

**DAY 1 - (week beginning Mon 13 May 2019)****Read - Genesis 28:10-22**

*When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." v16-17*

Some years ago my wife and I were on a holiday in England and we visited the famous cathedral in Salisbury. It was the middle of the week and the organist was practicing. As I listened to the beautiful piece of music he was playing, my knees went weak and I had to sit down. A deep sense of God's presence came over me, a sense of awe and worship. I felt transported. I caught a vision of something greater and a feeling of peace and love came over me. I think in that moment I understood the meaning of the words, "I touched the hem of the eternal". It was a deep moment of worship and it has stayed in my memory.

I think this is something of what Jacob felt that night when he had that wonderful dream of a ladder reaching up to heaven.

Worship is right at the heart of the Christian life. True worship revives and gives power to the soul. It strengthens our ability to live in the fullness of life that Jesus offers us. It cleanses us and helps us to focus again on the things that are truly important in life.

To know God is to worship him. It is not an optional extra. There is an inborn need in the human soul to worship the One who created us, to connect with God. Worship is the fire in the power station at the centre of our being.

***I worship you, Almighty God, there is none like you.***

**DAY 2****Read - John 4:21-24**

*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. v23-24*

What is worship? It is not mere attendance on a Sunday. You can come to church and not worship.

Worship is an encounter with the living God. When you feel you have met God; when your spirit connects with the Spirit of your Creator; when you feel that God's love has touched you in deep places, that is when worship truly happens. This is part of what it means to worship in spirit and in truth, as Jesus said to the Samaritan woman that day. Worship happens when the Holy Spirit touches us and moves in us, and we give God the honour that is due to him.

True worship is not limited to a particular style or place or time. It does not mean following a set form. It can happen when you follow a set liturgy. It can happen when you sing old hymns with an organ. It can happen when you sing modern worship songs with electric guitars. It does not always happen in a church. It can happen when you are sitting quietly on your own somewhere, or when you are reading your Bible or praying.

Worship can happen anywhere at any time because it's about meeting God and sensing that you are in his presence. It involves a deep connection of the soul and opening your heart to the love of God.

***Father God, I praise and worship you in this moment. Glory be to you O Lord!***

**DAY 3****Read - Isaiah 6:1-8**

*In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." v1-3*

True worship always begins with a deep sense of the holy - a sense of the Wow!! An awareness of the greatness and the glory of God.

Isaiah had an experience like that, and that sense of awe and wonder stayed with him for the rest of his life. No one else in the Old Testament captures the greatness of God quite as deeply as Isaiah. *I am the Lord, there is no other; apart from me there is no God" (Is 45:5)*. It was this vision that kept him going when things got tough, which they did a number of times in his ministry. Have you ever had an experience like that?

Holiness though, is more than just a feeling of awe and wonder at the greatness of God. Holiness also means moral purity and righteousness. God is totally good, honest and true. There is no evil, sin or falseness in him, and when we become aware of that we also become aware of our own sinfulness and guilt. *"Woe to me!", said Isaiah, "for I am a man of unclean lips!"* One of the angels took a burning coal from the altar and touched Isaiah's lips and said, *"See .... your guilt is taken away, and your sin is atoned for."* So when we worship God it is only natural to confess our sin and wrongdoing, and ask him to forgive us.

***Father, what an amazing, holy and glorious God you are, I bow down in worship to you.***

## DAY 4

## Read - Psalm 139

*You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. v1-3*

The key to worship is to be open to God. Can I invite you to open yourself to him now.

Begin by opening your heart to God. Your heart represents the deeper spiritual part of you, your inner being; your feelings, your thoughts, your fears, your longings, what you love, your worries and concerns, your dreams, your hopes, the things you are wrestling with. God knows you intimately so you can be real with him. Come just as you are, you can't pretend in God's presence.

Most of our living is done inside ourselves where no one else can see. But God can see and this is where he deals with us. It is always personal. Know that he is present inside you in a spiritual way right now.

Opening our heart also means to receive and give love and express our love. Receive the love God has for you. God loves you passionately! Praise him. Feel your love for God flowing from you to him. Tell God you love him. Just as you should tell the special people in your life often that you love them, so you should also tell God often.

***Where you are sitting, sing a spiritual song of your choice quietly and let the words sink into you. May I suggest:***

***I love you Lord, and I lift my voice,  
To worship you, O my soul rejoice.  
Take joy my King in what you hear,  
May it be a sweet, sweet sound in your ear.***

## DAY 5

## Read - Colossians 3:16-17

*Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. v16*

Worship is the heart of the Christian community. It binds us together as a community of faith. The church is above all else a worshipping community. Everything we seek to do as a congregation flows from the centrality of our worship together.

Our worship unites us. We come together from so many different directions, with so many different needs and concerns, yet when we sing and pray together it brings us together and creates a deep bond. There is so much in the modern world that separates us and keeps us isolated, but our worship creates fellowship and community. As the poet John Donne said many years ago, *"No person is an island, entire of itself"*. We need each other. We are richer when we are together.

When we worship together we receive power. Two are always stronger than one alone. And two united are stronger than two doing things separately. But more than that, God's power comes alongside us when we work together. As Solomon once wisely said, *"A rope with three strands is hard to break"* (Prov 4:12).

When we worship together we get direction. We hear God speak more clearly when we are together, through preaching, through prophecy, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, when we hear a voice and receive confirmation from others.

***The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord. She is his new creation, by water and the word.***

## DAY 6

## Read - Luke 4:14-21

*Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. v16*

Jesus worshipped regularly. It was his custom. He had done so since he was a child. In the worship that day he used the words of Isaiah to declare what his mission and ministry was going to be.

Some years ago, before the change in SA that came in 1994, the Methodist Church held a convocation called "A Journey to a New Land". One of the main things that came out of that Conference was that our people were searching for a deeper spirituality. The heart of deep spirituality is always real, authentic worship. Our worship expresses the depth and quality of our spirituality. Worship can be both personal or corporate, but you can tell so much about a church from the richness, or otherwise, of its worship together. This is the furnace at the centre of the power station.

True worship also touches and helps us to engage with the whole of the gospel. As Archbishop William Temple once said, *"Our worship should quicken the conscience with the holiness of God; it should feed the mind with the truth of God; it should purge the imagination with the beauty of God; it should open the heart to the love of God; and it should devote our will to the purpose of God."*

Our worship tells the story of our faith. It declares what we believe and challenges us to be involved in God's mission to the world.

***Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth; her charter of salvation; one Lord, one faith, one birth.***