



Call To Worship

In the beginning,
before time, before people,
before the world began,
God was.

Here and now
among us, beside us,
enlisting the people of earth
for the purposes of heaven,
God is.

In the future,
when we have turned to dust

and all we know has found fulfilment,
God will be.

Not denying the world, but delighting in it,
not condemning the world, but redeeming it,
through Jesus Christ,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,

God was,
God is,
God will be.

Hymn: Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jbVNquFuZs>

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To His feet your tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me His praise should sing?
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for His grace and favour
To our fathers in distress:
Praise Him still the same for ever,
Slow to chide and swift to bless:
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, He tends and spares us,
Well our feeble frame He knows;
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes:
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Widely as His mercy flows.

Frail as summer's flower we flourish,
Blows the wind, and it is gone.
But while mortals rise and perish,
God endures unchanging on.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise the high eternal One.

Angels, help us to adore Him,
You behold Him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,
praise Him, all in time and space:
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise with us the God of grace.

Prayer

Living God,

we give you thanks and praise,
for you have made us and given us life,
you have redeemed us and set us free.

Loving God,

we give you thanks and praise,
for you have found us and made us your own,
named us and called us 'Beloved'.

Accompanying God,

we give you thanks and praise,
for you have promised to be with us always
and nothing can separate us from your love.

God, our God,

Song: 'Hide me now (under Your wings)'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sv3eJgqq2aw>

Hide me now under your wings.
Cover me within Your mighty hand.

When the oceans rise
and thunders roar,
I will soar with You
above the storm.
Father, You are King
over the flood;
I will be still and know
You are God.

Find rest, my soul, in Christ alone.
Know His power in quietness and trust.

Running- Away Prophet

Jonah 1: 1-16

Over the years I have found the book of Jonah a rich source for reflections. For many the book is best known for the image of Jonah swallowed by a big fish and then spat out on a beach but there is so much more to be learned, so over the next few week (when it is my turn) we will have a good dig around! This week I am going to do this in a slightly different way – I will give you pointers for your own reflections. Why not take some time for this.

So here is the reading: Jonah 1: 1-16

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.'

3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

4 Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6 The captain went to him and said, 'How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.'

7 Then the sailors said to each other, 'Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.' They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 So they asked him, 'Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?'



9 He answered, 'I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.'

10 This terrified them and they asked, 'What have you done?' (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

11 The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, 'What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?'

12 'Pick me up and throw me into the sea,' he replied, 'and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.'

13 Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. 14 Then they cried out to the Lord, 'Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.' 15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.



Jonah starts with: 'The Word of God came' (v.1) which is a striking beginning to any book, God actually speaking to Jonah – or... is it that surprising for Jonah?- as he was a prophet after all!

Even in these few words we are introduced to a main theme within the book – Jonah, this man of God hearing the Word of God clearly and audibly.

There are times that I am still surprised that God actually speak to me! When I tell my 'not yet Christian' family what God asks me to do at times, they look at me as if I am loopy! And yet scripture has God talking all the time, it seems to be an expression of His

love for us; like a father talking to his daughter or a mother speaking to her son.

Has God spoken to you? Have there been times when you thought He was asking something of you? Remember God speaks in many ways: Through The Bible, a feeling that you might get, what another person might have said to you.

What did you do about it? How did you feel? How does it feel if you think God has never spoken to you?



In **verse 3**, there is the reaction! The prophet Jonah runs away! Within the Bible every time God speaks there is a reaction. More often than not the person addressed refuses to do what God is asking him or her to do. But at least there is a response, Jonah did take God seriously enough to leave his home and spend his hard earned cash to pay for a boat trip – he just went the opposite direction God told him to go in.

Have there been times when you ran away from God? How did you come back? How do you think God felt when you did come back?

Verse 5 has all the sailors cry out to their own gods – ‘cry out to God’ is a phrase that appears regularly in, especially the old Testament – it is the Israelites who **cry out** in their distress when their slave existence in Egypt became unbearable. When we cry out to God we indicate that only God can help us, there is no other way out! And so in verse 5 the sailors do precisely that, they cry out to their own gods, I mean that is what gods are for after all. And where do we find our great man of God? Jonah is asleep in the hold of the ship of course! Who was taking God more seriously, Jonah or the sailors?

Have there been times you have cried out to God? What were the circumstances? What happened next?

And finally (for this Sunday at least) **verse 12** Jonah says: ‘pick me up and throw me in the sea’. He knows he is at fault and he also knows that the only thing that can be done is for him to be thrown into the sea so that God’s will can be done. Did he trust his God well enough to not leave him nor forsake him even when Jonah had gone against God’s will? Or was he ready to drown? I suppose we will find out next time.

How much do we trust God that even when we go against His will, He will always love us?



Song: Blessed be Your Name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnWKehsOXu8>

Blessèd be Your name
In the land that is plentiful,
Where Your streams
of abundance flow,
Blessèd be Your name.
And blessèd be Your name
When I'm found
in the desert place,
Though I walk through
the wilderness,
Blessèd be Your name.

Every blessing You pour out
I'll Turn back to praise.
And when the darkness
closes in, Lord,
Still I will say:

Blessèd be the name
of the Lord,
Blessèd be Your name.
Blessèd be the name
of the Lord,
Blessèd be Your glorious name.

Blessèd be Your name
When the sun's
shining down on me,
When the world's
'all as it should be,'
Blessèd be Your name.
And blessèd be Your name
On the road marked
with suffering,
Though there's pain
in the offering,
Blessèd be Your name.

Every blessing You pour out...

Blessèd be the name of the Lord...

You give and take away,
You give and take away,
Forever I will say, Lord
Blessèd be Your name...

Prayers:

Pray for our world – think about what you have heard about what is happening in the world. Bring one particular story the front of your mind. And pray for that situation.

End that time by saying:

Your kingdom come, O Lord Your will be done.

Pray for our country – for healthcare workers, those others who work on the frontline, our leaders and those have to implement decisions.

Your kingdom come, O Lord Your will be done.

Pray for ourselves, the people we know and care for – spend sometime praying for who you know. Then say the Lord's prayer

Your kingdom come, O Lord Your will be done.

The Lord's Prayer (say the Lord's prayer)

Hymn: 'A Sovereign Protector I Have'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ONBRS1683I>

A sovereign Protector I have,
unseen, yet forever at hand,
unchangeably faithful to save,
almighty to rule and command.
He smiles, and my comforts abound;
His grace as the dew shall descend;
and walls of salvation surround
the soul He delights to defend.

Kind Author and Ground of my hope,
Thee, Thee, for my God I avow;
my glad Ebenezer set up,
and own Thou hast helped me till now.
I muse on the years that are past,
wherein my defense Thou hast proved;
nor wilt Thou relinquish at last
a sinner so signally loved!

Inspirer and hearer of prayer,
Thou Shepherd and Guardian of Thine,
my all to Thy covenant care
I sleeping and waking resign.
If Thou art my Shield and my Sun,
the night is no darkness to me;
and fast as my moments roll on,
they bring me but nearer to Thee.

The Blessing

To thy name, Lord Jesus, help me
to bow the knee
and all its worshipping
to bow the head
and all its thinking
to bow the will
and all its choosing
to bow the heart
and all its loving.

AMEN