

Henley-in-Arden Baptist Church  
“Staying Connected” September 2020

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*Staying connected to God and each other while not meeting as church in the normal way*

This is effectively a bumper edition – material to keep you going through September.

We will be looking at selected Psalms; and then at the back is a ‘bank’ of prayers you may wish to use.

Firstly, we begin with a bonus Psalm to start us off. We looked at this one when we started lock-down together, back in March!

Psalm 46

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.  
<sup>2</sup> Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
<sup>3</sup> though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.  
<sup>4</sup> There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.  
<sup>5</sup> God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.  
<sup>6</sup> Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.  
<sup>7</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

<sup>8</sup> Come and see what the LORD has done,  
the desolations he has brought on the earth.  
<sup>9</sup> He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.  
<sup>10</sup> He says, ‘Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth.’  
<sup>11</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September

Psalm 16

<sup>1</sup> Keep me safe, my God,  
for in you I take refuge.  
<sup>2</sup> I say to the LORD, ‘You are my Lord;  
apart from you I have no good thing.’  
<sup>3</sup> I say of the holy people who are in the land,  
‘They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.’  
<sup>4</sup> Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.  
I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods  
or take up their names on my lips.  
<sup>5</sup> LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;  
you make my lot secure.  
<sup>6</sup> The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
surely I have a delightful inheritance.  
<sup>7</sup> I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;  
even at night my heart instructs me.

<sup>8</sup> I keep my eyes always on the LORD.

With him at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
my body also will rest secure,

<sup>10</sup> because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,  
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

<sup>11</sup> You make known to me the path of life;  
you will fill me with joy in your presence,  
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

This speaks of the security we have in God. What an assurance that is. Particularly when we feel a little vulnerable, perhaps, it is good to know that God is **always** there for us, and we can rest in that knowledge of His unfailing love and care. No-one or nothing else compares (v2)

The writer – probably David – was possibly stretching it a bit to say he always keeps his eyes on the Lord (v8) – perhaps he was expressing something of an aspiration, and that is no bad thing. He was aware of his blessings “The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.” (v6)

The last few verses here are quoted in the NT and speak of Christ: as always, fulfilling the great promises of God.

“Lord, we take refuge in You; and You keep us safe. Thank you, Lord! We praise You!”

*Quietly read through the Psalm again, meditating on the rich content, verse by verse.*

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September

Psalm 42

<sup>1</sup> As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.

<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When can I go and meet with God?

<sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food  
day and night,  
while people say to me all day long,  
‘Where is your God?’

<sup>4</sup> These things I remember  
as I pour out my soul:  
how I used to go to the house of God  
under the protection of the Mighty One  
with shouts of joy and praise  
among the festive throng.

<sup>5</sup> Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Saviour and my God.

<sup>6</sup> My soul is downcast within me;  
therefore I will remember you  
from the land of the Jordan,  
the heights of Hermon – from Mount Mizar.

<sup>7</sup> Deep calls to deep  
in the roar of your waterfalls;  
all your waves and breakers  
have swept over me.

<sup>8</sup> By day the LORD directs his love,  
at night his song is with me –  
a prayer to the God of my life.  
<sup>9</sup> I say to God my Rock,  
‘Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I go about mourning,  
oppressed by the enemy?’  
<sup>10</sup> My bones suffer mortal agony  
as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long,  
‘Where is your God?’  
<sup>11</sup> Why, my soul, are you downcast?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God,  
for I will yet praise him,  
my Saviour and my God.

There is an element of distress and lament in this Psalm, as the writer pours their heart out to God.

There are various things to note:

1. It is an honest expression (there is no need to hide our feelings from God – in fact quite the opposite, He invites us to be real with Him)
2. The Psalmist knows where to turn “My soul thirsts for God..” (v2)
3. There is a note of hope within the Psalm, even in the midst of the suffering (v11b)

I think it is great that there is a rich diversity of Psalms in our Bible. A gift to us; and a reminder perhaps that God is involved with through the whole of our experience.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September

Psalm 93

<sup>1</sup> The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty;  
the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength;  
indeed, the world is established, firm and secure.  
<sup>2</sup> Your throne was established long ago;  
you are from all eternity.  
<sup>3</sup> The seas have lifted up, LORD,  
the seas have lifted up their voice;  
the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.  
<sup>4</sup> Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,  
mightier than the breakers of the sea –  
the LORD on high is mighty.  
<sup>5</sup> Your statutes, LORD, stand firm;  
holiness adorns your house  
for endless days.

The Lord is King! And He reigns over the chaos, the storms of life, the Covid pandemic...

It is good to regularly reaffirm the kingship of God.

He is mighty, He is holy. We worship Him in reverence and praise!

He is sovereign over the whole world, and reigns from His eternal throne. (vv2, 5)

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September

Psalm 121

<sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the mountains –  
    where does my help come from?  
<sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD,  
    the Maker of heaven and earth.  
<sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot slip –  
    he who watches over you will not slumber;  
<sup>4</sup> indeed, he who watches over Israel  
    will neither slumber nor sleep.  
<sup>5</sup> The LORD watches over you –  
    the LORD is your shade at your right hand;  
<sup>6</sup> the sun will not harm you by day,  
    nor the moon by night.  
<sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all harm –  
    he will watch over your life;  
<sup>8</sup> the LORD will watch over your coming and going  
    both now and for evermore.

A prayer of quiet confidence in God's help and protection.

As we look into the unknown circumstances of our lives, we need not be anxious. We may feel threatened or uncertain in some way – I'm sure we all do from time to time. There are always difficulties and challenges of one kind or another. But God **will** watch over us and keep us safe, declares the Psalmist.

It may be little things that trouble us, or big things. But we needn't be unnerved. The Lord **is** on our side and will "watch over our coming and going." (v8)

*Read the Psalm again, slowly, asking God to build Your faith and trust in His care for you at all times. (No need to wake Him up! (vv3-4))*

*And then turn your reflections into a prayer of thanks....*

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And a bonus one to end with – the last one in the book of Psalms:

Psalm 150

<sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD.  
Praise God in his sanctuary;  
    praise him in his mighty heavens.  
<sup>2</sup> Praise him for his acts of power;  
    praise him for his surpassing greatness.  
<sup>3</sup> Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,  
    praise him with the harp and lyre,  
<sup>4</sup> praise him with tambourine and dancing,  
    praise him with the strings and pipe,  
<sup>5</sup> praise him with the clash of cymbals,  
    praise him with resounding cymbals.  
<sup>6</sup> Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.  
Praise the LORD.

Lord God, our heavenly Father,  
We praise and worship you; and as we do so, inspire us to bring our prayers for others. Hear the prayers of our heart, which we bring in Jesus' name...

*We pray the world....*

We thank You for all that is good in the world, the tremendous blessings and gifts that we share. And yet we know there is much suffering too. Lord, we pray for families struggling with health, or economically. Lord, bring healing, consolation and peace, we pray. And may there be a way forward through the difficulties

We pray for people in fear of their lives through war or persecution. You are a God of rescue: bring Your help we pray. And may there be a work in the hearts and minds of those who would do evil – by the grace and power of your Son, Jesus, we pray

We pray for.....  
.....

*We pray for the church....*

Lord, we pray that You would keep us close to You through these unusual times. Be with church leaders as they seek to navigate ways of being church during these times of restriction; and we pray for peace and unity in the church.

We pray for Henley Baptist Church, that you would be close during this season in the life of the church. We ask for Your help, and Your blessing. Thank You that You are faithful, and we can trust You for good.

We pray for.....  
.....

*We pray for our family and friends....*

Lord, we thank You for our family and friends, and ask for Your blessing on them. We pray for hopes and dreams for the future; Lord inspire and energise us into Your ways...

We pray for those who are struggling with difficult circumstances: for the bereaved, those who are unwell, those who are lonely, those who are fearful of the future...

We pray for.....  
.....

*We pray for ourselves....*

Lord, You are aware of our needs more than we are ourselves. We come to You as we are; and ask that You would help us in our own situations day by day.

We pray, Lord, for Your Holy Spirit to fill us anew. Help us to receive all You would have for us; and give out to others as You enable. Thank You of the love we have in You.

We pray for.....  
.....

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed 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.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.*

*For any Beatles fans, I came across this:*

This is how an iconic album cover may have looked had it been in today's times rather than 1970 when 'social distancing' wasn't a thing!

*= a bit of fun (and not a face covering in sight!)*



For those not online, especially:

Worship services on radio and TV include:

- Radio 4 8:10am Sunday Worship
- BBC1 12:25pm Songs of Praise (check the time)

And finally, as Kay and I move on, we will have endeavoured to say good-bye to each of you in some way. Please forgive us where this has not been possible. We have had a tremendous three years with you, and I am so grateful for your love and support over three years of ministry formation. What a privilege it has been! We look forward to keeping in touch, and to seeing you again in the future one way or another. We are confident that the church will enjoy some great ministry in the years to come; and trust that God will keep you close to Him at all times.

May God bless you with His peace.

With our love, Mike and Kay

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