



We take a breath and come intentionally into God's presence

The Lord be with you: **And also with you.**

Holy Spirit draw us close and minister your grace to us. May our hearts and minds be open to all you have to say to us this day. **Amen**

Bible Reading Ephesians 1: 3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Reflection

I love these verses. This Ephesians scripture beautifully describes how God chose us before the foundation of the world to be God's adopted children. Yes to be holy and blameless but made this impossible task possible through Jesus' redemption of us and the Holy Spirit within us. We are forgiven and set free. Each time we are weighted down by our failings, we can be lifted back up with heads held high, ready to try again, to live out our divine calling. God willed our being and we read was pleased to do it. We were desired by God. We are God's, anointed with God's holy seal. This is personal and intimate.

Sometimes though, rather like my favourite hymn 'I cannot tell why he whom angels worship' (that Lucy kindly recorded for us today) I do find myself asking why?

Why would God look down through history see the pain and suffering we are to experience, the pain and hurt we are to cause each other and continue to want to will us into being?

With-out our over consumption, asset stripping, endangering of forest, fauna and animals, wouldn't paradise be more beautiful with-out us?

Knowing all this, not only does God still desire us to be, God goes on to make us 'a little lower than angels' (Psalm 8) in His-Her very own image. We are then entrusted with thinking creative minds, and purposefully invited to play a part in the world, to be holy, and then, in love we are given freedom to choose how we live out this gift of life. For good. Or for bad. For contributing and enriching the communities and the world in which we live, or for breaking it down and taking all we want without thought for our environment or one another.

Although God gives us the Holy Spirit, community rules (commandments) to be led by, Jesus' life to follow, prophets and sages in each age and our own prickling conscience. We still get to choose how best we should engage in the world and with one another.

We all have a personal and divine calling to play a holy and nurturing part in the world. We are called to let our divine nature burst out! WWJD (What would Jesus do?) may now be somewhat clichéd but it's not a bad motto to help us live by. As long as we remember how radical Jesus was!

Christians and non-Christians, male and female, black and white, gay and straight, rich and poor, able-bodied and less able-bodied, classical or country swinger, Harley rider or vesper driver... and any and all spectrums in between

God made us to participate in this life well and to enjoy the world and each other.

So care, challenge, enjoy God's blessings and be happy, it is what God intended!

Amen

Worship Music

For a smile: Don't worry be happy - from around the world

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWXUWepSak4>

I cannot tell why him whom angels worship – Lucy Gibson attached

Guide me oh thy great redeemer with lyrics:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=guide+me+oh+the+great+redeemer+lyrics

Prayers

This prayer is by St Thomas of Aquinas c. 1225:

Grant O merciful God, that I may ardently desire, carefully examine, truly know and perfectly fulfil those things that are pleasing to You and to the praise and glory of Your holy name.

Direct my life, O my God, and grant that I might know what you would have me to do and for me to fulfil it as is necessary and profitable to my soul.

Grant to me, O Lord my God, that I may not be found wanting in prosperity or in adversity and that I may not be lifted up by one nor cast down by the other.

May I find joy in nothing but what leads to You and sorrow in nothing but what leads away from You.

May I seek to please no one or fear to displease anyone, save only You.

Grant to me, O Lord God,

A vigilant heart that no subtle speculation may ever lead me from You;

A noble heart that no unworthy affection may draw me from You;

An upright heart that no evil purpose may turn me from you.

Give me a steadfast heart that no tribulation may shatter and a free heart that no violent affection may claim as its own.

And finally, grant me O Lord my God, a mind to know you, diligence to seek you, wisdom to find you.

Give me a way of life pleasing to You; perseverance to trust and await You in confidence that I shall embrace You at the last. **Amen.**

In this moment of stillness, we lift before God our prayers:

For the healing of the world...

For all who are unwell...

For all who face discrimination and injustice...

For those who are hungry...

For those who are struggling...

For those who have no one to pray for them...

For the recently departed and those who grieve...

For one another...

For all whom we love and care for... and the prayers and burdens we carry in our own hearts ...

Joining all our prayers together we confidently pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven;

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive them that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power,

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be with you and those whom you love always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve one another: **In the name of Christ Amen.**