

Worship at Home 5th February 2023 with Linda Leathersich

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Salt can season tasteless food. Salt can keep us safe on icy roads. You, Lord, can inspire our prayers and direct our paths.

Light can reveal hidden shadows. Light can cut through the deepest darkness. You, Lord, can change our lives and show us truth.

We worship God who gives meaning to life.

STF 346 – Christ is the World's light

1. Christ is the world's light, Christ and none other
born in our darkness, he became our brother.

If we have seen Him, we have seen the Father
Glory to God on high.

2. Christ is the world's peace, Christ and none other
no one can serve him and despise another;
who else unites us, one in God the Father?
Glory to God on high.

3. Christ is the world's life, Christ and none other;
sold once for silver, murdered here our brother
he, who redeems us, reigns with God the Father: Glory to God on high.

4. Give God the glory, God and none other
give God the glory, Spirit, Son and Father
give God the glory, God with us, my brother;
Glory to God on high.

PRAYER

Mighty God, your crystal heavens shine upon us, the light of your glory;
every night you enfold us with the comfort of your love.

Each morning you surround us with the freshness of your grace. Without
words you speak of your love for the world, in timeless silences of beauty
and hope.

You are Alpha and Omega, sunrise and sunset. You meet us in the
morning as dew on the grass. You treasure us as the apple of your eye.
Though we run from your presence, and are afraid to be loved, yet in your
time your light shines in every corner, and your peace stills every storm.
Your breath is the life of all living; your words perfect – a staff to the frail,
a guide to the lost and wisdom for the world.

We offer our hearts and lives in praise and prayer for we know you to be
our God.

Help us, see us, touch us O Lord and receive our offerings of praise for we ask in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Readings: Isaiah 58 v 1-9a & Matthew 5 v 13-20

MESSAGE:

Jesus said that we are the salt and light of the world. All his disciples should be people who make a difference in the world. Do **we** really make the world a better place?

The reading from Isaiah tells us that making a show of our discipleship does not fool God, saying that we are followers is not enough – we have to “Walk the Walk” as well as “Talk the Talk”.

Isaiah told the people that their acts of fasting and wearing sackcloth and ashes to show their humility was useless – God could see inside them and knew what was in their hearts, even if they were fooling other people. God could see that for all the outward show, the people were still leading the same everyday lives, they were behaving as badly as ever.

Repentance is about being sorry and CHANGING – not about saying you are sorry and carrying on doing the same. “True fasting” is to love others by doing good to them, to give our time and our actions to help others – when we do this it shows true worship, it shows that we are honouring God’s will with our whole being. When we do this it is what God wants to see, it is then that our light shines out for all to see. We always have to shine from the inside out to let the world know that God lives in us.

If you tell someone that they are “the salt of the earth”, you are giving them a compliment, telling them they are special. In the ancient world, salt was highly valued. It was pure and useful, it was produced by the sea and the sun. Salt is used to add flavour to food, using just the right amount in our cooking, enhances the flavour – as you will know if you have to have a salt-free diet, something I didn’t enjoy – and it needs to be added at the right time. If you sprinkle salt on food after it is cooked it doesn’t have the same effect, it has to be in the food from the start, working away throughout the cooking. It can also be used to preserve things – in days before freezers, I can remember my family salting runner beans to keep them through the winter. Christians should be to life what salt is to food, we should be working away with everything around us enhancing life for others and preserving the good things and preventing the bad things taking over. We should be making a stand, even when it is hard, having God in our lives should make us sparkle. Sadly many think that following Jesus means that you have to give up everything that is fun – that’s not true, we just need to stick to the things that are good and that don’t cause harm to others but help others.

When the sun shines on salt it makes it sparkle, if we look to Jesus – our Light – he will shine on us and lead us to do the right things and help us to enhance lives and to reflect his love on to others, That is the great thing, as Christians we are not left alone to get on with our lives on our own, Jesus is always there with us, he will always help us if we just ask and then listen to what he tells us.

The light we reflect has a purpose it is to lead others safely and lighten the dark places around us, places where people are struggling and have little hope, so many needing help. Our light can't stop at our own front door or at the door of the church, the light we reflect from Jesus is intended for the whole world, for all people, starting in our communities and workplaces. Each of us has the opportunity to make life better for others, just where we are if we let God's love work through us to help those in need.

Let's make sure that all our thoughts, words and actions show that we are the Salt and Light of the world, we have God in our lives and we want to make a difference, to make things better – Let's "shine from the inside out so the world can see God lives in me!" **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God you know us inside out, our deepest needs and prayers. We ask for the gift of your Holy Spirit to guide us into loving you more and more so that the words we speak and the things we do become outward reflections of your love in our hearts.

Loving Father you tell us that what really matters is not money and the love of power but the power of love, mercy and justice.

We pray for those in government that they will seek ways of peace and justice for all. We pray for the Ukraine and all places where people live in fear and hate.

We pray for those who have no homes and have lost their families through war, disasters, and poverty.

We pray for the Church that all followers of Jesus will go beyond the outward practice of our religion and seek ways to work in unity, so that living in love we might be a light for the world.

We pray for all who are sick and in need of any kind at this time – *name in your hearts any known to you* – We name them and leave them in God's hands for his blessing.

Lord we ask that you will be with all people everywhere and you will touch them with your love, comfort, healing and blessing and show each of us ways to help others and share your love.

We bring our prayers together and offer them in the name of Jesus who taught us to say **The Lord's Prayer**

HYMN –STF 407

1. Hear the call of the kingdom
lift your eyes to the King, let his song rise within you, as a fragrant offering, of how God rich in mercy, came in Christ to redeem all who trust in his unfailing grace.

2. Hear the call of the kingdom
to be children of light, with the mercy of heaven, the humility of Christ walking justly before him, loving all that is right that the life of Christ may shine through us

Refrain:

*King of heaven, we will answer the call
we will follow, bringing hope to the world
filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim, salvation in Jesus' name,*

3. Hear the call of the kingdom
to reach out to the lost, with the Father's compassion,
in the wonder of the cross, bringing peace and forgiveness, and a hope yet to come;
let the nations put their trust in him.

Refrain.

Blessing

Let us be salt in our communities and people of God giving light to the world.

May God bless us and those we love with light, joy and peace and may the blessing of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us this day, this night and for evermore. **Amen**