

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 30th May 2021

Our appointed times

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 know You as You know us, and to love You as you Love us. We pray that this time spent in Your presence may be pleasing to You and a blessing for us.

Amen

Some words of wisdom from King Solomon.

Reading: Ecclesiastes 3:1-17 *A time for everything*

3 There is a time for everything,

and a season for every activity under the heavens:....

¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

¹² I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. ¹³ That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil – this is the gift of God.

¹⁴ I know that everything God does will endure for ever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will revere him.....

¹⁷ I said to myself,

‘God will bring into judgment

both the righteous and the wicked,

for there will be a time for every activity,

a time to judge every deed.’

Song: In His time, He makes all things beautiful –
(Last couple of lines of song should read “We remember that **He** can”)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Et5JEMI_rsY

Every purpose under heaven has a time.
There are times, there are days,
weeks and months we cannot understand God’s ways.
If for years we fail to scan,
what is His eternal plan,
we remember that **He** can,
all the time

The passage about a time for everything is quite well known. As we face an uncertain future it is good to remember that God knows the future and has a plan for each one of us. Our challenge is to figure out where we fit in His plan or at least to hold tight to Him as he leads us forwards.

Song: I know who holds tomorrow –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7BtGs1w6hA>

Prayers - In your own words just praise and thank Jesus that we can hold His hand. Praise Him, for who He is, for what He is, for what He has done. Confess your need of forgiveness. Acknowledge the price Jesus paid; so that justice might be served, yet our sins forgiven. He died that we might live.

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.

Readings: Acts 17:26-28

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.”

Some Thoughts: Our appointed times.

It's interesting that God deals with nations. He is the creator God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He has dominion over the nations. As we watch politics play out in different lands and between nations, we need to remember that God sees all, and although Satan is the Prince of this World, God is sovereign. He has the final authority.

We are hearing a certain amount about the 'Great Reset', the New World Order, a system of global government. With the slogan 'Build back Better' to combat global problems, such as coronavirus, climate change, and the coming global economic collapse. There are moves towards a one world global digital currency, a global government and a global religion. Followers of prophecy know where this leads – to the temporary rule of the antichrist. Before the return of Jesus.

It's an old story, with echoes of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11).

As individuals, there is not much we can do about this. We can just watch the flow of events as history unfolds around us.

However, as well as setting appointed times for nations and empires, God also takes an interest in each one of us. He determines whether we live or die.

Reading: Matthew 6:25-27 *Do not worry*

²⁵ 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?' ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

It seems many people are worried about Covid-19. With the development of experimental mRNA vaccines the world has embraced them as if they are the saviour of mankind, bringing us the gift of eternal life. The clamour for the vaccine and the joy people have expressed to receive it have been remarkable. As have the intense government campaigns to persuade people to take it.

We have just had a wake-up call though. Bill Shakespeare, the first man in the world to be given the vaccine after the initial trials, died last week.

It is reported he was 81 when vaccinated and living in a frailty ward. It is believed he died from a stroke, not Covid-19 or any side-effects of the vaccine.

His death reminds us, that even at its most successful, the vaccine will only reduce our chances of dying from Covid-19, so that we are more likely to die from something else. In fact in the UK, most future deaths will be amongst vaccinated people, simply because most people have been vaccinated.

Why mention any of this?

Simply because of the fear and uncertainty it creates in the world in which we live. As Christians, we should be aware of what's going on in the world, but able to stay calm and carry on. The more alarming future events become, the greater our opportunity to truly trust in the Lord.

We have a God who loves us so much that He sent His only son to die upon a cross that we might not perish but have eternal life. Jesus died that we might live.

How sad that so many people drowning in a sea of sin are reaching for a lifebelt that does not save. As Christians, we are in the lifeboat. Saved by our faith in Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Let's pray that we might encourage more people to join us.

We are called to be witnesses to Jesus. One way we can do that is by showing the Peace which only He can give us, in the hope that others might see this and want it for themselves.

Song: Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibqgZxWa6bM>

Explaining the good news of Jesus is a challenge. However it is fundamentally about peace. Peace with God. A clear conscience before God. If you haven't done so already, now is the time to make peace.

- This requires you to admit that God has the right to judge you and He will do just that when you die.

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

- This requires you to acknowledge and believe that Jesus can save you from the penalty of this judgement.

Hebrews 9:28

²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

- This requires you to accept and declare Jesus as your Lord and Saviour

Romans 10:9

⁹ if you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

THE ABC'S OF SALVATION



ADMIT:

Admit that you are a sinner and have made mistakes.



BELIEVE:

Believe that Jesus is God's only Son and He chose to die on a cross for you.



COMMIT:

Commit yourself to a life of following Jesus and serving others.

Song: Turn your eyes upon Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=zTZtKoAwf0U>

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