd and a sign of his impetuosity. The Gospel of Mark (9:6) goes so far as to say that he did not know what he was doing. Peter did offer to do something, however, and that was an act of devotion. Perhaps his spiritual style was much more action-orientated than that of the other disciples, and explains why Jesus chose him to be their leader!

I wonder if you can think of a moment when you felt close to God? Not necessarily because you were surrounded by a bright light, it may have been more like a quiet whisper as Elijah experienced. And did you feel compelled to action like Peter? Hopefully with a bit more sensible response!

The important part of this Bible passage for me are the words "Listen to him". It is Christ as our spiritual guide, shining his light on the path ahead of us, that can lead us into a closer relationship with God, and by listening to, and reading his teaching we can live our lives in a way that reflects his glory on earth.

How could you be a leading light to others today?

Hymn 261 Transfigured Christ, none comprehends

1 Transfigured Christ, none comprehends
your majesty, whose splendour stuns
all waking souls; whose light transcends
the brightness of a thousand suns!

2 You stand with Moses on the hill,
you speak of your new exodus:
the way through death, you will fulfil
by dying helpless on the cross.

3 You stand here with Elijah too,
by whom the still small voice was heard:
and you, yourself, will prove God true,
made mute in death, Incarnate Word.

4 If we could bear your brightness here
and stay for ever in your light,
then we would conquer grief and fear,
and scorn the terrors of the night.

5 But, from the heights, you bring us
down,
to share earth's agonies with you,
where piercing thorns are made your
crown
and death, accepted, proves love true.

6 Majestic Christ, God's well-loved
Son,
if we must share your grief and loss,
transfigure us, when all is done,
with glory shining from your cross.

Alan Gaunt (*b.* 1935)

Prayers of Intercession

God always assures of his grace and
mercy,

He always assures us of his
forgiveness and love.

God always listens to our prayers
and it is now time for our prayers for
others,

for the Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God

Father we pray for the world
where people, adults and children, are
unloved and afraid;
for the world where people worship
anyone and anything rather than their
Maker;

for the world in its need of hope and
renewal;
for the world where might is right and
the weak are crushed;
for the world wherever there is
darkness.

We pray for the world in need of the
transforming light and life of Christ.
The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for our nation, where the
name of Christ is rarely heard except
in blasphemy;

for our nation, where the rich get richer
and the poor are ignored;

for our nation, where young lives are
abused and corrupted by false values
and attitudes which are accepted as
normal.

We pray for our nation and its need to
begin again,

for our nation in need of repentance,
forgiveness and peace.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for our community, where
many feel forgotten;

for those around us who are empty
and hurting and broken and lost;

for our community where many are
isolated by their lack of ability, their
poverty or their failure to be loved;

for our community where many long
for acceptance, love, understanding
and hope;

for those battling loneliness or
addiction or unemployment.

We pray for our community in need of
each other and their Lord.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for the church.

We pray for the one church of Jesus
Christ, that we may be one with him;

that our witness, our worship and our
service may be worthy of him.

We ask for wisdom, understanding,

truth and sensitivity in the whole of our life together with Jesus, for the joy and the wonder of knowing that our fellowship here is designed for eternity. We pray that the churches within our Circuit, will be a place where all are made welcome and where people are transformed and made whole by Christ.

We pray for the church, that we may glorify God.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for any we know who are in great need;
for those who are ill
for those who will never recover
and for those who wait with them;
for those waiting important decisions
and for those not sure what tomorrow may bring.

We pray for our neighbours, our family our friends, and any we know who need to hear of the love of God, to feel the touch of the healing hands of Jesus,
to experience the life-transforming power of the Spirit....

We pray that their needs will be met by God.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God

We pray for ourselves.

We pray for all we must do and say and face in the coming week;
for the words of faith we should share and the prayers of others for which we need the words;
for the challenges that we know we must face and the pressures and pain and the stress of each day.

We pray for ourselves
and ask for the transforming love of Christ to go with us.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

In the name of Christ, who makes all things new. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 59 Lord, the light of your love

1 Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining :
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us ;
set us free by the truth you now bring us
shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory ;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and mercy ;
send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light !*

2 Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
from the shadows into your radiance ;
by your blood I may enter your brightness :
search me, try me, consume all my darkness
shine on me, shine on me.

3 As we gaze on your kingly brightness
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory :
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story
shine on me, shine on me.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Blessing

Whether your journey takes you
to the mountain-top or the city;
whether you go alone
or whether you go with others,
go now with confidence,
go now in peace.
And may you know the blessing of
God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
every step of this week and always.
Amen.

Kathy Lowrie