

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 24th May 2020

Listen and Understand

Reflection

As we come to worship this morning, let's take a moment of quiet reflection, to clear from our minds all the clutter of everyday life, and just focus our thoughts in worship of our wonderful creator God.

Prayer

Father God, as we consider all that you are, all that you have made, and all that you mean to us, we bless and praise you, and just come before you with a heartfelt "thank you", for your unconditional and undeserved love to us.

As we gather this morning, help us to worship you afresh, and appreciate you in a new a special way, amen.

Song Father God I wonder

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gID9KHc2CBE>

Prayer Time

P Pause to appreciate the privilege of talking to Almighty God

R Rejoice and praise our wonderful God and Saviour

A Ask:- A time to bring to God, our needs and personal concerns, to ask for God's help for others who we know need His touch, and to ask for His help and protection for our country.

Although we cannot physically be in our church building today, let us in our minds eye, imagine we are there, and focus on each person, sitting in their usual spot, and as we visualise each person, spend a few moments praying for those who we see in our thoughts.

Y Yield ourselves afresh to God's service and say the Lord's Prayer

Jesus, thank you that because of your death and resurrection we are part of God's family, we are children of God and we can trust you and leave our fears with you

Song I'm no longer a slave to fear

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQqkXg-C9jo>

Reading Matt 15:1-10

15 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, **2** “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

3 Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? **4** For God said, ‘Honour your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ **5** But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’ **6** they are not to ‘honour their father or mother’ with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. **7** You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

8 “ ‘These people honour me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

9 They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’ ”

10 Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “**Listen and understand.**

11 What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

Prayer

Lord we confess that like the crowd and the Pharisees, we so often fail you, but we praise you, because through our dear Saviour Jesus, there is now no condemnation, and that as a result, whatever we face, we can say “it is well with my soul”

Song for meditation

It is well with my Soul <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4taAN4Qtbl>

Some thoughts

Today’s passage highlights the saying of Jesus “Listen and understand”.

Whilst this command was directed at the Pharisees, and the crowd, we can do no better than to take this command on ourselves.

The command is twofold, first to listen or take in, and second to understand or make sense of it, and there is a third unspoken but implied command, namely to put into practice what has been heard and understood.

Jesus was challenging the Pharisees about how they valued their traditions rather than the teaching of God in the law.

What does this mean for us? Perhaps we too may value our church traditions, or our way of “doing church”, or how we go through the motions of worship, at the expense of a deep personal relationship with our heavenly Father and our Saviour Jesus.

Or have we simply lost our “first love” and grown cold in our relationship with our Father God?

Jesus challenged the Pharisees with a passage from Isaiah 29:13, when he quoted in verses 8 and 9 of our passage,

‘These people honour me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’

The challenge for us is, do we just honour God with our lips, are our hearts far from Him, is our worship shallow, and is our relationship with God remote and indifferent?

If this is true, then we need to listen, understand and action this lesson too, why, because at times like these we need to keep close to God, and in doing so, it will help us through the difficult times we are experiencing.

Then, as Paul and Timothy wrote as they closed their letter to the Philippians, we too can rejoice because of the closeness of our Saviour, who because He was both truly man and truly God, knows all about our troubles.

They wrote in “Phil:4 4-7

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5** Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

If we remain in a close relationship with God and His son Jesus, we can take these verses and make them our own, so as we continue to face uncertain times let us:-

1.Rejoice because we have this sure and personal assurance and relationship with our Saviour.

2. Remember the Lord is near.

3. Be anxious about nothing.

4. Use the privilege of Prayer and Thanksgiving.

5. Reap the reward of that marvellous peace which only God can give us.

6. And so in Christ Jesus, guard our hearts and minds from the thoughts and fears which may creep upon us.

Song Blessed be the Lord <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bi3LearkvuM>

A verse to take with us into the coming week.

2 Th. 2:16-17 - Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.