

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 21st February 2021

Butterflies are free

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You that whether we are in the church building together, on Zoom, 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: Sing to God new songs of Worship –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RW3Eg3cbDqI>

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 praise from the bible

Reading: *Psalm 92 A song. For the Sabbath day.*

- ¹ It is good to praise the LORD
and make music to your name, O Most High,
- ² proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,
- ³ to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.
- ⁴ For you make me glad by your deeds, LORD;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.
- ⁵ How great are your works, LORD,
how profound your thoughts!
- ⁶ Senseless people do not know,
fools do not understand,
- ⁷ that though the wicked spring up like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they will be destroyed for ever.
- ⁸ But you, LORD, are for ever exalted.

Song: It is good to praise you Lord –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jERIH2pg7e4>

Prayers of Praise, Thanks and Intercession

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

Some thoughts:

How can we praise God if we don't know Him? How can we worship, follow or obey Him if we don't know Him?

Whilst many followers of this e-Service have known God for some years, there are others who may not yet know Him. What should our message be for them?

The apostle Paul had this challenge, particularly when he was in Athens and called upon to speak to a group of people who did not know the God of the bible. What did he say to them?

Reading: Acts 17:22-34 *Paul in Athens*

²² Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: 'People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship – and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

²⁴ **'The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth** and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, **he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.** ²⁶ From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. ²⁷ **God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.** ²⁸ "For in him we live and move and have our being." As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring."

²⁹ 'Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone – an image made by human design and skill. ³⁰ **In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all**

people everywhere to repent. ³¹ For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. **He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.'**

³² When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, 'We want to hear you again on this subject.' ³³ At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴ **A few men became followers of Paul and believed**

Just as Jesus made his disciples fishers of men, here Paul is fishing for disciples. The words highlighted in **bold** type above are hooks that might catch someone's attention.

God the creator of the world and everything in it.
God gives us life and everything else.
God did this that we might seek him, reach out and find him.
God commands everyone to repent.
God raised the man he appointed (Jesus) from the dead.

Paul caught a few fish – a few men became followers of Paul and believed. A pity he didn't catch them all, but we know from our own experience that most people are not interested in the claims of God.

If you don't know God already, let's hope that one of these hooks grabs your attention and inspires you to seek and find Him.

I was once an atheist. How I was caught by God is a long story, but one of the first hooks to grab me was the first one above. The gradual realisation that God is the creator of the world and everything in it.

I think it was the butterfly that was a turning point for me. Answering the simple question – how does it know it needs to dry its wings before flying? – led me to God. (I had a pilot's licence at the time).

The following comes from animals.howstuffworks.com

At first, the wings are wet and wrinkled. The butterfly has to expand and dry them as soon as it emerges from the chrysalis. To do this, it uses its body as a pump and forces fluid through a series of tube-like veins. It's a little like inflating a balloon -- as the veins fill with fluid, they slowly stretch the surface of the wings.

*This is just one of the things a butterfly has to do as soon as it emerges to prepare for its life of flight. The butterfly also must also get rid of the waste produced during its transformation and the remains of its last meal as a caterpillar. This waste is known as **meconium**, and it has a bright red, often bloody appearance. Then, the butterfly has to thoroughly clean all its sensory organs so it can find food. Finally, it has to get its proboscis in working order. When the butterfly emerges, its proboscis is in two separate pieces that join together with tiny hooks and fringes. The butterfly has to curl and twist the two halves of its proboscis to create one drinking tube.*

All this work takes place before the butterfly even takes flight, and it doesn't end there.

How does the butterfly know what it has to do and how to do it?

The simple answer is – Instinct.

But what is instinct and where does it come from?

Wikipedia describes instinct as the inherent inclination of a [living organism](#) towards a particular complex [behaviour](#). The simplest example of an instinctive behaviour is a [fixed action pattern](#) (FAP), in which a very short to medium length sequence of actions, without variation, are carried out in response to a corresponding clearly defined stimulus.

Any behaviour is instinctive if it is performed without being based upon prior experience (that is, in the absence of [learning](#)), and is therefore an expression of innate biological factors.

So what are these innate biological factors?

To me as an ex-computer programmer, they are obviously a set of hard-coded instructions. Now whatever people might say about computer programmers, writing instructions to control what something does in the future to achieve certain aims under a variety of conditions, requires intelligence.

So where is the intelligence? Who wrote the butterflies' start-up, pre-flight program of instructions? The obvious answer for me is God.

Now over 30 years later, with increased knowledge of cell microbiology, DNA and genome coding, I am even more convinced that God is responsible for all life on earth.

Song: You're not a God created -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DswjhCdU6Yw>

Recognising God as Creator was one of my "Hooks". I wonder what hooks caught or will catch you!

God is so amazing, there is so much to learn about Him and experience with Him. And most wonderful of all, He wants a relationship with us.

God created us so that we would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

So whether you are searching for God for the first time or known Him all your life, please be encouraged to ASK, SEEK, KNOCK.

Reading: Matthew 7:7 Ask, seek, knock

⁷'Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Song: Seek ye first -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFxZeY2D5tc>

I have put a link to a video called Evolution Demolition at the end of this service. If you are in the slightest bit interested in learning more about God the Creator, you should watch this video to get a perspective on the counter-theory of evolution.

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

I highly recommend this video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf32BXMSN7A>

I also recommend this video

<https://www.livingwaters.com/movie/the-atheist-delusion/>