



Chet Valley Churches
Last Sunday Praise
25 October 2020



Welcome

Welcome to Last Sunday Praise. In this file you will find links to the songs we have chosen for our worship. Click on the links to take you to each song.

While we are now able to meet in church for worship, we are not allowed to sing – so for the time being Last Sunday Praise will remain in this format.

Introduction

Our theme for this service is 'Made in His Image'. How often do we say something like "You're so like your mother!" or "You do look like your dad"? In this service we're looking at the amazing fact that we are made in the image of God – and what that might mean for us on a day-to-day basis. So let's take some time to praise and worship God, starting with three songs of praise to Christ our Lord.

♪♪ *All the songs link to YouTube. Just click with your mouse on the link, which will take you to a song with on-screen words. You may have to skip a few YouTube adverts if we have chosen songs that are not currently on the Chet Valley Churches YouTube channel.*

♪♪ **God of mercy, God of grace**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nvn4OEq9ezU>

♪♪ **You're the Word of God the Father**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVpkR4gYTlg>

♪♪ **How great is our God**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDgmjFw6F64>

Pause for thought, and prayer...

The three songs we've just sung (or listened to) are songs of praise to our God. It's a thought too big for us to contemplate – God who is so great, who stands outside time and space, is fully aware of what it's like to be a human being. He made us, in whatever way this happened, in order that we should reflect his likeness. That can make us feel very small indeed, but it also goes the other way, and enables us to feel the awesome power of God in our lives.

The Collect is a special prayer written for each day. Perhaps you might read the prayer aloud, line by line, stopping to think about each line as you do so.

The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day

God, our light and our salvation:
illuminate our lives,
that we may see your goodness
in the land of the living,
and looking on your beauty
may be changed into the likeness
of Jesus Christ our Lord.

♪♪ Beautiful Saviour

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

♪♪ Meekness and Majesty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yW5NVGQI5LM>

♪ Lord I lift your Name on high

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSKlJvGlc2E>

Pause for thought, and prayer...

We praise God for all that he is, and all that he has done for us through Jesus. We acknowledge that we are imperfect and that as such we cannot fully reflect God's glory – after all, we're only human. And yet, God offers us total forgiveness when we turn to him, and the chance to deepen our faith and trust in him.

Perhaps you might like to ponder the following prayer.

A prayer for our lives

Heavenly Father,

Forgive us for the times when we are caught up in all the busyness of life and forget that you're there,

forgive us for the days when we find ourselves fitting you in to the odd moments that aren't taken up by other things,

forgive us for letting our minds wander when we worship.

Teach us each day how to live closer to you – to be the people you want us to be, and to do the things you want us to do.

♪ Amazing love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFL6rpUmwH0>

♪ All I once held dear

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxpPla-BskY>

Bible Reading

1 John 2 . 28 - 3 . 10

²⁸ And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. ²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

3 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, ^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸ The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. ⁹ No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. ¹⁰ This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

Talk

David Owen has written this reflection.

During the past few months Nina has been scanning and filing the multitude of photos that my mother used to have standing up in frames, in books and on shelves in her house. There are no end of them, and all the photos of significance are of the family. Some are old and faded, dating from many years ago, while some are very recent. Some, for some reason, had been put in the frames behind more recent photos! All, however, have a story to tell. The problem we have is that piecing together the story isn't easy. In some instances there are clues which are obvious - a notable location, a tell tale piece of furniture or toy, but on other occasions the story is much more difficult to decipher because (and here's the catch) the images are of family members, with a significant number taken when they were youngsters. More than once we've decided who is in the photo only to discover that we're a generation adrift. The similarity of features and smiles is quite unnerving. We too, Nina and I, are also noticing it. We had an image sent over the other day of our son and grand-daughter, and when we looked at it closely we realised that both had the same expression and attitude despite the 30+ years difference in their ages!

Yes we have family likenesses. We bear that likeness in our DNA.

So what is our spiritual DNA? And how will others know that we are related?

In a recent thought on this subject produced by Scripture Union, it was pointed out that lions and tigers may look cute and cuddly when they are cubs, but in time they will attack and kill without compunction. Their behaviour is a key indicator of their predatory nature. Of what sort of creature they are.

There's therefore another aspect to our family likeness besides the way we look. There is the way we behave and what motivates us.

Our behaviour is an indication of who we are and what we've learnt from those around us. I mentioned the similarity in my grandchild's smile and that of her father. I recall someone saying to me many years ago that they could tell that I was Eddie's son because of the way that I'd responded to a particular situation. We learn from our family, and in particular our parents, how to behave. So what about our spiritual family and behaviour?

As the writer of the letter of John tells us, we are God's children now and therefore are to be like him. Our behaviour needs to reflect that family relationship and our spiritual DNA therefore inclines us to do those things which God would want us to do. So what does that mean? At its basic level it is to love one another in a way which is uplifting and pure. It is to do what is right and honourable rather than to be self-seeking and vainglorious.

We are told that Jesus, the Son of God, was revealed to destroy the attributes in our lives which separate us from each other, so that we can emulate the attributes of God the Father and show them to the world around. Maybe now is the time to ask God to show each one of us how we can do this in our own situation, wherever that may be.

🎵 Do not be afraid

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2rO0LhSWJ0>

Time for prayer...

Let's take time to pray for:

- The people we live amongst – neighbours, friends or family, maybe including those we have not seen for some time
- Our church leaders who have to find a way through the rules about Covid and enable the church to live and grow
- Members of church congregations who are no longer able to worship together, and are finding it tough going
- People we know who are struggling as a result of Covid, either socially or economically or because of long term effects on their health
- Those who have lost touch with society following isolation and are afraid to venture out
- Those who are ill, either with the coronavirus or other ailments that don't hit the news bulletins
- Ourselves, that we might be brave enough to stand out as people of faith

And a prayer for every day as we grow closer to God:

Stand by us Lord,
and give us courage
and bright hopes
this day, and all our days
Amen

You might want to pray aloud the prayer that Jesus taught his first disciples. Use whatever version or language you wish!

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is 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.

♪♪ **I stand in awe**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BLNNykAicQ>

♪♪ **I believe**

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

♪♪ **O for a thousand tongues to sing**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFJvBwgmK_c

A blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.
Amen