

Creationist 2.0

Creating is Shared

27 August 2023

Call to Worship – Psalm 124

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side when our enemies attacked us,
**We would have been swallowed alive, the flood would have swept us
away, the torrent would have gone over us;**

Blessed be the LORD,

Who has not given us as prey to their teeth.

We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers;
The snare is broken, and we have escaped.

Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Isaac Watts

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

It's amazing, God

Just what can happen in a year

We make friends and lose friends

Forget things and learn new things

We watch the seasons pass

Winter to spring to summer to autumn

We watch the plants grow, flowers, leaves, fruit

We watch children grow, taller, faster, wiser (maybe)

We watch ourselves grow, older, slower, wiser (maybe)

Through it all your hand of mercy

Touching our thoughts, our actions

Reminds us of how much you love us

How much you long for us to turn to you

Thank you for waiting for us

Thank you for holding our lives in your hands

Thank you for teaching us your ways

Thank you for looking past our mistakes and failures

To see the people you have created us to become

We bring our confessions to you now...

That a God so exalted should look upon us and love us is amazing

That a God so strong and able should care for us is incredible

That a God so powerful should forgive us is extraordinary

And you do

Thank you that we are forgiven

Amen

Notices

The Peace

10000 Reasons

Matt Redman

Bless the Lord O my soul, O my soul

Worship His Holy name

Sing like never before, O my soul

I'll worship Your Holy name

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning

It's time to sing Your song again

Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me

Let me be singing when the evening comes

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger

Your name is great and Your heart is kind

For all Your goodness I will keep on singing

Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

And on that day when my strength is failing

The end draws near and my time has come

Still my soul will sing Your praise unending

Ten thousand years and then forevermore

Reading Romans 12:1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵ so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶ We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸ the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Reflection

As we delve into your word today, help us, God, to discover new treasures and old and to be inspired by your Holy Spirit to deepen our relationship with you and with those around us.

Have you ever noticed how it feels to be recognised by someone. It may be for something you did. Or it could be an old friend from times past. They see you and their face lights up (I'm going to assume it was a good thing you did). They grin and come over to greet you. Do you remember when... and the conversation goes on from there. Or perhaps you are given something in a form of recognition for your role in an activity. Most New Zealanders will act a little embarrassed and say, 'You didn't have to do that, it was nothing.' Or something to that effect. But inside we are warm and fuzzy because we have been seen. It doesn't even have to be anything spectacular or amazing, it could be an inexpensive token of recognition.

A number of years ago I was at a general assembly, I think in Christchurch. Everybody there was given a small plastic gem – they probably came in packs of 50 for \$2. Our task was to find someone we would like to encourage and give them our gem as a way of showing them they were appreciated. I took mine and after some thought gave it to someone. Hopefully they received it in the spirit it was given. Then, to my surprise, Michael Frost came up to me and gave me his gem. To be honest I had not really expected to receive anything. Being given this little piece of plastic with no real-world value was unexpectedly precious and I kept it for quite a long time afterwards. I had been seen by someone and that meant a lot to me.

It strikes me as I have pondered our reading that we don't invest very well in understanding the depth and strength and character of the people around us. Each one of us has been gifted with something deeply special and unique that the world misses out on if we fail to share what we have. Far more than any \$2 shop gemstone, the beauty of what we have to share can touch people to the very core of their being.

The sad thing is that we have a tendency to take the words, 'don't think of yourself more highly than you ought,' and turn them into law cast in stone. Rather than own who and how we are before God we demur, denying the gifts we have and hiding them away lest we be thought of as making ourselves out to be more than we are. I would like to suggest an alternative approach. Step one is to understand what it means to, 'present your bodies as a living sacrifice.' To be fair this is deserving of multiple messages all on its own. For

now, here is one point to ponder. We are not islands in the stream despite what Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers may want us to think. We live within a community that is interdependent. We need each other just as we need God. To be a living sacrifice means to accept that interdependence and to live in a way that acknowledges, accepts and supports the Other.

Step two is to stop conforming. Stop conforming to the wants and expectations of others that makes you afraid to stand out. Stop conforming to the Tall Poppy syndrome. Stop conforming to the desire to fit in with what everybody else wants you to be. Instead, ask God, 'What do you want from me? How can I be the best me that God has created me to be?' It's a scary question to ask because we will quite likely get answers that will make us uncomfortable and a little afraid. That doesn't mean we shouldn't ask it and listen hard for the answer.

Step three is to take that answer and turn it into action. Paul has a bit of a list of possible things God may have created within us. It's not an exhaustive list. You don't drop off God's radar if you don't happen to fulfil the requirements for this list. It is simply some examples. The point isn't whether you happen to be, a prophet, a minister, a teacher, an exhorter, a giver, a leader, or compassionate. You might have a quite different gift – listening, cleaning, writing, gardening, the list is endless. The real question is what you are doing with your particular gift. Are you giving or listening or teaching or cleaning to the absolute limit of your ability. And are you then turning to God and saying, "I can't quite manage this bit, you need to step in here."

This is where it gets incredible. When we all step up and do what we are created to do we will begin to find that sharing becomes natural, a normal state of affairs and the power of God will begin to work in us in unimaginable ways. As we share, we become more generous and as we become more generous the life and hope we experience in Christ begins to flow out toward the Other in often unexpected ways. We will begin to create like we have never created before and see God work in us and through us like we have never seen before. I think that is rather exciting.

We Pray

Gift-giving God, you see us. You know us down to the tiniest detail. And you have given us gifts, remarkable gifts that suit us perfectly. Forgive us for hiding our gifts or for pretending they are less important than what someone else might have. Forgive us for failing to share our gifts with joyful hearts. Teach us to recognise those remarkable gifts you have given us and to put them to use.

Teach us to discover the joy of sharing what you have shared with us. We long to see you at work among us and so often fail to realise that you at work means us at work. May your kingdom come in us so that your kingdom can come in our community. Through Jesus who challenged his disciples to discover their gifts we pray. Amen.

What a beautiful name

Ben Fielding & Brooke Ligertwood

You were the Word at the beginning

One with God the Lord Most High

Your hidden glory in creation

Now revealed in You our Christ

What a beautiful Name it is, what a beautiful Name it is

The Name of Jesus Christ my King

What a beautiful Name it is, nothing compares to this

What a beautiful Name it is, the Name of Jesus

You didn't want heaven without us

So Jesus You brought heaven down

My sin was great Your love was greater

What could separate us now

What a wonderful Name it is, what a wonderful Name it is

The Name of Jesus Christ my King

What a wonderful Name it is, nothing compares to this

What a wonderful Name it is, the Name of Jesus

What a wonderful Name it is, the Name of Jesus

Death could not hold You, the veil tore before You

You silence the boast of sin and grave

The heavens are roaring, the praise of Your glory

For You are raised to life again

You have no rival, You have no equal

Now and forever God You reign

Yours is the kingdom, Yours is the glory

Yours is the Name above all names

What a powerful Name it is

What a powerful Name it is

The Name of Jesus Christ my King
What a powerful Name it is, nothing can stand against
What a powerful Name it is, the Name of Jesus

Offering

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning>

Loving and generous God: As we offer our gifts this day, we confess that when confronted with Jesus' question, "Who do you say that I am?" our answer is ambivalent at best. Even when we get the words right, we know our lives give a different answer. We turn away from the suffering and oppression of your children. We accumulate wealth and prestige and ignore the poor and powerless. You give and hold nothing back, and we give from our excess and resent being asked to do more. Help us to respond with the answer that comes from the centre of our being and that is demonstrated in our living. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for Others and Ourselves

We pray, our God, for our sisters and brothers of every race, our fellow New Zealanders and the myriads who may seem just statistics in populations of Asia, America, Africa or Europe.

We cannot love every person, but you do, and we seek your blessing on them.

Please help those who are caught up in webs of corporate evil, and those who are torn by personal temptations, to now take some control of their own destiny.

Please help any who are on the brink of belief and trust, but who feel that their lives are too insignificant for you to be concerned for them, to find renewed faith.

Please help children who are enduring war, hunger, violence, or who are forsaken, orphaned, homeless, or diseased, to receive loving care through the hands of your agents of mercy.

Please help the intellectually and physically handicapped, the frail who find each day a major struggle, the lonely, sad or bitter folk, to discover peace and purpose in their daily lives.

Please help prime ministers and presidents, parliaments and local councils, the UN Security Council and UNESCO, to find the way to achieve what is best without fear or favour.

Please help leaders in commerce and industry, and union secretaries and shop stewards, to look beyond short-term victories to the long term wellbeing of all.

Please help the social welfare outreach of the church, its social justice ministries, and its ventures in evangelism, that we may be more ready to serve than be served.

Please help us where it is appropriate to our skills and opportunities, to implement some of these prayers with sensitivity, integrity and quiet determination.

Through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen!

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, holy be your name

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen

Joy to the world

Isaac Watts

Joy to the world, the Lord has come

Let earth receive her King

Let every heart prepare Him room

And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing

And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns

Let men their songs employ

While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains

Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy

Repeat, repeat the sounding joy

He rules the world with truth and grace

And makes the nations prove

The glories of His righteousness

And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love

And wonders, wonders of His love

Benediction and Grace

As we go on from here may we confront our fears and share everything we have received so the Other can meet Jesus in us...

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God,
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.

BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS: WAITAKI PRESBYTERIAN PARISH 02-0940-0018657-00