



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 27th July 2025

compiled by Barbara Dalton – Local Preacher in training

Today we consider how we see God, not just with our eyes, but how we perceive and know his character, as revealed in Christ.

Opening prayer:

Lord, as we gather here today,
open our eyes,
so we can truly see you.
Open our ears,
so we can truly hear you.
Calm our busy hands,
so we don't miss a thing. **Amen**

Song: Be thou my vision

1] Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me save that thou art.
Thou my best thought by day and by night;
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

2] Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father, I thy dear child;
Thou in me dwelling, with thee reconciled.

3] Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
Be thou my dignity, thou my delight.
Thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower;
Raise thou me Heavenward, O Power of my power.

4] Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always.
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.

5] High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heavens Sun!
Heart of my heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Words from *The Poem Book of the Gael* selected
and edited by Eleanor Hull (1860-1935)

Colossians 1:15-28

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers - all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him - provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Verses 15-20 of this passage: 'In one of Paul's richest theological reflections on the coming of Jesus, he talks about the crucified Christ as the invisible God made visible. His point is even clearer if you read these verses backwards.' We will have a go at doing this:

²⁰ And through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,

¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.

¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

¹⁶ for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers - all things have been created through him and for him.

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation,

Prayer - based on Psalm 25

God of all the world, in you we trust for you are our Saviour.

Your faithfulness guides us, your humility inspires us,
your Spirit encourages us and your Word feeds us.

We praise you for all your blessings, all your gifts
and for those you have entrusted to us,
to bless, encourage and care for.

In Jesus' name. **Amen**

Reflection

Archbishop Michael Ramsey said, 'God is Christlike and in him is no un-Christlikeness at all.' We see that in Paul's words to the Colossians. Read forwards, they tell us how all the majesty and glory of God was somehow squeezed into Jesus. But read backwards, they show us that this is how God has always been, that it is in grace and condescension (that is, his willingness to communicate with humanity in a way we can understand) and his preparedness to suffer that Creation is held together and ultimately reconciled to him.

Have you ever seen the Northern Lights (aurora borealis) over the past year? We are currently near the peak of the 11-year solar cycle and high solar activity has meant that we have been seeing more Northern Lights, at least in the UK. Many people posted images on social media, capturing an incredible range of fluorescent colours. However, most people could not see them with the naked eye – a phone camera was required to make the seemingly invisible visible. Similarly, Paul tells us in the Colossians passage that it is in Jesus that God is made visible.

In the Colossians reading, Paul points out that it is in Jesus that we see the invisible God made visible. Can you imagine if the invisible God was suddenly present in your own front room? Would you be too busy and distracted

to notice? - we are so busy running around that we don't have time to sit and spend time with the important people in our lives. We can feel resentful of those who do seem to have time to sit and chat.

As with Abraham's visitors, so with Jesus – it is easy to miss the coming of God when he arrives in such an unexpected form. Paul tells his first hearers that true authority and power are not found in the pomp and might of Caesar, but in the humility and suffering of Jesus.

In verses 20a-19, Paul shows that reconciliation comes through self-giving, laying aside your interests to serve the needs of others. We see a pale reflection of this in people such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela; but we see it most gloriously in Jesus. Then verses 17-16 point to God making all things new. All through human history our suffering king has been holding creation together even as we try to tear it apart; his suffering is not limited to the cross! And now Jesus remakes this ruined world, creates harmony, peace, new life and reconciles cultures; he invites us to be part of it, paying our price of entry through the cross. So verse 15 tells us that if we want to see God, then we need to look not at Caesar in his pomp, but at Jesus on his cross. It is as we look at the crucified one that we see the world-making, world-reconciling God in all his glory.

As we embody the values of Jesus, we will encounter opposition but, if we respond with a servant heart, others may see the image of the true God (vv.25-26). And so Paul points to our hope (vv.28-29), which keeps us going because one day we will be perfect in a perfect world (v.28) – that is the glory we hope for.

Song: At the name of Jesus

1] At the name of Jesus
Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess him
King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.

2] Humbled for a season
To receive a name
From the lips of sinners,
Amongst whom he came.
Faithfully he bore it,
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious
When from death he passed.

3] In your hearts enthrone him!
There let him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true.
Crown him as your Captain,
In temptation's hour;
Let his will enfold you
In its light and pow'r.

4] Brothers, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again
With his Father's glory,
With his angel train,
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon his brow,
And our hearts confess him
King of glory now.

Caroline Maria Monk (1817-1877)

Prayers of Intercession

God of all:

we pray for places where neighbouring peoples and countries are at war,
asking that a just peace will overcome deep-seated fear and hatreds.

May we be faithful in prayer

for the Middle East where neighbours are driven by historic mistrust and deepening violence;

for decisions that improve lives across all the nations of the United Kingdom;

for dialogue leading to lasting peace between Russia and Ukraine;

for co-operation between nations on the biggest challenges facing us all in our world,

including climate change, asylum and migration.

We turn to you, O Lord.

Fill our hands with gifts to share.

God of all:

we pray for our relationships with our friends, our families and our colleagues at work
that we would show your love in daily acts of kindness.

May we be generous in our opinions of others.

May we break down barriers and see beyond narrow expectations of other people
and may we be prepared to go beyond the limits of our own patience and care,
trusting in the resources of your Holy Spirit.

We turn to you, O Lord.

Fill our hands with gifts to share.

God of all:

we pray for people who are suffering from sickness or distress of any kind;
for bereaved people, remembering

May we have the holy imagination to see the pain in our world
and be prepared to respond to it with whatever resources we have.

We pray today for people who work at the frontline of caring:
medical staff; first responders; social workers, teachers, parents;
and people whose life ministry is about binding up the wounds that life inflicts;
and we place into your hands the people we know
who are in need of your healing today.

We turn to you, O Lord.

Fill our hands with gifts to share.

The Lord's Prayer..... Our Father

Song: Alleluia Alleluia

*Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord;
alleluia, alleluia, give praise to his name.*

1] Jesus is Lord of all the earth,
he is the King of creation.

Alleluia, alleluia

2] Spread the good news all the earth,
Jesus has died and has risen.

Alleluia, alleluia

3] We have been crucified with Christ;
now we shall live for ever.

Alleluia, alleluia

4] God has proclaimed the just reward,
Life for all men, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia

5] Come let us praise the living God,
joyfully sing to our Saviour.

Alleluia, alleluia

Donald Fishel (b. 1950)

Closing prayer

Lord, life is busy.

Help us this week to take some time
to sit at your feet

and truly see and hear from you.

Be in our decision-making and in our thoughts. **Amen**

Songs published under CCLI No 558764