

Creationist 2.0

Creating Makes Space

08 October 2023

Call to Worship – Psalm 19

The heavens are telling the glory of God;

And the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech,

And night to night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words;

Their voice is not heard;

Yet their voice goes out through all the earth,

And their words to the end of the world.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,

O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

Come, now is the time

Brian Doerksen

Come, now is the time to worship

Come, now is the time to give your heart

Come, just as you are to worship

Come, just as you are before your God, Come

One day every tongue will confess You are God

One day every knee will bow

Still the greatest treasure remains for those

Who gladly choose you now

Lord, I lift your name

Rick Founds

Lord I lift your name on high

Lord I love to sing your praises

I'm so glad you're in my life

I'm so glad you came to save us

You came from heaven to earth to show the way

From the earth to the cross my debt to pay

From the cross to the grave

From the grave to the sky

Lord I lift your name on high

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Dear God, in this time of quiet
Help me feel the stillness
This hiding place
This veiled space away from prying eyes
Where I sit in your presence
Surrounded
Alone
Me
You

Pausing to listen
For the sound of your gentle whisper

Help me feel the stillness
This hiding place
Where you see me
In all my glory and failings
The real me
Stripped of my pretence

Waiting in silence
For your touch

Help me feel the stillness
This hiding place
Where I am Me and you are You
And we are We

(Silence)

All fall short of the glory of God. As we go about our lives, that glory is diminished but not absent. In making our confession, let us remove the dull sheen of what is wrong and allow the glory to shine through God's grace. Let us pray, first in silence.

Loving and gracious God, you are so patient with us.

We run away, and you seek us.

We make foolish choices, and you teach us the better way.

We hurt you and others, and instead of hurting us back, you forgive us.

Help us, we pray; help us reveal your glory and goodness in our living,

That we will bear the imprint of Christ throughout the world. Amen.

The Peace

Notices

When I survey

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?

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.

Reading [Matthew 19:16-26](#)

¹⁶ Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" ¹⁷ And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸ He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹ Honour your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbour as yourself." ²⁰ The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?" ²¹ Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²² When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter

the kingdom of God.”²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, “Then who can be saved?”²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”

Reflection

Who then can be saved?

It’s a curious question in a way. Saved from what, exactly? Saved to what? Does the young man need to be saved from his possessions? Is poverty the answer to getting into heaven? What exactly is heaven that one would wish to enter?

Let me begin by suggesting, perhaps at some risk, that we Christians tend to be a rather narrow-minded bunch. I don’t think that is necessarily true of us as individuals, but put us together in one room and it can feel as if what we believe squashes down to a handful of carefully curated rules. Should anyone have the audacity to step outside the rules they will be firmly dealt with. It would be tempting to put that down to the necessity of keeping our community in good order. I think it is more than that. I think that when we gather together we tend to encourage each other into a small, manageable space, with a little bit of the smallest common denominator guiding our efforts. Some might argue we are caring for those with the smallest faith by doing this. I don’t think that is the case. I think that in reducing the perimeter, removing the unexpected and lowering the expectations we are protecting ourselves. We are making a safe space for ourselves.

There’s a problem with that. The problem is that it pushes away everyone who doesn’t fit our expectations. A couple of humorous yet valid examples. Men do it when they get round for a drink and one of their number orders ginger beer. And women do it when they get in the kitchen and someone comes along who isn’t one of the team. We all do it in various ways. We push people away, intentionally, or unintentionally because they are different or do different things. Our safe space excludes difference.

So, who then can be saved? Is it only those who fit in our safe space? Is it only those who follow our particular set of rules and regulations? Those who do the things that we like and suit our purposes? I don’t think so.

Here is where my theme comes into its own. Creating makes space. We are created by God to create. That creating is not for the purpose of making us feel comfortable, although it may contribute to some comfort. The creating is not for the purpose of setting boundaries and making rules, although we all benefit from some boundaries as some points.

Our creating leads us to open up possibilities, enlarge our space, include the other, to make space. This creating makes space for the different, the challenging, the diverse, the uncommon.

Here is something to ponder. This creating is impossible for mortals. It relies on the God for whom all things are possible. None of our creating can get us into the kingdom of God. None of our rules and regulations, no matter how good or bad they are will enable us to enter the kingdom of heaven. We can drink the beer and fit right into the kitchen and we may never enter the kingdom of heaven. We can pray the right prayers and sing the right songs and attend the right meetings and still not enter the kingdom of heaven. Only God can make that happen.

Keeping that in mind, here are a few thoughts that occur to me.

When we create space it comes in different forms. There is the space we make for things we quite like but wouldn't want all the time. For example the dances that Cornerstone have shared with us over the last year. Yes, I know some would love to have them every week. Others prefer it to be infrequent. We make space because it makes us feel good. That's one kind of space.

Another kind of space is for things we grudgingly put up with. A personal example for me is Christmas carols. I make space because I know they are special to people. I don't much enjoy them but I do like that others enjoy them, so I make space. To be honest, it's nothing to boast about. Perhaps even something to be a little embarrassed about.

There is a third kind of space that I suspect we don't give much thought to. That is space for things that are utterly unlike us, that are alien to us. Some of these things we have never even considered. Some of them make us cringe inwardly. Imagine a faith group that meets randomly, rarely the same people, rarely the same place. They never sing songs. They have a beer over their meal and talk God stuff in the same breath as they discuss their work or their family. There is no organisation to this grouping. They don't plan events or run fairs or organise retreats. There is no clear order to what they do or how they do it. But somehow they connect with God and with each other. Relationship matters to them. I suspect many of us would be profoundly uncomfortable with this approach to the journey of faith. What about not neglecting to meet together? How do they look after the sick? How does mission happen? Who determines if they are right or wrong in their doctrine? That's just one imaginary possibility. I am sure there are many others that I may never get my head around.

And here is the question I leave you with. What if, by creating space, we give permission for God to make the impossible possible and the impossible becomes real and living and a wonderful testament to the glory of God?

We Pray

God of Elijah, who set aside 7000 even as Elijah thought he was the only one left. Who made space for faith in places no-one could imagine. Who makes the impossible possible. God of us, who invites us into a place of creativity and gives us permission to make space for the other, the different, the uncommon. Grant us eyes to see and ears to hear what your Spirit is saying to us. Gift us grace to make space for the unknown and unexpected. Teach us to find joy in seeing you at work among us in diverse and challenging ways. Through Jesus, who invites us to imagine the impossible, we pray. Amen.

Shout to the Lord

Darlene Zschech

My Jesus, my Saviour,
Lord, there is none like You;
All of my days, I want to praise
The wonders of Your mighty love.

My comfort, my shelter,
Tower of refuge and strength;
Let every breath, all that I am
Never cease to worship You.

Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing
Power and majesty, praise to the King
Mountains bow down and the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name.

I sing for joy at the work of Your hands,
Forever I'll love You, forever I'll stand,
Nothing compares to the promise I have in You.

Offering

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

Generous and giving God, you have offered us a deep and soul-satisfying relationship with you, one that extends far beyond our earthly journey; and too many of us have opted for a “faith-lite” experience. One day a week or a couple of times a month has been a better fit. We have rejected what you so

generously offer us, even as we dwell in and are sustained by your vineyard. As we offer our gifts this day, may we better receive the relationship you offer us and may we walk more closely. In Christ's holy name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer for Others and Ourselves

For the many and varied peoples who live on this world, those who know you and those who do not, we pray.

Make your ways known upon earth, O God,
your saving power among all peoples.

For the people who seek to serve you as Lord and Saviour, who stumble and fall then get up and try again, we pray.

Renew your Church in holiness,
and help us to serve you with joy.

For the men and women who endeavour to lead nations, elected and unelected, powerful and weak, good and less good, we pray.

Guide the leaders of this and every nation,
that justice may prevail throughout the world.

For those who struggle with finding the basics of life – food, water, shelter, warmth, relationship, we pray.

Let not the needy, O God, be forgotten,
nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

For ourselves as we wrestle with the consuming business of life, searching for ways to bring peace in this broken world, we pray.

Make us instruments of your peace,
and let your glory be over all the earth.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven holy be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is 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

Will you come and follow me

Graham Maule, John I. Bell

Will you come and follow me

If I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know

And never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown,

Will you let my name be known,

Will you let my life be grown

In you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind

If I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind

And never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare

Should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer

In you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see

If I but call your name?

Will you set the prisoners free

And never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean,

And do such as this unseen,

And admit to what I mean

In you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide

If I but call your name?

Will you quell the fear inside

And never be the same?

Will you use the faith you've found

To reshape the world around,

Through my sight and touch and sound

In you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
When you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
And never be the same.
In your company I'll go
Where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
In you and you in me.

Benediction and Grace

As we go on from here may we make space for the God of the impossible to bring hope to our world...

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.

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