

NOTE: This Sunday we follow a different order of service as we explore the theme of “worship” in the Psalms. We explore three Psalms to marvel at God’s creation in worship; after the reading of each Psalm, we respond, followed by a reflection on the Psalm. This is our worship service on 11 September, 2016

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**Opening reflection:** Fifteen years ago today on 11 September something terrible happened. Four passenger airlines crashed, two of which flew into the iconic World Trade Centre buildings in New York bringing down both of them. We sat before television screens paralysed by fear and disbelief, hoping this was Hollywoods finest hour, and the team of Schwarzenegger, Stallone and Willis would soon blast the baddies into smithereens, and everything would be alright! When the dust literally settled, we counted 3,000 dead. The one question which lingered on everyone’s mind was, **Where was God?** Was He asleep, or was He too busy igniting a supernova somewhere in the universe?

Strange isn’t it, when things are ticking away perfectly, God doesn’t matter; He is taken for granted. We don’t give Him credit, for example, for the perfect timing of the sunrise and sunset everyday, but when things go wrong, we blame God for not being present to stop it!

Surely, this is **not** the God we are here to worship? Are we here because we need Him to set things right for us? Are we here because God owes us a perfect life, and today we need to remind Him **our** life is not perfect, the way **we** want it?

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Gathered by Jesus the Christ,  
inspired and motivated by the Holy Spirit,  
and eagerly anticipated by God,

**We are here to worship our Holy God.**

In the name of the Healer, the Provider and the Enabler,  
enter His gates with praise on your lips, gratitude in your heart  
and joy in your soul.

**O Lord, our God,  
how wonderful is Your Name in all the earth!  
How wonderful it is to praise and worship You!  
Your Majesty is the music of the starry skies.  
yet even we, children of dust, can sing your praises.**

**HYMN**                **62**    O Lord my God, when I in awesome splendour ...

**READING**           Psalm 19

**RESPONSE**

Enter this sacred space, to worship God!

**His Creation is flawless**

**His Law is perfect**

**His Plans are reliable**

Enter this Holy place, to worship God

**His justice is perfect**

**His commandments are clear**

**His love cannot be restrained**

Enter with Holy fear, awe reverence and wonder

**to receive life**

**to accept wisdom**

**to have our hearts transformed**

**and our eyes opened wide to Your Majesty**

**PRAYER OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING**

**REFLECTION ON PSALM 19**

I wish I had the time to tell you the little I know of the opening lines of  
Psalm 19, *"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims*

*his handiwork. Day to day it pours out speech, and night to night, it reveals knowledge."*

There are well supported traditions, some Persian and Arabian which ascribe the invention of astronomy to Adam, Seth and Enoch. Scholars have suggested that the signs of the zodiac and the names of the stars associated with them originally were created as a mnemonic device by these our ancestral forefathers, to tell the story of the Bible. Historian Josephus says Seth and his offspring preserved ancient astronomical knowledge in pillars of stone.

The prophet Amos refers to the planet Saturn; Jeremiah<sup>1</sup> refers to Venus as the queen of heaven; Isaiah refers to Venus as the morning star<sup>2</sup>, visible before dawn, known as the light-bearer, Lucifer!

The Hebrew Bible tells us that since the first humans, God revealed Himself through the heavens, and they knew what God was about to do, all this before the Greeks gave us the zodiac and Egyptians mapped the stars!!

Psalms 19 invites to appreciate and learn about God's creation and God Himself. The opening lines declare God's Glory Proclaimed by the Heavens (19:1), followed by the declaration that the Heavens express God's Word without uttering a sound(19:2-4a). The perfection of God's universe is seen in the sun as it runs its course, day by day.

The Law of God is perfect and gives us new life. His teachings last forever, and they give wisdom to ordinary people. God's instruction is right and His commands shine brightly and they give us light. This is how we can be protected from doing wrong by God standards, from going against His

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<sup>1</sup> 7:18 (see "Hebrew astronomy" in Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew\\_astronomy#cite\\_note-1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_astronomy#cite_note-1))

<sup>2</sup> 14:12 (see reference above)

plans, because **THIS** our God is like a rock and is our Redeemer, who bought our freedom with His life!

### **PRESENTING GOD'S TITHES AND OUR OFFERING**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him all creatures here below  
Praise Him above You Heavenly Host  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost! **AMEN**

**HYMN**            **58**    Meekness and Majesty

**READING**        **Psalm 8**

### **RESPONSE**

God of Creation and Life

You know us before we were born into this world, before we breathed the air you created to sustain life, you know our present and our future.

**You created us, in Your image**

**You breathed into us, Your Spirit!**

We celebrate Your life in us

We delight in Christ's sacrifice for us

We are grateful for the Holy Spirit's guidance of us

**Search me and reveal my inner thoughts**

**Unveil my masks and pretensions**

**Sift through my thoughts and desires**

**and set me free to see You and worship You**

### **PRAYER FOR WORLD AND NATION**

### **REFLECTION ON PSALM 8**

Psalm 8 connects God's creation of the universe and the earth, with the purpose of human life.

We live in a world where the focus is on **"me"**; the new trinity is *I, Me and Myself*.

This Psalm humbles us before a mighty and stupendous God! Not only is the glory of God seen above the Heavens, but praise from the mouth of babies and tiny infants, is like a sturdy, impenetrable fortress which silences God's enemies and those who turn against Him, leaving them speechless.

David asks a question which has echoed through the ages and is worth thinking about: When I observe and think of all the heavens your hands have made, the moon and stars we can see which you put in place, I ask myself, *"Why do you care about us humans? Why are you concerned for us weaklings, who cannot exercise mental, emotional and intellectual strength to put aside our self importance and worship You?"*

You and I are literally, God's work of art, the best and finest example of His creative capability. God's Son Jesus the Christ is the heir of God's Kingdom, and God has made us co-heirs with Him, to whom has been given the ends of the Earth as His possession, to Whom all authority in Heaven and on Earth has been granted.

It **IS** all about me, only I have to see, to **God**, it is all about me. The evidence of God's creation lets me understand, I'm the undeserving recipient of a love I have no right to expect, and blessings I have no ability to measure.

**God's love** has elevated me to the highest heights of creation. I am humbled to see what the Creator of the Universe has done for me, to take me back to Himself, because he made me in His image to be with Him forever!

The answer to the question, "What is the human being that You O God are mindful of him?" is, "O LORD, our God, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

**HYMN**            298-299    Spirit of the Living God

**READING**        Psalm 139

### **PRAYER FOR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY**

### **REFLECTION ON PSALM 139**

God knows us better than we know ourselves; God knew us when we were in our mother's womb; God knew us before we were born; as a matter of fact, God knows each one of us from eternity past, long, long before this world was made!

God does not control what we do or say; God has not predestined us to act or speak in certain ways.

Before we've acted or spoken, God knows our actions and our motives! It is beyond my ability to understand how God knows so much about me, and still make plans for me to live with Him forever.

But this is the character of God - that he loves each one of us, despite ourselves and in spite of ourselves, and nothing, absolutely nothing will ever stop Him from loving us. **WHY?**

He made us, with His hands and breathed into us His breath, His life, His being; not only do we belong to Him, **we are a part of Him!**

So it is only appropriate for us to pray in worship, *Search me, look deep into my heart, mind and soul O God, and find out everything I am thinking, my conscious and subconscious, even my secret thoughts. If there is anything you find which is hurtful to you, please stop me and don't let me act on any of those thoughts, because they will lead to all that is not of you, all that is evil.*

*But please lead me in the way, which is proven true before this time came into existence.*

Three of many Psalms which help us marvel at God's creation and appreciate what He has done, and is doing. Don't you want to be in the New Jerusalem, the city of God where, "the dwelling of God is with all people, and **He will live with them and be their God.**"<sup>3</sup>

Then, the question, Where is God?, will never be heard! He will be with us His people and we will live marvelling at, and enjoying His creation.

Our final hymn is one we know know well and love, which tell us, God's story of creation, is our story of life and it is worth singing about - Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine. O what a foretaste of glory divine ... Perfect submission, perfect delight, ... perfect submission, all is at rest.

**HYMN**            **329** Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine

## **BENEDICTION**

Let's declare together, this Truth:

**There is nowhere in this universe,  
where God is not.**

**There is nowhere on earth and in Heaven,  
which Christ has not conquered.**

**There is nowhere we can go,  
where the Holy Spirit is not achieving God's will.**

Go into your world to live the live of God in you,  
to proclaim the sacrifice of Christ for you,  
and to demonstrate your submission  
to the work of Holy Spirit, guiding you.

This service has ended, let your service begin!

**AMEN.**

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<sup>3</sup> Revelation. 21:3