



AT HOME SERVICE
Sunday 19th January 2025
Epiphany 2

compiled by Alison Morgan - Local Preacher

In our worship today, let us remember that the love of God for his people and for his church knows no limits. God blesses us with the gifts of his Spirit so that his church, his people, might be a light to his glory. Father God, we bring our offering of worship.

Hymn

Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me,
mould me, fill me.
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.

Paul Armstrong

Let us pray

God whose love reaches to the highest heavens,
how can we keep silent?
God, whose righteousness stands like the tallest mountain,
how can we keep silent?
God, whose justice is deeper than any ocean,
how can we keep silent?
God, whose grace flows like a never-ending river,
how can we keep silent?

How can we not proclaim your majesty
from generation to generation?
How can we not raise the lamp of your salvation
for all the world to see?
God, whose love reaches to the highest heavens,
we lift up your mighty name!

We pray for confidence to share your word with others
and for the opportunity to proclaim it.
Forgive our reluctance, our timidity.

We pray for wisdom to know what should be said
and the moment in which to say it.
Forgive our reticence, our anxiety.

We pray for knowledge of the fullness of your grace
and the willingness to live it.
Forgive our ignorance, our self-reliance.

Be the centre of all we are, the light by which we walk,
the grace by which we talk, the blessing that we share.

For the gifts of your Spirit, present within us in knowledge, teaching, wisdom, healing,
In faith that's strong, in words and song, we thank you Lord.

Lord, for in your power lives are transformed, and made new.
For the gifts of your Spirit, present within us, we thank you Lord. Amen

Isaiah 62: 1-5

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch. The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

John 2: 1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now. Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Reflection

Who doesn't love a good wedding? A ceremony of two people being joined together in love. And then all the celebrations with friends and family.

In our passage from Isaiah the people of Israel have returned from exile. Rather than being happy and excited, they are feeling down and exhausted. They've run out of energy and not quite sure what to do next. They have just gone through a nasty separation with God, after committing adultery with multiple foreign Gods, and in deep sorrow, God finally sent his beloved bride into Exile, in the hope that the people of Zion, would realize the error of their ways and return to the love of God. But God says to his exiled wife that there

is hope for her future. He promises that the present situation is not the end of their story, and this is not the final journey. God will make them shine again.

God has promised to vindicate the Israelites. They are going to be God's beautiful crown, 'a royal diadem'. They will be held in God's hand and given a new name. No longer will they be called 'forsaken' and their land called desolate'. Instead, they are to be renamed; 'My Delight is in Her', and the land will be called 'Married'. God is renewing the covenant relationship with the people of Israel, telling them again that they are loved for ever.

The marriage of God and God's people is recalled with all that means faithfulness, commitment, one flesh and eternal love. Here is God's overwhelming generosity. The wedding image is about the celebration of the whole community over this relationship of love between God and the people.

That celebratory theme is carried through to the Gospel when John records another wedding, this time at Cana. It starts as an earthly, all-too-human event at which people overindulge so that the wine runs out, which is a huge embarrassment for the wedding host. But all is not lost because Jesus is on the guest list. Heaven and earth meet, and a miracle occurs. Plain ordinary water becomes the very best wine. God again is more than generous. Six hundred litres of wine are provided. (That's a lot of wine).

This is the first of Jesus' miracles and he isn't sure that it is the right time to reveal his hand: 'My hour has not yet come', he says to his mother. But Mary has faith in him and encourages him to act. The wedding is saved and transformed and God's generosity and glory, once more, is revealed.

When Paul writes to the Corinthians, he encourages them to proclaim Jesus as Lord, and when they do, he reminds them that it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that they recognize Jesus' kingship in their lives. The Holy Spirit is at work in anyone who recognizes that Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth. The Spirit gives a variety of gifts to God's people: wisdom and knowledge, faith, prophesy and prayer, healing and miraculous works. These and other gifts are given to us by God. All of us are gifted by the Spirit and called to use our gifts to build up one another to be Christ's witnesses in the world. We can feel confident to do this because the God who calls us loves us completely, is wedded to us and will never let us go whatever happens. Who doesn't love a good wedding?

Hymn

1] The splendour of the King,
clothed in majesty;
let all the earth rejoice,
let all the earth rejoice,
He wraps himself in light
and darkness tries to hide,
and trembles at his voice,
and trembles at his voice.

*How great is our God, sing with me,
how great is our God, and all will see
how great, how great is our God.*

2] And age to age he stands,
and time is in his hands:
beginning and the end,
beginning and the end.

The Godhead, Three in One,
Father, Spirit, Son,
the Lion and the Lamb,
the lion and the Lamb.

How great is our God, sing with me.....

Name above all names,
Worthy of all praise;
My heart will sing:
How great is our God.
Name above all names,
Worthy of all praise;
My heart will sing:
How great is our God.

How great is our God, sing with me....

Chris Tomlin (b. 1972), Jesse Reeves & Ed Cash (b. 1971)

Let us pray

I am using the words of Psalm 36 vs. 5-10

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extend to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the might mountains, your judgements are like the great deep.
You save humans and animals alike, O Lord.
How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.
O continue your steadfast love to those who know you, and your salvation to the upright of heart.
Amen

The Lord's Prayer

The Collect

Almighty God,
By whose grace alone we are accepted
and called to your service,
strengthen us by your Spirit,
and make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all,
evermore. Amen