



**Call to worship**

**Psalm 145 v 1-2**

I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.  
Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.

**Hymn – all people that on earth do dwell (STF 1)** Watch on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmGwHdNtpEw>

All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice,  
Him serve with fear, His praise forthtell;  
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;  
Without our aid He did us make.  
We are His folk, He doth us feed,  
And for His sheep He doth us take.

Oh, enter, then, His gates with praise,  
Approach with joy His courts unto;

Praise, laud, and bless His name always.  
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? The Lord, our God, is good;  
His mercy is forever sure.  
His truth at all times firmly stood  
And shall from age to age endure.

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
To God whom heaven and earth adore,  
From men and from the angel host  
Be praise and glory evermore. (William Kethe (d  
1594)

**Prayer**

Loving God, we praise You for Your greatness and goodness. You are the Creator of heaven and earth, the source of life. We worship You for Your unending love. May our lives always reflect Your glory. And Loving God, we thank You for Your blessings upon us. Everything good comes from You. With a thankful heart, we sing praises to Your name and rejoice in Your steadfast love. **Amen.**"

**Lord's prayer**

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 trespasses, as we forgive those  
who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

**Hymn – O worship the King all glorious above (STF 113)**

Watch on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouXPsfNAYtg>

O worship the King,  
all glorious above!  
O gratefully sing  
his power and his love!  
Our shield and defender,  
the Ancient of Days,  
pavilioned in splendor,  
and girded with praise.

O tell of his might!  
O sing of his grace!  
Whose robe is the light,  
whose canopy space.  
His chariots of wrath  
the deep thunderclouds form,  
and dark is his path  
on the wings of the storm.

The earth, with its store  
of wonders untold,  
Almighty, thy power  
hath founded of old,  
hath 'stablished it fast  
by a changeless decree,  
and round it hath cast,  
like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care,  
what tongue can recite?  
It breathes in the air;  
it shines in the light;  
it streams from the hills,  
it descends to the plain,  
and sweetly distills  
in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust,  
and feeble as frail,  
in thee do we trust,  
nor find thee to fail;  
thy mercies, how tender!  
How firm to the end!  
Our Maker, Defender,  
Redeemer, and Friend!

O measureless Might,  
ineffable Love,  
while angels delight  
to worship thee above,  
the humbler creation,  
though feeble their lays,  
with true adoration  
shall all sing thy praise. (Robert Grant 1779-1838)

## Readings

### Psalm 13

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?

Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.

### John 11: 17 – 24

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

## Reflection on the readings

I have chosen this address, not because I know a great deal about the psalms, but because over the past few days I have really struggled with prayer. You know when things really get you down, and you are unsure as to how to deal with it, and in all honesty, there seems no answer. I thought the best way to pray was to petition God for certain things, or on my good days to praise him and give thanks for something wonderful that has happened. I thought, perhaps by just leaving it in his hands then all will be well. At times these are the correct ways to be with God, but over the past couple of days after looking at the psalms I realised there is much more to prayer than that, because when trouble struck the psalmists, they really let rip at God and told him in no uncertain terms what they thought of him.

So I would like to concentrate on psalm 13.

All human life is here is this psalm. One of the most encouraging things about so many of David's Psalms is their honesty - David doesn't hide his emotions in his writings. They are neither clinical nor academic. They honestly reflect his moods and feelings - the ups and downs that followed the swings of fortune in his life.

All human life is here - joy and sorrow, faith and doubt, anger and bitterness, victory and despair, pleasure and pain.

David's terrible predicament was he feared that God had forgotten him. Be honest has that thought never occurred to you? Or have you ever been plagued with doubt? I am asking these questions because sometimes we need to face them and like the psalmist confront God with them  
David was plagued by doubt. All kinds of questions about God's goodness and faithfulness - and perhaps even his very existence haunted him.

This is what happens when we are struggling with our faith because it is being tested, it is in the mind that the battle most fiercely rages:

*"How long must I wrestle with my thoughts?"* David protests.

*"You've turned your back on me!"* he complains. *"You've forgotten me - you've abandoned me!!"*

We need to learn from David's honesty that when you come to God in the bleakest and blackest moments, at the hardest and most harrowing times, you can always be honest with God.

It's interesting that while nearly half the prayers and hymns in the Psalms speak words of lament, their distinct voice is almost never heard in the life of the church. It seems we've lost this tradition of biblical prayer. Why?

Well perhaps we are not fully convinced that it's appropriate to pray this way. When we come to worship, we want to put our best foot forward. We want God to see us in a good light. We try to clean up our act before we pray. And we've been taught all our lives to respect our elders. We don't talk to God this way. We don't challenge God.

This is not simply an Old Testament tradition. It is the witness of the New Testament as well. In our gospel reading, Lazarus the brother of Mary and Martha, two faithful disciples of Jesus, has died and has been in the tomb four days. When Jesus finally arrives on the scene, he is met individually by both Mary and Martha, who greet him with the same words, "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died." They do not say, "Oh, Lord, we're glad you came. Lazarus has died, but he's now in a better place." No, they hold Jesus accountable for what has happened. "Lord, if you had been here, our brother wouldn't have died."

How can they speak to Jesus this way? They can speak to Jesus this way because he was their friend. Because he was their Lord, because they loved him and they knew he loved them, too. Mary and Martha can speak to Jesus this way because their quarrel with him was a lover's quarrel. They had learned it from the psalmists.

Hear the words of Psalm 13 once again: "Consider and answer me, O Lord, my God!

But this is never the response of the psalmists. They let their disappointment be known. They feel free to speak the truth, to be honest with God. And out of their distress and disillusionment they hold God accountable for what has happened in their lives.

Hear the words of Psalm 13 once again: "Consider and answer me, O Lord, my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed'; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken. But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me."

The change that comes is the psalmist's tone is not automatic, an inevitable part of the process, like spring following winter's frost. The change in the psalmist's tone comes as a surprise, as a gift, as only the grace of God can. We cannot control this intervening, transforming work of God, but as the people of faith have learned over time, it happens when we are willing to risk, willing to be honest and willing to be open to God in prayer.

Amen.

## Hymn – Majesty, worship his majesty (STF 333)

Watch on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNnTFDNPT3U>

Majesty, Worship His majesty  
Unto Jesus be glory,  
Honor and praise  
Majesty, Kingdom authority  
Flow from His throne  
Unto His own  
His anthem raise...

Majesty, Kingdom authority  
Flow from His throne  
Unto His own  
His anthem raise...  
Majesty, Worship His majesty ...

So exalt, lift up on high  
The name of Jesus  
Magnify, come glorify  
Christ Jesus the King...

Majesty, Worship His majesty  
Jesus who died, now glorified  
King of all kings...  
Jesus who died, now glorified  
King of all Kings... (*Jack Hayford*)

## Prayers of intercession

We pray for the Church, throughout the world, and all who call themselves Christians, that they may go forward in unity and strength. Help us to respect the beliefs of others even if we do not share them, to celebrate what we have in common and to accept our differences. **(Short Silence)**

Creator God, drive away despair from our politics, revive our dreams of justice and truth, and restore our passion for what is good and right. Establish your just and gentle rule throughout the world especially where there is conflict; where peace seems so far away and so many have lost everything, even the faint hope of a peaceful future. **(Short Silence)**

Gracious God, help us always to remember that in life we are “Third” and that you and our neighbour come first and second. Help us always to practice unselfishness as we try to live out lives where we genuinely try to be the servant of all as our Lord commanded. **(Short Silence)**

Faithful God, draw near to us, strengthen our faith, deepen our love for you and for our neighbours and open our eyes to the wonder of your creation.

Merciful Father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

## Hymn – To God be the glory (StF 94)

Watch on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CeBoSQsBR0>

To God be the glory, great things He hath done,  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,  
Who yielded His life our redemption to win,  
And opened the life-gate that all may go in.

***Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the earth hear His voice;  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the people rejoice;  
Oh, come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,  
And give Him the glory; great things He hath done.***

Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
To every believer the promise of God;  
The vilest offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,  
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
But purer, and higher, and greater will be  
Our wonder, our transport when Jesus we see.  
(*Fanny Crosby 1820 – 1915*)

**Blessing :** The blessing of God, The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Be with us now and always **Amen**