

Worship at Home service Sunday 16th June 2024 with John Atkin

A prayer of approach:

Our God looks on us and loves us; come with thanks and praise.
Our God sees us and knows us; come in worship and adoration.
Our God leads us and cares for us; come to listen and go out in faith. So, thank you, Lord, that you have been faithful to us through all the changes of our lives; we praise you, for there is no end to your faithfulness. Help us today to be open to you, and to trust you through all the changes still to come. **Amen.**

StF 594 Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us.

Lord Jesus Christ, You have come to us, you are one with us, Mary's Son
Cleansing our souls from all their sin, pouring your love and goodness in
Jesus, our love for you we sing, Living Lord

Lord Jesus Christ, You have come to us, Born as one with us, Mary's Son
Led out to die on Calvary, Risen from death to set us free
Living Lord Jesus, help us see, You are Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, I would come to you, live my life for you, Son of God
All your commands I know are true, Your many gifts will make me new
Into my life your power breaks through, Living Lord.

[LIVING-LORD, LORD JESUS CHRIST - YouTube](#)

Prayer of confession

Lord, forgive us when we don't see change as a positive thing;
when we try to hang on to things because we are used to them;
when we don't acknowledge that we need change, and only you can do it.
Forgive us, Lord, help us to change and grow.

We often only look at outward appearance, make snap judgements, reject someone on looks alone, see the negative and not the positive. We might not cope with a change in circumstances. We might try to change others but are not open to change ourselves.

Forgive us, Lord, help us to change and grow.

Our unchangeable Lord doesn't see us as others see us. God sees the whole picture. God has heard the cries of our hearts and forgives us. Pure and simple. No questions asked. Bless you, Lord. **Amen.**

Bible readings: Genesis 28: 10-13, 15-20 and 32: 22-31. Psalm 8: 1-9.

Prayers of thanksgiving

We praise you, God of grace, for bringing into our lives those who draw us closer to you,

those who speak your words of encouragement,
those who believe in your calling for our lives,
those whose testimonies inspire, excite and move us,
and those who reflect your love,
faithfulness and compassion, day by day.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Eternal, ever-present God, visible and yet invisible,
we bring our prayers for those we know
and those unknown to us.

We seek to journey with you and with them,
to support and uphold them with prayer and love.

For those who journey with illness and pain,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those searching for meaning and purpose,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those wanting to belong and yet seemingly always on the edge,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those who lack confidence in themselves,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those who have no faith, no vision for an eternal future,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those who live with lies, secrets and untruths,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

For those who live without the very basic foundations of life: without food
and water and homes,
transform them by your grace, Lord.

By praying for these, we know that we must walk and work hand in hand
with you, to relieve their suffering and pain.

We trust our prayers, our loving and our living, to your almighty and
eternal presence.

Amen.

Time to reflect:

To really understand God's relationship with Jacob you need to read
Jacob's back story from Genesis chapter 26 his birth. Jacob does not fit
the 21st century idea of someone chosen by God to serve he is a
scheming cheat. He is devious, greedy, and self interested he does
everything, both right and wrong with great zeal.

He deceived his own brother Esau and his father Isaac. He wrestled with an angel or was it even God and worked 14 years to marry the woman he loved.

Jacob starts off by referring to God as “Isaac’s God” He isn’t sure at the beginning that he wants to serve God himself, he wants the covenants blessings without the responsibilities.

God’s covenant promise to Abraham and Isaac was offered to Jacob as well in his dream at Bethel. Jacob learnt that it was not enough to be Abraham’s grandson, Jacob had to establish his own personal relationship with God. God has no grandchildren, each one of us must have a personal relationship with Him. It is not enough to hear wonderful stories about Christians in your family. **You need to become part of the story yourself.**

Was Jacob at Bethel trying to bargain with God? It is possible that he in his ignorance of how to worship and serve God treated God like a servant who would perform a service for a tip. More likely Jacob was not bargaining, but pledging his future to God, He may have been saying in effect, “Because you have blessed me, I will follow you”.

Whether Jacob was bargaining or pledging, God blessed him. But God also had some difficult lessons for Jacob to learn. **“Are there times when we have difficult lessons to learn to be able to serve God”**

In Genesis 32: Jacob is about to meet his brother; he had run away from his family because Esau was ready to kill him. How would you feel knowing you were about to meet the person you had cheated out of his most precious possession. Jacob had taken Esau’s birthright and his blessings, now he was about to meet his brother for the first time in 20yrs and he was frantic with fear. “He decides to pray” When we face a difficult situation we can run about frantically or we can pause to pray, which approach will be more effective?

Jacob describes this in a dream as a wrestling match which continued all night just so he could be blessed. He was persistent, God encourages persistence in all areas of our lives, including the spiritual. Where in your spiritual life do you need more persistence?

God gave many people new names, Peter, Abraham, Sarah. The new names were symbols of how God had changed their lives. Here we see how Jacob’s character had changed. Jacob the ambitious deceiver had now become Israel- the one who struggles with God.

When finally faced with what Jacob thought was mortal danger, he decided to pray for God to guide him through his struggles in life, do we?

StF 662 – Have you heard God’s voice.

Have you heard God’s voice; has your heart been stirred? Are you still prepared to follow? Have you made a choice to remain and serve, though the way be rough and narrow?

Refrain (except the last time) *Will you walk the path that will cost you much and embrace the pain and sorrow? Will you trust in One who entrusts to you the disciples of tomorrow?*

Will you use your voice; will you not sit down when the multitudes are silent? Will you make a choice to stand your ground when the crowds are turning violent?

In your city streets will you be God’s heart? Will you listen to the voiceless? Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start, will you share your faith with the faithless?

Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith and believe it could be different? Will you share your views using words of grace? Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

We will walk the path that will cost us much and embrace the pain and sorrow. We will trust in One who entrusts to us the disciples of tomorrow.

[Have You Heard God's Voice \(StF 662 / Singing the Faith 662\) - YouTube](#)

A going out prayer:

Thank you, Lord, that you love us and you can change us: help us to trust you this week.

Thank you, Lord, that you love this world and you can change it: help us to work with you this week.

Amen.