

# Sunday 26 July 2020

This short act of worship (by the Revd Heather Wilson, a minister in the Wolds & Trent Circuit in the Lincolnshire District) has been prepared for you to use whilst you are unable to attend church. Spend a few moments with God knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

## Opening Prayer

Lord, open the eyes and ears of our understanding today as we prepare our hearts for worship. We want to see you with our spiritual eyes today. Amen.

## Hymn: Open the eyes of my heart (StF 451)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrw-k7bl3KE>

*Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,  
open the eyes of my heart;  
I want to see you, I want to see you.  
Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,  
open the eyes of my heart;  
I want to see you, I want to see you.*

To see you high and lifted up,  
shining in the light of your glory.  
Pour out your power and love;  
as we sing holy, holy, holy.

## Refrain

To see you high ...

Holy, holy, holy,  
holy, holy, holy,  
holy, holy, holy,  
I want to see you.

*Paul Baloche*

## Prayer

Lord our God, you require truth in the inward parts. We do not wish to deceive but at times we are not honest with ourselves or honest with others. Take any deception, known or unknown and pour out your Spirit of truth. Today we receive your Holy Spirit and ask that as a cool glass of water, you will refresh and cleanse us today of all sin and duplicity.

We give you thanks that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. This is his gracious word: 'your sins are forgiven'. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

## Genesis 29:15-28

## Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

## Reflection

Our agricultural friends will know the concept of sowing and reaping. I'm not a gardener but I know if I plant seed potatoes, I will probably dig up potatoes. There are many biblical passages pursuing themes of sowing and reaping. Jesus taught parables along these lines. And in Galatians 6:7 you can read, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap" (ESV). Similar words are found in 1 Corinthians 6:9 and 2 Corinthians 9:6.

However, this not just a New Testament concept: Job 4:8 says: "As I have observed, those who plough iniquity, and those who sow trouble, reap the same", and in Hosea 10:18, we discover the prophet's warning: "You have ploughed in wickedness and reaped injustice; you have eaten the fruit of lies because you have trusted in your own way and in the multitude of your mighty men."

Consider our Genesis reading. Jacob has been deceived and was given Leah instead of Rachel. But now, Jacob the deceiver is himself deceived. In Genesis 25:29-34, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew. And Genesis chapter 27, Jacob tricked his ageing, blind father, Isaac into giving him the first born's blessing. There are other trickeries pertaining to Laban's flock (Genesis 30). But just before Jacob and Esau meet again, Jacob has an encounter at Peniel.

On this night, Jacob wrestles an Angel and before the day breaks there is a name change. This is significant because Jacob's name means supplanter, or one who grasps the heel, (because of the manner of his birth). The name change given to Jacob is now Israel, a combination of the Hebrew words for "wrestle" and "God."

What is now sown in Jacob's life through his encounter with God is a new way of life. Not only has his name been changed but his character will be forever marked by the event at Peniel. As Christians, we have received a new name (Isaiah 56:5, Revelation 2:17; 3:12, and a new nature (John 3:6, Ephesians 4:24, Colossians 3:10, and 2 Corinthians 5:17) so that we can sow good seeds in the lives of others.

I can testify of a new nature within. Since coming to Christ, I have changed. The Scripture says, "The Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image" (2 Corinthians 3:18). According to Wesley there would be an initial sanctification process (a process that attends to the entire work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life) at salvation then a continuing work where the mind of Christ was and is being formed in the Christian's daily life.

- Take a time to sit quietly and ask yourself – what work has already begun in your life? Perhaps, you are not where you want to be but you have progress from where you were.

### **Prayer**

Dear Father, I thank you for the ongoing work in my life. I know it will continue until you take me home. Thank you for sins forgiven, for a life with you now, and a life with you in the hereafter.

We pray for the Methodist Church, nationally and worldwide.

We pray for the universal Church and the churches that have met through technological means during this time.

We pray for all those who have suffered loss in this present coronavirus situation.

We thank you for every act of kindness done during this time and all the imaginative ways that ministers and lay people have used to keep in touch with their congregations.

We pray for those who are in need of healing, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Lord in your mercy, hear these prayers. Amen.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Hymn: Through all the changing scenes of life (StF 638)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OVJxhapcj6o>

Through all the changing scenes of life,  
in trouble and in joy,  
the praises of my God shall still  
my heart and tongue employ.

Of his deliverance I will boast,  
till all that are distressed  
from my example comfort take,  
and charm their griefs to rest.

O magnify the Lord with me,  
with me exalt his name;  
when in distress to him I called,  
he to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around  
the dwellings of the just;  
deliverance he affords to all  
who on his succour trust.

O make but trial of his love;  
experience will decide  
how blest are they, and only they,  
who in his truth confide.

Fear him, you saints, and you will then  
have nothing else to fear;  
make you his service your delight,  
your wants shall be his care.

*Nahum Tate (1652-1715) and  
Nicholas Brady (1659-1726) Based on Psalm 34*

### **Blessing**

Lord, I have heard the good news that you accept and love all people, including me. Grant that whatever I do this day I will be responding to this love with a humble and thankful heart. Amen.

*(by Deacon Gwennlian Knighton, from day 26  
of 2019/2020 Methodist Prayer Handbook)*