

Order of Service

Unto You, O God, we lift up our eyes, O you who dwell in the heavens. Behold as the eyes of the servants look to the hands of their masters, and the eyes of the maidens look to their mistresses, so our eyes wait upon you O Lord, our God, until you have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us O Lord. Have mercy upon us.

Come to me all you who labour and are thus burdened and I will give you rest.

This is the day which the Lord has made: we will rejoice and be glad in it.

From Psalm 118:24, Matthew 11:28
and Psalm 123:1-3.

R599 An Invocation: Thou art Worthy.

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,
Thou art worthy O Lord
To receive glory, glory and honour,
Glory and honour and power.
For Thou hast created, hast all things created.
Thou hast created all things.
And for Thy pleasure they are created,
For Thou art worthy O Lord.

A Prayer as we give ourselves to worship:

Almighty God unto whom all hearts are open and all desires are known. You know our inner thoughts. You understand our weaknesses and limitations. We are bold and pleased to come before you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because He has paid the price of our transgressions. We have heard Him bid us come. He has bid us call you our father, even as He, as perfect man, called you His father. According to your loving kindness and in compliance with His command we most humbly, most thankfully obey.

Be pleased therefore to bless this hour of prayer, this hour of confession and this hour of remembrance to the furtherance of your purpose in us and our usefulness in your service we pray; in Jesus precious name and merit. Amen

The Hymn: Immortal, Invisible R15, B81.

1

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

2

Unresting, unchanging, and silent as light,
Not wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

3

To all life Thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish, but nought changeth Thee.

4

Great Father of Glory, pure Father of Light
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render, O help us to see:
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee.

5

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

Walter Smith 1824 - 1906

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Here are some recent comments from people on the internet about this hymn:

1.

Our God is really immortal my heart is over Joy when ever I sang it,
Ama Lartey, Accra, Ghana. Feb. 3rd 2021.

2.

This hymn will not stop coming into my mind. I sing it every day before going to bed. Our God
JEHOVAH ALMIGHTY is indeed immortal, invisible and the only wise GOD. GLORY TO HIS
NAME. JAN

28 January, 2021. Sandra Simply, Lagos, Nigeria.

3.
As I woke this morning fighting covid-19.
Thanking God for his healing and peoples.
That song was just right there in heart with 1
Chronicles 16:34, for a perfect healing.
Abiodun Adams, 15th January, 2021 ,
Columbia, Maryland, United States.

4.
To all life Thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all; We
blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish, but nought changeth
Thee.

I read this verse and I said to myself. Who am
I?... People die everyday but he chose to
preserve me. Almighty God, I bow to you.
26th January 2020. Emeka Nkpor, Anambra,
Nigeria

There are pages of these testimonies on
hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/14. This is just some
of what
your missionary prayer and dollar is doing.

Some announcements.

1. This morning's service is a
Communion Service. If you have not come
prepared, please break off and do that now.
If you do not have 'the right materials' to
hand, simply use whatever you have
available. It is the memory and the
thankfulness that is important.

2. We are given to expect that this lock-
down is from Saturday to Wednesday
inclusive.

Therefore the Tuesday Evening Missionary
Prayer notes will D.V. be emailed to you. If
that changes we will be in touch.

3. There is a Church Quarterly Business
Meeting set for the last Sunday 28th after
Church. Please advise the Secretary of any
items of business you feel are important in
good time for inclusion.

We shall sing Isaac Watts well known hymn to
lead us to our Communion memorial.

When I survey the wondrous Cross. B154.
R82.

1
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.

2
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 through his blood.

3
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?
In the Public Domain

Read of the committal to crucifixion, the
deed, the response of the crowd and the
treachery of the authorities, both Roman and
Jewish as we remember that Jesus, God made
flesh came to die our death that we may live
with Him eternally.

Matthew 27:24 - 56.

Take the bread in your hand and offer your
thanks for His body broken for you.
Now partake of the bread.
Take the cup in your hand and offer your
thanks for His cleansing blood.
Now partake of the cup.

The fourth verse of the communion hymn
leads us into our prayer for one another.

4
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all

Shall we pray:

As we come before you, Our Heavenly Father,
we are conscious that we come at the expense,
and on the merit of your only Son, our Savior.
All we can do to please you is to accept so

great a gift. This we affirm. We offer our thanks and cast our selves wholly and gratefully upon your mercy.

We pray dear Lord for one another. We remember first of all Wendy, and with her Darrell. We dare to pray for healing for Wendy. We ask of you your mercy for her. Restore them both over this couple of weeks they have taken aside, we pray.

We remember all of our people and dare to pray for them by name and as we do we remember that they also are part of families and that those families also have needs.

We remember Joan, Janette and John, Arthur and Jeanette, Helen and Mary, Laurie and Valmai and David and the family, Coralie and Family, Ann and Family. For our ladies in care, Georgina, Rae, June and Muriel. For Chris, Doreen, Eirene and Philip.

We remember our missionaries, people for whom we pray in our Tuesday group and our Green Leaf listing, and the work they do. We pray for those impacted by the Covid plague and all the restrictions caused by it. We pray for our responsibility to make Jesus known, individually and as a group, and we are aware that our Good Friday in the park will be curtailed again this year. Lord please undertake in our restrictions and deficiencies.

We pray for our governments, for our prime minister and premier. We pray against the humanist scourge in high places remembering that Jesus Christ is King and it is important that we stand up for right against the trends that rob people of their ability to rear their children, and the freedom to serve the Lord. Help us to stand true.

[Please add the needs and issues of your own and your family right here]

Now we pray as Jesus taught His disciples to 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 those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever - Amen.

Message

LM

This message is in two parts. The first commences below and was presented "live" in January. Commence near the top of page Seven, the second column, if you want just the second part.

Reading from Matthew 24:1_14

Jesus left the temple and was walking away when His disciples came to Him to call His attention to its buildings. "Do you see all these things?" He asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left upon another. Every one will be thrown down." As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives the disciples came to Him privately. "Tell us" they said, "When will this happen? What will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?" (4) Jesus answered, "Watch out that no one deceives you for many will come in My Name claiming 'I am the Christ' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumours of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen but the end is still to come. Nation will arise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. (9) Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of Me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. This gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the

whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come.”

Are these days almost upon us? How far should we take the parallels between what was happening in Israel around 2800 years ago, and what is happening now as we as a nation are rejecting any influence by the standards set by Almighty God in how we manage our lives. Laws enabling behaviour which is condemned in our Bibles have been around for some time but are now being passed with increasing frequency. And Restrictions on Christians: Not being allowed to pray for somebody when they request it. A year ago who would have dreamed of such a law coming into force in this fair country.

God's chosen people, the Israelites also turned their backs on God. Let's take a look at God's Rules: Exodus 20.

First, the Preamble: Who is initiating this treaty. verse 1 “I AM the Lord your God, Who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.”

Then the Conditions.

Condition One: v. 3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.” Are we any different to ancient Israel in this? “Every man did what was right in his own eyes” is certainly something which happened in the garden of Eden, in ancient Israel, and is happening now. Are we guilty too? I think I will have to put up my hand on that one. How can we best avoid it? My suggestion is to make sure that we know our Bibles well enough that what we judge as right is well informed by what God has plainly told us in His Word.

Can we ever completely comply? Not until the words of that Hymn “May the mind of Christ our Saviour live in me from day to day by His love and power controlling all I do and say” come true for us.

Condition Two: v. 4 “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of any thing in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them for I, the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of their fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.” Are we any different to ancient Israel in this? They did make their Asherar, Baals and lots of others which most people today have not even heard of and bowed down to them and offered sacrifices to them, but what have we done with the likes of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Elizabeth Taylor, the Beatles, or for others it might be Beethoven or Bach etc. (I think I have to put my hand up again.) Or we may be enamoured with Billie Graham or some early or recent Belgrave or other convention speaker. It could even be some Biblical character we admire, such as Daniel, Joseph, Elijah, Elisha, Barnabus..... Let's be careful what position we elevate these people to in our lives. I believe that we are doing the same when we elevate “Mother Nature” or “evolution” to the position belonging to the Creator, The Maker of Heaven and Earth. As we learn more of the wonders of the inner workings of living things which He has designed and brought into being we are meant to give to Him the Praise.

Nothing has made itself except as He has first made the living things able to replicate themselves. How much time do we give to hearing these or reading of them when we ought to be “meditating upon His Word by day and by night”.

Can we ever completely comply? Not until we can comply with what the Psalmist suggests, (Ps.37:4) “Delight yourself in The Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” Does that mean that if I delight in God that he will give me more Vivaldi music (or whatever it is that we are now giving a high place to)? I do not think so. He would give us a greater knowledge and closer relationship to Himself after we have shown that is what we desire. I think we would find our desires changing. Isaiah puts it “Then you will find your joy in The Lord....” (Isa.58:14)

Condition Three. v. 7 “You shall not misuse the Name of the Lord your God for The Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His Name.” For ancient Israel the misuse might be by the false prophets speaking in His Name when God has not spoken to them, or by using That Name in an oath. Today it is more likely to be an expletive or an exclamation. (When I hear someone using that OMG expression I am tempted to ask “Which God are you talking about?” What do you think? Should I?) Probably better to just follow the example of Jesus, “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.”

Condition Four: v. 8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all of your work, but the

seventh is a Sabbath to The Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the foreigner who is within your gates. For in six days The Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” No exceptions are spelled out here. That there are some things which must go on is apparent from Luke 14:5 where Jesus asks, “If one of you has a son, or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day will you not immediately pull him out?” And Jesus healed the sick man. He did not make him wait. There are other examples where we do not take this condition literally. A mother does not neglect to care for her child for a single day. As a farmer’s son, I know that the cows must be milked every day. But the principle remains. Man, and other creatures, need rest, and not just whatever we allow ourselves each night. We need a break. Yes, some people need the break more than others but without adequate rest we can wear ourselves out. Likely all of us know of at least one person who has suffered “burnout” and simply become incapable of continuing effectively. Jesus said that “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” Mark 2:27

Did God need to rest? I doubt it. Did He pause to enjoy what (and who) He had made? Why not? And this break gives us time to pause from our daily routines and enjoy fellowship with Him. In ancient Israel this rest day was either not being observed or in other cases grudgingly observed.

Increasingly, we are allowing this time to be eroded. I remember that my auntie used to go to Church on the Sunday morning, have a simple meal and then sit for the remainder of the day, usually with her Bible (AV of course) and a Hymn book on her lap. No other activity was approved. My parents also rested all afternoon until it was time to get going and milk those cows again. We were a little legalistic about it! I can remember one Summer when the harvesting was in full swing that we worked one particular Saturday up to 11:55 PM. came home to clean ourselves up for Sunday (very necessary) and were back on the job at about 00:30 AM on the Monday morning. We had rested most of that Sunday afternoon.

After I left home I used to reserve the Sunday morning, but the afternoon was usually spent exploring the rocky cliffs and beaches mostly between Queenscliff and Lorne. It would be a relaxing time. Sometimes I would sit and read for an hour or so but not all afternoon. No strenuous activities on the Sunday. While we were in Papua New Guinea, the main change was that Sunday afternoon was the time to be with our children, playing with them and enjoying them. And as they grew, the activities grew more strenuous. Recently, I have often been trying to complete on a Sunday afternoon some of the projects that we always find need doing and have realised that I need to push back before Sunday becomes the same as any other day. Do you have similar memories and experiences?

Condition Five: v. 12 “Honour your father and your mother so that you may live long in

the land the Lord your God is giving you.” I do not know of many instances mentioned in the Bible of children dishonouring their parents but there are a couple of glaring examples where the sons of kings rebelled and attempted to take the kingship from their fathers. What is our situation today? For at least fifty years much of what has passed for entertainment has portrayed men as incompetent beings who are unable to make sensible decisions. At first, it was the women who were portrayed as being sensible. Later, in films such as “E.T.” they too were portrayed along with practically anybody who had any position of authority in government as being fools incapable of logical thought while the children were the only sensible ones around. And of course the children were proved right in the end.

Increasingly, legislation which claims to address the very real concerns for the few cases where parents really do abuse their children, is blocking what I would regard as both normal and necessary affirming in the truth, and disciplinary processes. The children are the new rulers. Under new laws to come into force shortly, they must always be “affirmed” even if that affirmation results in their bodies being mutilated. Normally, doctors are compelled by law to warn their patients of possible negative outcomes to any planned treatments even when those negative outcomes are very unlikely. But nobody is allowed to do that when considering possible sex reassignment therapies for children. I wonder at what age of patient the law flips?

The rules are not in our control, but our conduct is. Are we prepared to be ‘Daniels’?

Condition Six. v. 13 “You shall not murder.” Not much argument there; provided that is, that we define human life as not commencing until shortly after birth, and finishing before the patient or maybe their relations feels that it is time for them to go. I do not agree with either of those. Regarding the comparisons with the practices in ancient Israel, how much different is it to take a newborn baby and throw it onto a red-hot surface as an offering to Baal, or to use a high vacuum to dismember the living fetus because we are determined to maintain our chosen lifestyle? Then at the other end of life, most societies have looked after their older relations and frequently other people as well, as well as they could. And we still do that in many cases. But increasingly our ageing folk are reliant on care from people outside their families. There are many and varied reasons for that. I well remember the struggle it was for me when my own mother’s dementia was becoming more severe and we still had three school-age children with us. We ended up deciding that for the sake of these children we had to leave her confined in the locked-in section of the local aged care facility. It was not the dementia which decided me. It was other behaviour associated with her reducing comprehending capability. I have to admit that, although we visited her frequently while we were able, her quality of life, according to our feeble perceptions, was not good through those last four years of her life.

There is an important difference between ‘pulling the plug’ on a machine which is prolonging life past when the end would have come without that machine and the increasingly accepted practice of deliberately

administering drugs to terminate a life early.

Bills facilitating assisted suicide are passing through our parliaments.

To ponder: what does it mean to be “made in the image of God”? And does it make any difference?

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Part 2

Condition Seven. v. 14 “You shall not commit adultery.”

The standard that Jesus set on that one is high. Matthew.5:27, 28 “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery’ but I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Job, the man who “spoke about God what is right”, “Made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.” Job 31:1, Job 42:7. Marriage is a relationship which is special in the sight of The Lord. The pinnacle of human relationships. Not to be messed with. A partnership decision which must not be taken lightly. One, or both parties suffer when it is. Example: I was told of a certain young man who was married to a very pretty woman. They had several children but he did not seem to spend much time with them. Came home from work, had a meal, and promptly went off to the hotel to be with his male friends for the evening. Often the last to leave, he was asked about this. Why did he marry *that* girl if he did not appear to want to spend much time with her? His response was flippant. Somebody bet me I could not get that pretty girl to marry me but I won that bet.

What a sad situation for that woman, and for the children too.

Contrast that story with one I read of from

another culture, one in which the man customarily “bought” himself a wife. This particular girl was regarded as being not of much worth, just two cows, and it showed. Then one day along came a wealthy man who offered the father five cows. The offer was quickly accepted.

The story was told by another man who later visited his wealthy friend and, looking at the woman, commented that she did not appear to him to be a two-cow woman at all. The husband just smiled and replied “What woman wants to be known as a two-cow woman? I offered five, and I have got five.”

There are some instructions recorded in Leviticus Chapter 24 which are of interest.

Verse 1 “If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he has found something indecent about her and he writes her a certificate of divorce and sends her from his house and after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man and the second husband dislikes her, writes her a bill of divorce and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband who divorced her is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of The Lord. Do not bring sin upon the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance. “

Do I need to read it again, maybe two or three times to figure what message we are to take from this? Is it just pointing out that the marriage relationship is a very special relationship and needs to be taken more seriously than any other human relationship?

When I asked my son, Joshua about this passage he commented that in the

surrounding area around this time a man could marry, divorce, and later take back the woman even if she has married another in the meantime and was still married to him. The provision referred to in Deuteronomy gave the woman a degree of protection by ending the power of the first husband over her when he divorced her. It would also be reassuring to the second husband I should think.

If we read on, in the next verse of Leviticus we read of a government support package that was not available for any other situation.

Verse 5. “If a man has recently married he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.” It is important to take time to build the new relationship properly. This one needs to stand firm over many years. I suggest it is the backbone to civilisation.

Condition Eight. v. 15 “You shall not steal.”

Fairly self-evident mostly, but I believe that we need to be very careful with this one. It is too easy to do it without realising it. Do we pride ourselves on never taking something physically but spend a little long over morning coffee? Or needing to look up something on internet and getting distracted by something else that looks interesting? It does not have to be something intrinsically bad and may even be something helpful but is the employer getting what they are paying you for?

Regarding physical things too, it is not always simple. We tend to see grey areas, but, God sees in black and white. (Or is it Red and White?) Where do **you** draw the line in the

examples below?

Some people seem to think it is somehow OK to steal from a big store. A friend of mine saw somebody in a large store peel a label off an inexpensive product, put it on an expensive one and walk off to the cashier? Although he was an employee of that store his reaction was that the customer was “smart”.

Or take a few small parts out of a boxed kit of parts and put the box back?

What if you take twelve of something to the cashier and after you are home you realise that there are only eleven on the receipt? When that did happen to me recently I went back, selected another one, and, when I reached the cashier told them what had happened and paid for two.

This also has happened to me: I took something from a box marked “Special \$5.00 each” to the cashier and found that according to the barcode that item was not on special. But the staff insisted I take it at the special price anyway when I showed where I had got it from. Most likely some other customer or perhaps a child had picked it up from one place and put it down in the other. They were very similar products but not the same. It happened a few years ago now. Now that I have had more time to think about it I believe that when the staff had insisted I pay only the special price I ought to have said “No thanks, I will put it back where it belongs.”

Condition Nine. v. 16 “You shall not witness falsely against your neighbour.” The way that Jesus defined “neighbour” in the story of the good Samaritan makes it very clear that this is not referring to just the folk next door. (That applies to Condition Ten as

well.)

Is it not also false witness if we do not speak up when somebody else makes false accusation against our neighbour?

Does it make any difference if it is in court or in gossip?

Condition Ten. v. 17 “You shall not covet your neighbour’s house. You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, not his manservant or maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or any thing which is your neighbour’s.” (I joke that this one is anti-trade. The whole object of the trader is to make you desire something that belongs to them so that they can sell it to you and earn their living.) The point however, is that we ought not to look at anything that another person may have and (to feed our own pride) consume our resources trying to appear to be able to gain at least as much goodies for ourselves. This leads to discontent with whatever God has provided for us because there will always be somebody who appears to be more wealthy than ourselves. Our focus, and our energies, will not be where they ought to be.

If we are content with what we have then there is no opportunity for temptation to steal. We are also more responsive to the needs of those around us as we recognise that we have more provision than they.

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Some Other Thoughts.

How much longer before our beloved Bible becomes a prohibited book? The attacks have been for some time restricted to denying the

authority of the Bible as anything more than a collection of ancient myths. Certainly not something to influence the way we live our lives from day to day. And if we try to teach our children that it is a guide to the way they should live, then we are guilty of child abuse and may have our children taken away from us and handed over to the care of people who will re-educate them to a very different standard.

Laws which would criminalise prayer for people who are struggling with an identity crisis have unanimously passed the lower house in Victoria and have now been passed by our senate.

Do we dare to be ‘Daniels’?

Pray for our leaders. They are pushed this way and that by many interest groups. Christians like ourselves have little input now, especially when there are prominent leaders in some large denominations who are publicly proclaiming opposing views. As the Hymnwriter expressed it, “By schisms torn asunder, by heresies distressed....” (Hymn: “The Churches One Foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord.”)

But we must build on the only true foundation_ Jesus Christ our Lord. What we add to that foundation will be judged. And so will we, by the One Who considers our motives as more important than what we achieve or think that we have achieved.

May HE give each of us the wisdom to discern and the courage to obey.

Back now to what Chris has prepared for us.

Concluding Hymn. Christ of the Upward Way.

1
Christ of the upward way, my Guide divine,
Where Thou hast set Thy feet, may I place mine;
And move and march wherever Thou hast trod,
Keeping face forward up the hill of God.

2
Give me the heart to hear Thy voice and will,
That without fault or fear I may fulfill
Your purpose with a glad and holy zest,
Like one who would not bring less than the best.

3
Christ of the upward way, my Guide divine,
Where Thou hast set Thy feet, may I place mine;
And when Your last call comes, serene and clear,
Calm may my answer be, “Lord, I am here.”

Walter John Mathams b.1853
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Benediction:

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD
make his face to shine upon you and be
gracious to you; the LORD lift up his
countenance upon you and give you peace.
Numbers 6:24