

Ripon & Lower Dales

Worship at Home

7th May 2023

The Way, the Truth, the Life

It's a rather special weekend, we have an extra Bank Holiday, and if you are reading this on the Sunday, have probably (hopefully) enjoyed watching the King's Coronation – our earthly king, Charles III.

As Christians, we of course have another king, who is also seated on a throne and has been anointed - by his Father, our God. So we come today to worship the true King, the one who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life that we want to follow.

But first, as the Coronation of Charles III is a significant occasion historically for our United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, let us begin with a prayer from the Methodist Church, written by Revd Michael Parker, Chaplain to the military:

Loving God, come with your grace and heavenly aid to fill the heart of your servant King Charles.

Anoint him with your Spirit and lead him into all truth.

Grant him wisdom to fulfil this calling, to promote freedom of conscious, generosity of spirit and care for others. Give him strength for all the future holds, that in his thoughts, words and actions, he may seek your honour and glory.

Bless Camilla, the Queen Consort, and all the Royal Family, that enriched by your presence, they may serve you with faithfulness and peace.

We ask this in the name of the Lord of Lords and King of kings, Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Call to Worship

Almighty God, your Word has led us here;

your truth has echoed in our minds,
your Spirit has touched our lives,
your being is within us.

You are more than we see and more than we know,

more than we can comprehend or imagine or wish for.

You are ours and we are yours,
and together, we are your family.

To you be all praise and glory.

Amen

Hymn 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

Prayers of Praise and Adoration

Lord God, we cannot see and know the depth of your being, but, for what we do see and know, we worship and adore you.

We find in you protection, guidance and love.

We find in you forgiveness, acceptance and repentance.

We see in you a way of living that is right and just, loving and caring.

We feel the spark of your Spirit in the depths of our beings and know you to be true.

Blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as you are one, may we be one with you.

We thank you, O God, for your creation:

for plants, for flowers and food, for animals and people, for sustenance and provision.

We thank you for sight and sound, for touch and taste and smell and feeling; for emotions and inspiration; for your indwelling spirit.

For all of this and so much more that makes life what it is, and reveals what living and loving are.

We thank you for guidance; for dreams and visions that reveal you to us.

We praise and thank you for all people – the good, the bad, and everything in between –

who have made us the people we are, and who encourage us to be the people you want us to be.

You are our compass, our plumb line, our map through the choices of life.

To you, O God, we offer our thanks this and every day. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Assurance

Holy God, whose perfect nature challenges and changes us, our guilt weighs heavy on our shoulders.

It saddens us that we fail you so often when we:

fail our families, friends and neighbours;

fail to recognise need;

fail to see how we can be the hand that guides, the love that enfolds, the word that strengthens.

Forgive us that we deliberately look the other way and avoid the hard challenges you call us to.

Forgive us, O God, for our failings, our deafness and our blindness in reaching out and offering your love.

Your love is abundant, your forgiveness unimaginable.

O God, may we hear your still small voice that says,

‘Your sins are forgiven, your slate wiped clean, the weight of your guilt removed.

Go now, in peace to love and serve your neighbour”. Amen.

Hymn Christ is the world’s light

1 Christ is the world's light, Christ and none other ;
born in our darkness, he became our brother.
If we have seen him, we have seen the Father :
glory to God on high.

2 Christ is the world's Peace, Christ and none other ;
no one can serve him and despise another ;
who else unites us, one in God the Father ?
Glory to God on high.

3 Christ is the world's Life, Christ and none other ;
sold once for silver, murdered here, our brother —
he, who redeems us, reigns with God the Father :
glory to God on high.

4 Give God the glory, God and none other;
give God the glory, Spirit, Son, and Father;
give God the glory, God with us, my brother:
glory to God on high.

Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)

Bible Reading John 14:1-14

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

Jesus the Way to the Father

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it

is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Reflection

The opening verses we’ve just read are very familiar to many of us from funeral services. “My Father’s house has many rooms; I am going there to prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

Mourners find much comfort there - that they will be reunited with their loved ones. My mother lived by those words for 25 years after they were spoken at my father’s funeral, waiting until Jesus came to take her. Her Bible said “In my Father’s house there are many mansions, so I used to say she would need one, for the first thing she’d be doing on arrival is inviting all the family around, all her friends - and many souls she could now come to know – from Adam through to the Wesley brothers. Personally, I look forward to Jesus showing me a little room, but I would want to walk in the garden with him, and to get to know him better.

The disciples had probably had three years to get to know Jesus as they travelled with him. They saw him in action, they heard his teaching and even had private lessons, but quite

frequently - they were clueless. Their questions revealed how little they understood. Thomas could not understand where Jesus was going, even though he had told them enough times. Philip wanted Jesus to show them the Father, but that's what he had been doing from the beginning, as he was the very image of the Father, the human face of God.

This reading is part of the "Farewell Discourse", beginning in Chapter 13 when Jesus and the disciples are gathered for the Passover feast, which they don't realise yet, will be their Last Supper with him. Jesus teaches them their final lessons. He is their servant – no master is greater than his servant, so he washes their feet. Judas is sent out to "do quickly what you are about to do". Peter is told he will deny Jesus.

Yet, even so, Jesus says "I go and prepare a place for you."

Charles III may have lots of mansions, palaces and castles, but I don't expect him to prepare a room for me – and it's very unlikely he'll prepare one for you either. He may honour us for service to community, you could even be knighted, but he certainly can't offer eternal life. Charles is, however, the Head of the Church of England, and we see by his actions how he loves the people he now serves as King, and we know he has a deep faith like his mother had. So he is perhaps a good role model for us, as a servant of God, but he cannot lead us to God the Father like Jesus can.

Jesus said "I am the way and the truth and the life". The only way to God is through Jesus. That is the most important and basic statement of faith. Jesus is the path we follow, leading us,

guiding us, teaching us, which he did by coming alongside us as a human like us.

He is the truth – he shows us the reality of all God's promises, and how scripture, the prophetic words, are now fulfilled through him.

He is the life – human and divine, that acts as the bridge taking us to the eternal life on offer, because by uniting his life with ours, we are united with God. We become children of God through the life of His son, Jesus.

Jesus tells his disciples – and us, to have faith in him, for then we will be able to do what he did. That isn't to say we can all become miracle workers, but is about carrying the gospel message to the people we meet, so that we too bring glory to the Father. That may seem a scary thing, but Jesus says "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust in me."

So, let us pray: Lord Jesus, grant me to walk in your way, to know your truth and to experience the life you share with your Father. Amen.

Hymn Be thou my vision

- 1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art ;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord ;
be thou my great Father, thy child let me be ;
be thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

- 3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword
for the fight ;
be thou my whole armour, be thou
my true might ;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou
my strong tower :
O raise thou me heavenward,
great Power of my power.
- 4 Riches I heed not, nor earth's
empty praise :
be thou mine inheritance now and
always ;
be thou and thou only the first in
my heart :
O Sovereign of heaven, my
treasure thou art.
- 5 High King of heaven, thou
heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is
won ;
Great Heart of my own heart,
whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of
all.

Irish, 8th century

Prayers for Others

Lord, as you have called us to walk in
your way,
make us the people that you would
have us be,
guide us that we may do what you
would have us do,
that we may reveal your truth, and lead
others to the fullness of life,
that we may be a chosen people, a
royal priesthood,
that we may proclaim the mighty acts
of him who called us
out of darkness into his marvellous
light.
**Lord, lead us in the ways of peace.
Guide us in the path of life.**

We pray for all who are in positions of
authority,
for all who will be called upon to make
difficult decisions this week.
We remember those who make
decisions that affect the life of this
planet.

We pray for all who do research into
healing and the renewal of the earth.
**Lord, lead us in the ways of peace.
Guide us in the path of life.**

We praise you for all who have
enriched our lives,
for all who have built up our
community, for those who extended
our vision,
for all who taught us the truth, for
those who set us on a good path.
We pray for our families and friends,
for the people we work with and those
we spend our leisure-time with.
**Lord, lead us in the ways of peace.
Guide us in the path of life.**

We pray for all who are confused
about the truth, or about life,
for all whose minds are disturbed, for
all who have lost their way.
We pray for all who live a lie and
cannot face reality.
We pray for all who are not at peace.
We come to you with all who are
troubled in heart.
**Lord, lead us in the ways of peace.
Guide us in the path of life.**

Lord Christ, as you have gone before
us and prepared a place for us,
lead us until we come fully into your
kingdom
and walk before you in that life which
is eternal.
**Lord, lead us in the ways of peace.
Guide us in the path of life. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive
those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and
deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Hymn Lord for the years

1 Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
 urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
 sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,
 Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

2 Lord, for that word, the Word of life which fires us,
 speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
 teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us,
 Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

3 Lord, for our land, in this our generation,
 spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care ;
 for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
 Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

4 Lord, for our world ; when we disown and doubt him,
 loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain ;
 hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him,
 Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

5 Lord, for ourselves ; in living power remake us,
 self on the cross and Christ upon the throne ;
 past put behind us, for the future take us,
 Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (b.1926)

Blessing

The good and gracious God guide us into the ways that lead to peace; and the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you now and always. **Amen.**

Kathy Lowrie
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