

ALTON BAPTIST CHURCH

e-Service

Sunday 16th May 2021

God is invisible

Welcome

Let us rejoice that Our Lord leads and guides us all, as He has done in the preparation of this Service; and that we will all receive a blessing.

Think about what is all around us that is invisible to our eyes?! ears?! touch?!; yet we know of its presence?

Opening Prayer

O Lord we ask that you give us open minds and hearts as we come to You at this time of worship with You and others. That you will strengthen our belief in You as we listen to the YouTube videos, read Your Word, speak with you in our prayers and as we consider what Your Word has to say to us to encourage and enrich our lives.

Our 1st hymns.

Our first hymn is about 'praising you' as we gather in worship.

We are here to praise you.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hs3I7Xi8Tds>

Reading for today

FAITH in Action

Hebrews

Chapter 11

¹Now

- **FAITH is confidence in what we hope for and**
- **ASSURANCE about what we do not see.**

²This is what the ancients were commended for.

³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made from what was visible.

2nd hymn

In our second hymn we are singing about our invisible God.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise

https://youtu.be/MlbnP4_yj18

Intercessory and Praise Prayers

Thank you, John (past Sunday's speaker), as I have copied his list.

- **National Issues**
- **As the restrictions ease with the lockdown, we need to pray for the continued protection of people.**
- **We ask for encouragement for those who are anxious about businesses that have suffered over the last year and the decisions made by the government that impact businesses.**
- **We remember farmers as they are busy caring for stock and preparing the fields for crops especially that the weather will not hinder them.**
- **We ask the Lord to be with all those involved in education during this time when assessments will be made so that the results will be fair.**
- **International Issues**
- **We ask that the Lord have His hand upon the tragic situation in India resulting from the ravages of the pandemic.**
- **We ask that peace will come for those areas in the world where there is war or civil unrest: Syria, Myanmar, and Yemen.**
- **Local Issues**
- **We remember those serving in local government in the Alton area that they will make wise decisions regarding the use of resources.**
- **The eldest son (of Jo's youngest sister who died a few months ago) has in the recent local elections been elected to the newly created West Northamptonshire Unity Authority and to the Northampton Town Council.**
- **For the churches in Alton that they will have an impact in the community as they share the good news of the gospel.**
- **We remember the fellowship at ABC.**
- **For the persecuted church by way of the Barnabas Fund prayer.**

3rd hymn

We need Jesus to open our eyes.

Open my eyes that I may see.

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

Let us look at His word.

God is **INVISIBLE**

Our **FAITH** and **ASSURANCE** is **VISIBLE**.

So, what did you think of that is all around us yet is invisible to our eyes?! ears?! touch?!; but we know of its presence? Gravity (despite what you have been taught; we do not know much about it) – magnetism (this keeps us alive here on earth) – sun's heat (Infra-red keeps us warm). Atoms that make up matter. God of course. We know of His presence, but we have not seen Him.

We read that Paul wrote in his letter to the Hebrews in Chapter 10: 23 – 25 -- *²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is **FAITHFUL**. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

This calls to believers for **PERSERVERANCE** in their **FAITH**. Paul goes on in Chapter 11 with a definition of **FAITH** – (always helpful to know what is meant by a word) – as in verse 1 –

Hebrews

Chapter 11

¹ Now

- **FAITH** is confidence in what we hope for and
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² This is what the ancients were commended for.

³ By **FAITH** we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made from what was visible.

He was surely talking here in verse 3 about things unseen, what we know today as the atom - the building block of matter in the universe. (Now we will ignore the pedants as that will only complicate matters.) These atoms naturally come in 94 flavours, varieties or as they are known elements - hydrogen - helium - oxygen - iron and so on. We often think that this is a modern concept of the late 19th century onwards. In particular many would consider this all started with the big bang. It certainly was. Clue - Jo & I were married on the 16th of July 1966 that was the 21st Anniversary of a world changing moment! Any guesses??? It was the detonation of the first atomic bomb in the Jornada del Muerto Desert in New Mexico USA. But you would be wrong that the concept of the atom is modern. When Paul wrote what he did the idea of the atom was known about. REALLY!!! So, it is possible that some of his hearers may have known what he was talking about. The Greek philosopher Democritus (circa 460 - 370 BC) and others were exploring the existence and power of the atom long before the invention of anything that could even see these tiny building blocks of the universe. They suggested that matter was made up of tiny indivisible particles called atoms. The word "*atom*" is derived from the Greek word "*atomos*", which means indivisible or uncut. We can of course today see atoms using the electron microscope. Just search "picture of an atom" on the internet.

They comprehended more than they could see, and atomic theory was the result.

So, are we like them in comprehending more than we can, see?

God's word tells us that the essence of **FAITH** is embracing what cannot be seen Hebrews 11:1 affirms "Now **FAITH** is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

Both Greek words used to define **FAITH** -

"confidence" the Greek *hypostasis* **"a giving of substance to"** and

"assurance" Greek *elenchos* **"a proving of"** -

both emphasised

FAITH as an **active** way of **life** in response to what we **know to be true**.

This assurance is not the result of wishful or positive thinking. It's confidence in the God we can't see but whose existence is the truest reality in the universe. His reality is displayed in His creative works

(Psalm 19:1 - The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.) and made visible by revealing His invisible character and ways -- in His Son, Jesus, who came to show the Father's love to us *(John 1:18 ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.)*

This is the God in whom “we live and move and have our being”. As such “we live by **FAITH**, not by sight” *(2Corinthians 5:7 - ⁷ For we live by **FAITH**, not by **sight**.)* Yet we don't walk alone. The unseen God walks with us every step of the way.

In a world where seeing is believing, in what ways do you struggle to live by **FAITH in God?**

What has strengthened your **FAITH, and in what areas do you need to rest in Him more fully?**

4th Hymn

A rousing hymn!

There is a light upon the mountain.

<https://youtu.be/AOCqAlA9m04>

COMMUNION

A time of Communion

5th Hymn for Communion

As we prepare for our remembrance of Jesus' Last Supper

Broken for me.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CKOvHD0dbY>

Closing Prayer

The Grace

“May the **grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the **love** of God, and the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”**