

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 14th March 2021

God is

Welcome and thank you for following today's e-Service. We pray that this will be a time when we can give glory to the Lord and worship Him in Spirit and Truth. The theme is GOD IS.

Psalm 66: 5

"Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works on man's behalf!"

Song: O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder

This song highlights that God is the creator of the universe and also our Saviour.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHqgQjJrxI8>

Prayer:

Father we want to give you the glory, praise and reverence due to you as the wonderful creator of our universe. We acknowledge that we are fearfully and wonderfully made and yet we confess that we are sinful and fail to give you the honour due to you as our loving heavenly Father. We thank you that you sent your Son that through Him we can have a relationship with you and by His death upon the cross we can have our sins forgiven. We pray today for mothers on this day when our society remembers the important role of motherhood. Please bless the mothers in our land and help those who are struggling with difficult family situations. We ask that through the power of the Holy Spirit you will touch our hearts and minds so that we can have a deeper relationship with you that will equip us to faithfully serve you and make you Sovereign Lord of our lives. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Song: Brother, sister let me serve you

This song reminds us how important it is to show care and love to our brothers and sisters especially in these difficult times.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQaOErUUjm8>

Intercessory Prayer:

Let's thank God for all those who serve in our community, for the successful vaccine programme, for the support initiatives provided by the government, for the blessings that come as the season of Spring approaches and for His protection upon our lives and those whom we love.

Let's pray for all who mourn, for the lonely, for schools and colleges as they resume the teaching of students, for farmers as they are busy with lambing and preparing for sowing and for those in the fellowship in Alton. We pray for the NHS for carers, pharmacists, water and food suppliers, police and those in crime prevention.

Let's pray for those in other countries The Yemen, Syria and Myanmar where people are in danger because of fighting, for those suffering persecution in China, Iran and Armenia and for those countries in Africa that are suffering from natural disasters and experiencing famine. Pray too for the organisations that provide relief that they will have the resources and that they will have the access required to bring relief.

Song: Spirit of God

Teach us the truth and help us believe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozWAspk5Zcg>

Prayer

Father we ask that your Holy Spirit open the scriptures to us to reveal the wonders of the GOD that you are. In the name of Jesus. Amen

GOD IS

Most people at some point in their lives question whether there is a God or some Higher Being. When we speak with others about God we have a wide range of responses ranging from those who say there is no God to those who have their own ideas about Him. There is a tendency within all of us to create God based on our imagination of Him. It is wonderful to hear the testimony of those who believe in God as each one is unique with amazing ways that the Holy Spirit reveals the existence of a loving God. It is also interesting to hear from those who cannot believe in the existence of God as it often shows how man wants to be independent of a God and be in control of their own lives. There is often a spiritual blindness that hides the wonders of a creative and loving God. Where are we to go to find out about God? We can find Him when we read the

Bible. There are two key pointers that help us to believe in the existence of God that that can be found in the Bible.

The first is that God is the creator of heaven and earth this is stated with the opening words in Genesis.

Genesis 1: 1 – 2 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” Chapters one and two of Genesis gives an account of the creation of heaven and earth.

Then the most wonderful thing of all is that he created mankind. In **Genesis 2: 7** “the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” David acknowledged the wonder of human life in **Psalm 139: 13 - 14** “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know full well.”

Is not your spirit touched when you look at the beauty of the fields, the trees, hear the sound of the birds, the profusion of colour from the flowers, the moon and stars at night and by the regeneration of life as spring bursts forth? Does that speak to you of a wonderful Creator God that encourages you to praise Him and thank Him? Do you have that awesome wonder that we sang about in our first song? I am sure that our spirit is lifted when we consider all the works His hands has made?

The second is that God is a loving God.

You might ask what evidence is there for this. **John 3: 16** “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” God sent His Son to dwell among us, in **John 1: 14** it says, “The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.” This statement shows the supreme extent of God’s love. It is in this act, *‘that the uniqueness of Jesus and the Christian faith is so strikingly summarised. The declaration, “The Word became flesh” has been described as, the great divide, because it separates the Christian faith from every other religion on earth. In all other religions the emphasis is on humanity’s search for God; in Christianity the emphasis is on God’s search for humankind.’* Selwyn Hughes

God, the creator, wants a relationship with us and this is established through our belief in Jesus as the Son of God. It is therefore essential that when we are sharing our faith in God that we point people to His Son Jesus because it shows that God is a God of love in sending His one and only Son to take on flesh and experience what it is like to be a human. God became flesh in order to reveal Himself more perfectly. This revelation is more significant as evidence of the existence of God than what we see in the wonders of the created universe. **1 John 4: 15 – 16** **“If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he is in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love.”** Isn't that wonderful that we can rely on the love of God!

What does having a belief in God mean for us? Belief or not in the existence of GOD is important as it shapes our thinking and approach to the way we live. During the time of this pandemic people have been pondering the questions, “Is there a God?” “If there is a God, where is he in these terrible times?” People question if He really is a God of love when there is so much suffering. We cannot give an answer as to why some people suffer in terrible ways but we are aware that God does test our faith in Him. In **Deuteronomy 13: 3** **“The Lord is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all heart and with all your soul.”**

There is no doubting that people have been tested during this time and some have found faith in God as they have turned to Him in their moment of need. It is interesting when reading a book or watching a documentary film of real life dramas how people who do not have a belief in God turn to Him in prayer in desperate situations. It is also sad to see how these difficult times have hardened the hearts of people against God as they want to be in control of their own lives. We need to be aware that we will have times of testing as this is part of the deepening of our faith in God. **James 1: 2 – 4** **“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”**

If you are experiencing a time of testing at present then realise that the Lord is developing your trust in Him. It is not easy and it may be a painful and difficult time and you cannot understand why you are in such a situation. Nevertheless other scriptures can encourage us during testing times and I would like to direct you to other GOD IS passages that I hope will bless you.

Psalm 46: 1 “**God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.**” Isn’t it wonderful that God is and ever-present helper. People do help us in in difficult times and however good they are they often let us down, but God will not.

Psalm 116: 5 “**The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.**” People are touched by compassion. Throughout this time of the pandemic we have heard a great deal about the compassion that has been shown to patience and loved ones by those working in the NHS. When we turn to Him in our distress He will show compassion.

In **2 Samuel 22: 2 – 3** we have the words of a song sung by David. “**The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour.**” Just like David we too can find God to be the rock on which we build our lives. The hymn writer wrote, “On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.” In recent days I have listened to that hymn on YouTube many times and it has been a great comfort to be reassured that God is my rock.

There are many references to GOD IS in the Bible and I have only shared a few in this message. I hope to share more in my next e-service. May the scriptures studied today encourage you in your belief and trust in God and help you in your daily journey through life in these testing times.

Prayer:

Father we thank you for the wonderful encouragement your Word gives us to reassure us that there is a God in whom we can trust and that you have revealed yourself to us through Your Son and the beauty of the world you have created. We praise you that you are with us in so many ways on our journey through life.

Song: Goodness of God

With every breath I will sing of the Goodness of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f4MUUMWMV4>

Blessing Numbers 6: 24 - 26

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; The Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace.”