

**A service for**  
**Sunday 19th February 2023**  
Prepared by Revd Derek  
**Grimshaw**  
**The Mount of Transfiguration**



**Bible Reading:** Psalm 99

**Hymn:** O God, you search me, and you know me [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEGc3\\_D19Vo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEGc3_D19Vo)

1. O God, you search me, and you know me.  
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.  
When I walk or lie down, you are before me,  
Ever the maker and keeper of my days.
2. You know my resting and my rising.  
You discern my purpose from afar,  
And with love everlasting you besiege me:  
In ev'ry moment of life or death, you are.
3. Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,  
You have known its meaning through and  
through.  
You are with me beyond my understanding:  
God of my present, my past and future too.
4. Although your Spirit is upon me,  
Still I search for shelter from your light.  
There is nowhere on earth I can escape you:  
Even the darkness is radiant in your sight.
5. For you created me and shaped me,  
Gave me life within my mother's womb.  
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you:  
Safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

**A Prayer of Adoration and Praise**

With all creation we offer our praise and Adoration to God the giver of the light.

To Christ the Light of the World.

For the Scripture that illuminates our path. For the work of the Spirit enabling the Church world wide

To live and work for Gods praise and glory

Amen.

**A Prayer of Confession**

Forgive us Lord those times when we fail to recognise your glory.

Forgive us lord when we do see you in our brothers and sisters.

Forgive us when our words and actions do not point to you.

Forgive transform and renew us we pray by the power and love of Christ.

Amen.

**Old Testament:** *Exodus 24: 12-18*

**Epistle:** *2 Peter 1: 16-21*

**Gospel:** *Matthew 17: 1-9*

**Reflection:**

I am old enough to remember back in the early eighties when the Methodist Church published its new hymnbook "Hymns and Psalms" and we mourned the passing of several old favourites that never made it into the new book. I experienced something similar in 2011 when another new collection of hymns was printed in "Singing the Faith" and one of the hymns I really miss is number 158 in the old book "Stay, master, stay upon this heavenly hill" a hymn I always used to love to pick to accompany these readings for today. On the final Sunday before Advent, we are reminded that Christ is King of the whole world, and on this Sunday, the last Sunday before we start our journey through Lent, the story is very similar, we are reminded again about the glory and Majesty of Christ.

The highest mountain I have ever been to the summit of is Snowden in North Wales, and I confess that I paid for the family to ride to the top on the train. It cost a small fortune and when we arrived at the top, the mountain was shrouded in low cloud and the best we could do was imagine the wonderful panorama. The ascent is approximately three thousand feet and takes around an hour on the train compared to around two and a half hours of walking (according to Google) so it is a substantial time commitment.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, all tell the story of the transfiguration experience, although none of them say exactly which mountain they climbed. For a long time, scholars believed that they climbed mount Tabor, which although nowhere near as high as Snowdon is still a significant climb and would have taken around an hour climbing at steep gradients, which was no mean feat. Nobody will ever know which mountain, and I guess that two thousand years on it is irrelevant, but suffice it to say that the Disciples were high up and alone in this place. Mountains were important in scripture as you will see from reading the passage from the book of the Exodus. The location is of little significance to us today, but the point is that this was not simply a hill, it was a significant climb and the people of the time of Jesus believed that they were closer to God, the higher they climbed.

It is on the mountain top that the disciples witnessed something amazing, Peter refers to it as he writes in the passage you have just read. This was a time of real turmoil for Jesus, shortly after they climbed down from the mountain, they would set off for Jerusalem and we believe that Christ knew that the journey ahead would be difficult, maybe Jesus needed this time, on the mountain top, Jesus face shone like the sun and he was joined by Moses and Elijah, two of the greatest men in the history of Judaism. They were very significant; Moses was the giver of the Law and Elijah the great prophet.

Peter wants to stay on the mountain top, but Jesus leads them back down. I love the final verse of the hymn I mentioned earlier:

“No!” saith the Lord, “the hour is past,” we go;

Our home, our life, our duties lie below.

While here we kneel upon the mount of prayer, the plough lies waiting in the furrow there!

Here we sought God that we might know His will; there we must do it, serve Him, seek Him still.

Sometimes when we are experiencing the mountain top experiences in our lives, we want to stay there, to make that our home, but life is lived out in the mundane, the ordinary things of life. I suggest that you look at the words of the hymn, there is a YouTube clip, but it is the organ music only, I can't find a choir singing, sorry.

#### To reflect:

- What are the mountain top experiences in your life? The moments you would love to go back and re live time and time again.
- Jesus sought strength in his hour of need from the great men of old and from God himself on the mountain top. Where do you turn when the going gets tough, who do you need by your side when faced with difficult choices?
- What are your experiences of God revealing his glory to you? Where have you seen the majesty and wonder of God?

Hymn: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0\\_w2fvR7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0_w2fvR7s) (organ music only)

Stay, Master, stay,  
upon this heavenly hill;  
A little longer, let us linger still;

With all the mighty ones  
of old beside,  
Near to God's  
holy presence still abide;  
Before the throne of light  
we trembling stand,  
And catch a glimpse  
into the spirit land.

Stay, Master, stay!  
we breathe a purer air;  
This life is not the life  
that waits us there;  
Thoughts, feelings, flashes,  
glimpses come and go;  
We cannot speak them—  
nay, we do not know;  
Wrapped in this cloud

of light we seem to be  
The thing we fain  
would grow—eternally.

“No!” saith the Lord,  
“the hour is past,” we go;  
Our home, our life,  
our duties lie below.  
While here we kneel upon  
the mount of prayer,  
The plough lies waiting  
in the furrow there!  
Here we sought God  
that we might know His will;  
There we must do it,  
serve Him, seek Him still.

**Take a time to sit quietly and pray:**

We pray for the world around us; for the environment; for peace where there is conflict; for racial and social justice to be seen throughout the world.

We pray for our communities; for those who are shielding; for those who are fearful, for those working for the good of others in many different ways in our community. We pray for all who work in the NHS and for all key workers and those on whom we rely. We pray for our church community as we seek new ways of fulfilling our calling as the Church in these times. We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours. We pray for those who are ill and for those who are struggling financially or emotionally at this time. We pray for those who are grieving as we remember those who have died.

In the stillness we take a moment we bring our prayers to God...

***The Lord's Prayer:*****Hymn** *STF number 293*

All heaven declares  
The glory of the risen Lord;  
Who can compare  
With the beauty of the lord?  
For ever he will be  
The Lamb upon the throne;  
I gladly bow the knee  
And worship him alone.

I will proclaim  
The glory of the risen Lord,  
Who once was slain  
To reconcile us to God  
For ever you will be  
The Lamb upon the throne;  
I gladly bow the knee,  
And Worship you alone.

**A prayer of blessing**

Dear Lord.  
When times are hard, walk beside us.  
When we are unsure of which way to turn, dwell within us.  
When we need to listen to others, encourage us.  
When our lives and work bear fruit, rejoice with us.

So may the blessing of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with us all today and forever more. Amen.