

## CENTRAL HALL WORSHIP FOR 24<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2020

### Preparation

Before you begin worship perhaps you could gather something to represent a crown, prayer, a home and the Holy Spirit.



Place them on a table in front of you as a focus for worship. A hymn book and Bible would be helpful if you have them. (Many hymns are available on Youtube to sing along to if you have wi-fi access).

### To lead you into Worship

Read Psalm 47

Today is Wesley Day, the anniversary of John Wesley's conversion and Thursday past was Ascension Day (in case you don't know what Ascension Day is, it's when Jesus started working from home!). Read, sing or listen to Charles Wesley's Ascension Day hymn, 'Hail the Day that Sees Him Rise, Alleluia!' (StF 300)

Let the words lead you into prayers of praise and adoration. Use your own or this one:

*Lord Jesus Christ,*

*We worship You as the Lord of lords and King of kings.*

*We praise You; we worship and adore You.*

*We offer You our love.*

*You, and You alone are worthy of all praise and blessing and honour.*

*You are Sovereign over all things because You have lived our life, died our death and been raised in triumph to live for evermore.*

*But, as we praise You and focus on Your greatness, we become aware of our weakness and failure. As we remember how we have failed you, others and ourselves, we ask your forgiveness. Help us to hear afresh Your words of grace: 'your sins are forgiven', and help us to know, deep in our being the assurance of that forgiveness.*

*Receive our prayers, Lord, for we offer them from the bottom of our hearts. Amen.*

Another hymn to sing, read or listen to might be 'King of Kings, Majesty' (StF 331)

The full first line is "King of Kings, majesty, God of heaven living in me". That is what John Wesley felt in a very special way on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1738. His journal reads:

*"I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away **my** sins, even **mine**, and saved **me** from the law of sin and death."*

That 'heart-warming' moment changed his life, not to mention the church and the nation! Think about times when you have felt the warm glow of God's love in your heart; a special time when he has been close. Be thankful for it. Ask the Holy Spirit to touch you afresh as you think about what His Word has to say to you today.

Read Acts 1:1-11 & Matthew 28:16-20

Take some time to imagine the scene of Jesus' ascension, as Matthew & Acts tells it.

*The journey up the mountain, perhaps the Mount of Olives. Going past the Garden of Gethsemane.  
Standing expectantly waiting for Jesus to speak.  
The words Jesus said.  
The cloud.  
Jesus' final physical departure.  
The two men (Acts 1).  
The way back home.*

Do you sense the glory; the awe and wonder of the event?  
Do Jesus' words of blessing and encouragement speak to your heart?  
Are you excited and expectant?  
What's the message of Jesus' ascension for you – today?

Don't rush on, think about these things and look for the sense of glory and power; the heart-warming moment.

### **Reflection**

Jesus' ascension is a spectacular event! We can't understand it and maybe we shouldn't even try. But we can think about **'why'**.

This is where the symbols come in. First there is the crown. Jesus' ascension is His coronation! The moment when God says "well done my good and faithful servant". The task He took on seemed like *'Mission Impossible'*, but this is *'Mission Accomplished'*. It was accomplished on the cross when Jesus said, *"it is finished."* So the first **'why'** is so that Jesus could be final crowned as King of kings.

Then there the prayer. The Bible promises that *"Jesus is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us"* (Romans 8:34). This Jesus, who has shared every conceivable aspect of what it is to be human; who knows exactly what we go through – and more – is praying for you and for me! That is mind-blowing, because this human Jesus; this risen Christ; is the Word that brought creation into being. And He is praying for us! The second **'why'** is so that Jesus, sitting at God's right hand, could pray for us.

Then there is the room or house. Jesus said, *"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you."* (John 14:2-3). There is, already, a place in God's presence made ready by Jesus for all who believe in Him! This is our assurance of eternal life in His presence. Whatever may befall us in this earthly life; whatever life throws at us; whatever we have to bear; Jesus' promise to us is that there is a place in the security and in the joy of heaven waiting for us. The third **'why'** of the ascension is so that Jesus Christ could prepare a place for the likes of you and me!

Finally, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was no longer physically present and the disciples were gradually learning to experience His presence in a new way – and the *'pièce de résistance'* of that was just around the corner! It came like wind and fire in an amazing outpouring of power. But not just to give the disciples a nice feeling inside; or for John Wesley to feel his *'heart strangely warmed'*. It was given, poured out, to enable and equip the disciples; John Wesley; you and me to **BE** the church. *To be witnesses to Jesus' love in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Coventry, next door to where we live .....!* So, the final **'why'** is so that Jesus could send us the Holy Spirit. The more I think about it all the more 'WOW!' moments I find.

### **Responding**

This is glorious and transcendent. But it also a present reality which demands a response. What will yours be? As you make that response sing, read or listen to, *"O Thou who Camest from Above"*. (StF564).

Let the Holy Spirit lead you into prayers for others and yourself and then say the Lord's Prayer

We end with a final acknowledgement to Christ's sovereignty as we sing, read or listen to StF347, *"Crown Him with Many Crowns"*.

***The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you;  
the Lord look on you with kindness and give you peace. Amen.***