

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 24th January 2021

Lean not on your own understanding

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You that whether we are in the church building together or thinking about You alone, You are with us and hear our prayers.

Help us to spend time each day singing your praises, reading and contemplating Your Word, praying for one another and those issues You bring to our attention. Amen

Song: Jesus is the name we honour –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POmIxtEr9Rk>

Prayers - In your own words just praise and thank the Lord, for who He is, for what He is, for what He has done. Confess your need of forgiveness.

Some words of wisdom directly from God – before my humble thoughts.

Reading: Proverbs 3 *Wisdom Bestows Well-Being*

3 My son, do not forget my teaching,
but keep my commands in your heart,
2 for they will prolong your life many years
and bring you peace and prosperity.

3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.

4 Then you will win favour and a good name
in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;

6 in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.

⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord and shun evil.

⁸ This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.

⁹ Honour the Lord with your wealth,
with the firstfruits of all your crops;

¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine.

¹¹ My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline,
and do not resent his rebuke,

¹² because the Lord disciplines those he loves,
as a father the son he delights in.

Song: Trust in the Lord –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbMXOOp3znE>

Prayers of Praise, Thanks and Intercession

Pray as you feel led. Finish with the Lord's Prayer.

Some thoughts:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”

Wise words from God, especially in these troubling times as we try to make sense of current affairs. But how do we reconcile these words with what is happening to Christians in the world today? Open Doors USA have just reported that the number of Christians killed for their faith was 60% higher in 2020 than in 2019.

Barnabas Fund in their January magazine document the beheading of 50 people in Mozambique. *“Islamic militants turned a village football pitch in northern Mozambique into an execution ground where they beheaded more than 50 people during three days of savage violence between Friday, 6 November and Sunday, 8 November.”*

Awful though this is, I know whose side God is on. I am convinced it is the fallen Christians whom He loves and welcomes into His presence.

A few readings that may shine some light on this.

Reading: Matthew 5:10-12 *the Beatitudes in Sermon on the Mount*

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Reading: Revelation 6:9-11 *The fifth seal*

⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. ¹⁰ They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?” ¹¹ Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been.

Reading: Revelation 20:4

⁴ I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Each year on Remembrance Sunday we remember those who gave their lives that we might live in freedom.

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.*

So we are all familiar with the fact that we live in a troubled world. We are perhaps less aware that there is war between God and Satan.

God knows this – and His solution is rather strange. Perhaps because as he says:-

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,”
declares the LORD.

⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9

God’s solution was to come and fix the problem himself.

Song: You laid aside Your majesty -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=HxXrV-0JqoI>

So what?

The message today is “lean not on your own understanding”. We have to humbly admit that we do not know it all. Whatever we may think, we are not always right. We need to try and get God’s perspective on things. This does require listening to God; best done by reading His words in the bible. That is why there are a lot of readings today – it is better to listen to God than to man. God can actually do things to help, whereas man is very limited. So another reading – the verse before our previous reading:-

⁷ Let the wicked forsake their ways
and the unrighteous their thoughts.
Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon. Isaiah 55:7

Since many of God’s thoughts are way beyond our understanding, it is essential that we trust Him – *like a child*.

Final Reading: Luke 18:17 *Jesus speaking*

¹⁷ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Song: Do not be afraid -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAdRk9c1R1o>

Grace

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God,
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us now and always.

AMEN