

BEHOLD HIS GLORY!

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!” [Rev 5:12]

“To him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power for ever and ever!” [Rev 5:13b]

“Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” [Rev 15: 3b, 4]

As the unprecedented worldwide restrictions grow ever more severe, as the numbers of cases and deaths multiply daily, as the negative economic impact deepens and as Governments around the world struggle to deal with this pandemic, we can rejoice in the truth that the God we worship and serve is on His throne, immovable, unchanging, totally in control, faithful and true, holy and worthy of all praise, honour and glory!

That is something that is worth a ‘Hallelujah’!

We do not for one moment minimise or trivialise the severe impact of this virus, on individuals, families, communities and nations, but let us encourage each other by remembering in these dark days that around the throne the angels, the elders, the multitude of saints are continually worshipping and praising Almighty God – and that we are joined with them in the Spirit - especially when we lift our voices in praise and worship to *“the Lamb, and him who sits on the throne..”*

So whenever we pray, individually or in groups via the internet, start with praise and worship. It changes the atmosphere and deepens our sense of His presence as our God *‘inhabits our praises’* and is *‘enthroned on the praises of His people’*.

We don’t have to ask God to send His glory – it is already here and has been since the dawn of creation. Just ask Him to draw back the curtain to reveal His glory around you!

How and what to pray

Many have asked, how should we be praying in these days, and what should we pray about?

There are the many practical points, including praying:

- for the protection of family, friends, neighbours, communities, the nation;
- especially for the frail, elderly, vulnerable – those with serious ‘underlying conditions’;
- for the spread and impact of the virus to be slowed/limited/stopped in its tracks;
- for the scientists working flat out to create the vaccine – that they would receive a divine download with the exact strategy to follow, and for rapid production of the vaccine world-wide;
- for the anticipated ‘peak’ to be flattened by the control measures taken, to lessen pressure on the NHS;
- for those alone at home, especially those liable to suffer from mental health issues, stress, anxiety, fear etc. – that many would rally round to help and that they would know the peace of God *‘that passes all understanding’*;
- for all those ‘on the frontline’ – NHS staff, Social Workers and carers, Police, Prison Officers, Council staff – for their health, protection, strength and energy, the protection of their

families, for sufficient resources of staff and equipment, and that we would **show our thanks to them**;

- for those still working in the key retail businesses, for their health and protection, and that as we shop we would all comply with the safety instructions – **and show our thanks to them**;
- for those in Government – UK and Scotland – and all those supporting and advising them – for wisdom, health, strength and energy to cope with the huge pressures of having to take decisions in a rapidly evolving emergency, decisions that are impacting all of us in life-changing ways;
- for the civil servants, HMRC staff, Benefits office & Council staff struggling to cope with and implement emergency regulations and changes to systems, at the same time coping with floods of calls and enquiries for information, advice, help;
- for all employers, employees and the self-employed as they struggle to cope with massive change and threats to their livelihood and future – that the support measures announced so far, and hopefully more to come for the self-employed, will see them through this shut-down and help their businesses to survive until they can operate once again;
- for the Church, as we adapt to a strange new environment where ‘*doing church*’ or ‘*being church*’ has taken on a whole new meaning;
- that as ‘church’ – the *ekklesia* – the ‘*gathered ones*’ - we would grow in relationship with one another rather than drifting apart while we cannot meet as normal;
- that in many new, inventive ways the Church would be a beacon of light in each street, community and the nation, drawing many to Jesus through prayer, acts of compassion and kindness;
- that in the midst of the darkness His brilliant light will shine and the **knowledge** of His glory will fill the earth, ‘*as the waters cover the sea*’ [Hab 2:14]

Bringing out the best in us.....

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people...” [Gal 6:9-10a]

We have all seen how many thousands are responding positively to help those in need – at street, village, community and county levels.

- Give thanks for all the acts of kindness and compassion happening all over the nation, and for the amazing response to the call for NHS volunteers in England.
- Pray for the health and protection of all those volunteering and helping others.
- Give thanks that all over the nation we are ‘discovering’ our neighbours and building new relationships with them.
- Pray that this will not be just a temporary thing – but that we will rediscover ‘community’ where we have lost it, and maintain this long after the epidemic is over.
- If you are not able to say ‘thank you’ in person to NHS staff, shop staff and others maintaining essential services, why not send an email to their office/Chief Executive, or a card to your local GP/hospital/shop etc.
- If you haven’t already done so, initiate an exchange of phone numbers, emails or set up an online support group with neighbours to provide help if any have to self-isolate in the coming weeks.

.....and the worst

“For a man’s ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all his paths. The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the chords of his sin hold him fast.” [Prov 21-22]

References to '*being at war*' against this virus, to the '*blitz-time spirit*' remind us of how the nation pulled together during WW2. But even then there were the spivs, the fraudsters, the looters, the profiteers. And sadly so it is again today.

Many will have read or heard about:

- the scammers preying on the vulnerable and elderly pretending to offer virus tests on the doorstep as an excuse to gain entry to their homes;
- those selling masks, gloves, sanitisers and testing kits at vastly inflated prices directly or online – one man in London making £2.5 million in one week selling private tests kits;
- unacceptable actions such as the Coylumbridge Hotel near Aviemore sacking and evicting with no notice laid off restaurant staff (mainly East European) – thankfully rescinded after a wave of protest nationally and compassionate action by a rival chain and the local community;
- today (Wednesday) – reports of early morning attempted break ins to pubs in Glasgow – small businesses now boarding up their premises there amid fears of looting;
- a paramedic in south-west England given 24 hours' notice last Saturday to leave by his landlady who feared catching the virus from him, and reports of nurses in Birmingham being evicted from shared accommodation.

Please pray:

- that every wicked action will be '*brought into the light*' and the perpetrators stopped from continuing and, if they have broken the law, that they will swiftly be apprehended and brought to justice;
- for the protection of the vulnerable from doorstep callers and online scams;
- that the sudden and unacceptable evictions of NHS and other key personnel on the front line will stop immediately;
- that those seeking to profit unrighteously from the crisis will see their plans thwarted and completely reversed, so that they gain nothing;
- that social order and cohesion will be maintained, with no breakdown of law and order.

Conclusion

There is more detail than usual in this e-letter. The aim has been to give you, your Home Group/Life Group/Prayer Group and your church a framework of prayer points you can use more than once in the coming days and weeks. There will be others you can add to that list and folk you can pray for in each category by name.

Please do circulate these details as widely as you can to maximise the opportunities for prayer throughout the nation.

We hope you find this helpful. God bless you and thank you for praying!

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