

Father's Day Worship in Lockdown

Theme: Building the House

21 June 2020

Call to Worship

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain
Unless the Lord watches over the city
The watchmen stand guard in vain
For Blessed are all who revere the Lord and walk in his ways
Sing to God as long as we live
Let us rejoice in God's everlasting blessings
Let us praise his Holy Name

Opening Prayer

Creating God, who brought us into this world, breathed your Spirit into us and endowed us with your likeness, we give thanks for your creation and for the cords of love that bind us and nourish us. In these times we need your continued presence to sustain us as your family which you have formed and which bears your name.

Most loving Parent, we thank you that you are not a faraway God, hidden in magnificence in the heavens; we thank you that you commune with us in the depths of our souls. You know us through and through; you hear our prayers; you heal our sorrows. Like a father you pity us, like a mother, you comfort us. Help us to live in childlike trust in you, that we may be free to live with courage as your children.

You O God are the God of our fathers and mothers, and God of our children. Bless our children. Help us to care for them and to teach them your ways that they may understand the love you have for them and how deeply you desire to bless each one.

Amen

The Scripture Readings are taken from:

1 Chronicles 22: 5-12
Page 426 NIV

1 Kings 2: 1-4 & 10-12
Page 336 NIV

Both Scriptures relate to David's instruction as a father to his son Solomon



It is with great sadness that we have to intimate the death of:

Norma Beattie
5 Forthview Crescent

Please pray for the family

Please get in touch with the Kirk Office (451 5141) if you need anything.

We have friends willing to listen, shop, walk a dog, fix a garden.

Website: <https://www.curriekirk.org/> or <https://www.facebook.com/CurrieKirk/>

Meditation

It has been interesting to hear stories of how different families have adapted in Lockdown. I think with the nice weather and the lack of golf and other social meetings, many dads and men took a great interest in power tools. Maybe that is true in your house as well. As well as hearing more bird song, most of us in Lockdown have also heard the constant sound of lawnmowers, hedge-trimmers, power-washers, chainsaws and electric drills. I asked Darren what he wanted as a Father's Day gift and he said, "a new sander". He already sanded the benches, the picnic tables and all the kitchen counters . . .when the sander had enough and quit.

Whilst thinking of people building and making things and coming up to Father's Day, I re-read the story of King David and his son Solomon. Solomon's Father David had a great aspiration to build a beautiful temple, a House for God where people could worship; a place so beautiful that it might honour God's name and be a witness for God to the pagan lands around. David wanted to build a house a dwelling place for the Holy Books of scripture to be read aloud and to be a light to the people. However as we heard from the story, it was not David himself but Solomon who built it.



If we backtrack a little, King David ruled Israel about 850 years before Jesus was born. David was the little shepherd boy with the sling shot that killed the giant Goliath, saving his people from becoming victims of the Philistines. David felt God's grace, and he knew his strength came from God. David always knew that his kingship was dependent upon God's blessing.

David loved God, but if you read the Old Testament, David was the first to admit he was not a perfect King, nor a perfect husband or father. King David had blood on his hands and he did some selfish things. He coveted young Bathsheba, another man's wife and ordered her husband up to the front line of battle to be killed so that he might make her his own. Because he revered and loved God, David did feel great remorse for he knew that in the sight of God, he had let God down as expressed by his prayer in Psalm 51.

Although by his own admission, he was not a perfect King or father, history would judge him as a Good Father. One thing he desired for his son Solomon—to teach the ways of the Lord and to be faithful to God. He prayed for his son as he grew. He prayed for Israel. We find many of these prayers in the book of Psalms. David taught Solomon that the root of all earthly wisdom is fear of the Lord. In Psalm 128 where he writes, "*blessed are all who fear the Lord and who walk in his ways.*" This word fear is not meant to make us scared, it is about respecting and loving God.

So although David was not a perfect man, he was a good father because he taught his son about the things that matter. This story is a lovely reminder that whilst we, as human mothers and fathers, are not perfect or whilst our own mothers or fathers might not have been perfect, we can always trust in God, our Heavenly parent who is perfect in love and grace. The bible tells us God always works for the good of those who love him. God desires to bless our lives and to give us what we need.

Solomon heeded what his father taught him. His prayer, before becoming King, was that God might grant him wisdom. God blessed him and he became a great arbiter of peace among the nations. People flocked to Solomon yearning to hear him speak, yearned to hear and to seek his wisdom to resolve problems or disputes. Whilst David wrote the Psalms, Solomon wrote the Book of Proverbs, a book full of wise and helpful advice. Isn't wisdom something we simply yearn for from the leaders of our time? They say some are wise and some are "otherwise." Some leaders seem to have no wisdom, empathy, patience, kindness or self-control . . . these are all the other gifts of God's Spirit when we stay close to God.

Solomon brought about his father's vision. He built a beautiful temple for the people of Israel to worship God. But he knew there was no point in building it unless it was the will of God that he do so. In Psalm 127 we read these words, "*Unless the Lord builds the House the builders labour in vain that build it.*" These words, from Psalm 127, are often read at weddings. Because these words do not refer simply to the physical buildings of a house. They provide a metaphor for all relationships. If a marriage is like a house, we need God to bless that relationship. If parenting is about creating a home where children can grow up to be who they are meant to be, we want God to bless them. Do we not yearn for God to bless our children?

These are difficult times for parents with wee ones to home school. I am grateful for Heather's ministry. Do watch her A to Z of the Christian Faith for kids—it is a natural way to teach our children that God loves them. Blessing our children, showing them how to be kind or thankful can be simple, like giving thanks to God for food or for nice weather or something that made us laugh.

Jesus teaches us that when we build our house we should build it on solid rock, not sinking sand. The bible also refers to him as our sure foundation, the cornerstone of our faith. When we build our lives on the Christian Faith, we are giving our lives a sure foundation and we open ourselves to receive God's blessings. My father always described the Christian Faith as a tool-kit. The words of the bible are like a guidebook drawing us to God. Prayer is like a power-tool keeping us close to God's heart, helping us to know God's will, strengthening and encouraging us.

Jim Wallace is a Christian speaker and writer. For many years he worked for Sojourners in the heart of Washington DC. Sojourners is a ministry that works for social justice in deprived areas in the US and around the world. Having worked in downtown DC for over 20 years he found himself one night the victim of a mugging. He was preoccupied when he turned a corner and heard the sound of feet running up behind him. By the time he turned around he was hit by something that had gashed his head open above his eye. He could feel blood running down his face and several hands pushed him to the ground. He could hear one of them shouting, keep him down, get his wallet, take his money.

Jim thought the voice sounded very young so he popped up to face his assailants. There were four of them and they all looked about twelve to fourteen years old. They circled him and the youngest one started trying to do karate moves. Jim Wallace said he must have watched a lot of television because all his attempts at Kung Fu were useless. The kid looked only about twelve, and he started to flail with these silly ineffective Karate gestures. Once he saw that they didn't have any actual weapons, no knives or guns, he decided to confront them. They were only boys. He said, *"Stop it you guys. You have to quit terrorising people like this."* The boys were taken by surprise. He went on, *"You boys want to beat up a pastor and take his money, come on, go ahead, take your best shot."* The boys were taken by surprise. They turned and ran down the street. But the little Karate Kicker stopped and turned around and looked directly at Jim's eyes with a sad expression. He said in a sincere voice, *"Mister, ask God for a blessing for me."* Jim committed the lad to his prayers.

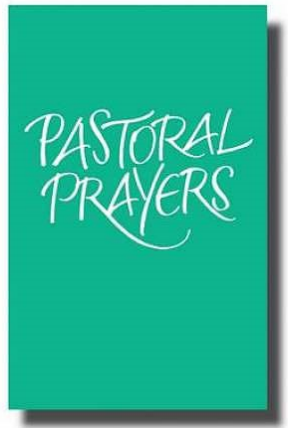
Who among us does not yearn for a blessing from God. What father or mother or child does not hope that God is with us. Whether we are struggling with lockdown, or with health issues, or other tough circumstances we may have days when we wake up and say, "Thank you God, I feel truly blessed" and then there are the other days that might feel like a nightmare, if one more thing goes wrong, it might put us over the edge. Sometimes we have a very-self focused perspective on our blessedness. We might think that it is only when things are going well that we are truly blessed. But Jesus turned our ideas of being blessed upside down. Blessed are the pure in heart. Blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are those who mourn. . God's blessings are not restricted to the good times, in fact Jesus assures us to be with us in the tough times.

So this is not just to use our power-tools to improve our houses in Lockdown. Let us also remember on this Father's Day that God gives us practical tools to help us build our relationships with one another and with God, to help us and our loved ones to grow in faith and wisdom, and in each and every circumstance or stage of life, God desires to bless us and all our collective children.

Amen.



Pastoral Prayer



Lord God we thank you for every blessing you have given us
For the love of family and friends
For rest and work
For good teachers
For kind compassionate neighbours
WE thank you for the song of birds and the beauty of the trees and flowers
We thank you that your love enfolds us from the day of our birth
To the day we may die
And we thank you that you can renew us each day in body mind and spirit

Bless our fathers and grandfathers and father figures
We pray for all families in this area
Grant them your strength and bless them
As they adapt to life in lockdown
We pray you will protect children from any abuse
And that we will all do our bit to share and care with those who are short of food or who face problems of unemployment or poverty

We pray for those who feel house bound or lonely
Stressed or isolated
For those who are fearful for their health
And for those in hospital fighting to live
We pray for those whose hearts are heavy or fragile
Because of personal loss or the failing health of a loved one

Bless all those who continue to work
The frontline workers, the farmers who grow our food
The nurses and doctors, ambulance drivers and police
Thank you that you call us to build things
And you invite us all to build a fairer, more peaceful world
A world where all your children may be blessed
With love, with peace and security.

Keep us close to you Lord God
Keep our hearts open to your teachings
That we may build our lives on deep foundations
Of faith and love so that we may be faithful
And let us now share the prayer Christ taught us. . .

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. . .