

## **WORSHIP SONGS -**

I will offer up my life      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWXWHdgapjl>

You are my vision      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMmSPOF-6Xo>

Jesus, all for Jesus      <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ko16FPnEZs>

## **PRAYERS:**

Eternal God,

by your word you create

and by your breath you give life.

We worship you with joy and thanksgiving,

praising you for the fullness

that your presence brings to our lives,

and our life together.

We praise you that by your word you feed us;

we are satisfied, and there is always more.

Your goodness is displayed in your wonderful works

for all humanity,

and in your perfect love.

In our humanity we are rebellious,

and sometimes follow after foolish ideas;

going ways which lead away from life with you . . .

And yet, when we cry out you are there,

your word healing our inner emptiness and pain,

embracing us, leading us in your life-giving ways.

For your unending faithfulness, revealed to us in Christ Jesus,

and made present to us in your Holy Spirit

we praise you, Lord God. Amen

For the health workers tending the seriously ill

for the scientists working on a vaccination

for the researchers analysing data and identifying trends

for the media outlets working to communicate reality

for the supermarket workers, hygiene and sanitation providers

for the good news stories of recoveries and effective planning

for the singing from balconies by locked-down communities

for the recognition that isolation doesn't need to mean loneliness

for the notes through letterboxes offering help and support

for the internet and telephones and technology that connects

for the awakened appreciation of what is truly important

Thanks be to God.

For those who are unwell and concerned for loved ones

for those who were already very anxious

for those immune suppressed or compromised

for those vulnerable because of underlying conditions

for those in the 'most at risk to coronavirus' categories  
for those watching their entire income stream dry up  
for those who have no choice but to go out to work  
for those who are afraid to be at home  
for those who are more lonely than they've ever been  
for those who are bereaved and grieving.  
God be their healer, comfort and protection,  
be their strength, shield and provision  
be their security, safety and close companion

And raise up your Church  
to be your well-washed hands and faithful feet  
to be present to the pain  
to respond with love in action  
if even from a safe distance.  
Amen.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as 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.

### **TALK:**

This morning our theme is being Chosen, how we are all part of a Chosen people. Now I don't know about you but being the idea of being chosen always takes me back to school PE lessons where I'd always be near the end of the line as they picked the teams. Occasionally I delivered moments of magic like the memorable day I scored a hat-trick in football with every goal came off a different body part - one off the knee, one off the hip and somehow one from the back of my head! But that was rare and so I was almost always one of the last ones picked.

If you are like me, there is good news for you in this passage! Although even if you'd excelled at sporty - there is still good news for you here.

We are going to look at 1 verse which is 1 Peter 2:9 It says this:  
"You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Peter here is writing for the Jewish audience who knew this phrase, accepted it - through old testament - Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua all knew what it was to be chosen by God. Familiar to audience (and very encouraging for Jews who have become Christians!)

Royal Priesthood - what does it mean? It means you have been chosen for a purpose, to serve God, to praise him in all you do. Priest means you are able to connect with God yourself, and connect others with him too. Royal means you are important and significant.

The verse also says that "You are God's special possession" - show Flossy, remember rescuing her from the garden. - She is precious to me so I risked everything sneaking out to find her! In the same way Jesus is willing to give everything, even his life for you. You are his special possession, you are precious and valuable and important.

You might not think this of yourself - that you have been chosen for a purpose, that you can connect with God and that you are important but it is true! So many things knock us back from who God tells us we are - shame of our mistakes, guilt of our sin, things other people say, things we think about ourselves - those voices push us away from God, away from our calling.

A great illustration for this is found in the Lion King - Simba is heir to the throne, it is his right and his duty to be the King. But his uncle Scar tricks him, lies to him. Scar tells him he's a criminal, a murderer. Scar tells him everyone is disappointed in him, if they knew the real Simba they'd hate him even more, Scar forces Simba to leave and instead of growing into a noble leader of a pride of lions that look after the whole kingdom he lives in a jungle, eating bugs and pretending not to care about anything but himself. Now here is the bit that will ruin the Lion King for you; Hakuna Matata is a catchy song but it's a terrible way to live your life. "If the world turns it's back on you, you turn your back on the world." Instead of worrying about how you could change things, or make a difference - stop worrying about other people, give up on effort, give up on your calling and your duty, give up doing anything but pleasing yourself. It's only when Simba realises there is more to life than selfishly pleasing himself that he is able to make a difference. Let's see how this happens:

Remember who you are! Is what Mufasa tells his son - the royal heir, the future saviour of Pride Rock! This is the key message for this weekend, this is what Jesus is saying to you today. Remember who you are! Simba was not chosen to hide in a forest and eat bugs, he was chosen to be a great king who leads his people and keeps the land safe! But he could only do that after he remembered who he really was.

And it is the same for you today. You are not insignificant, you are not worthless, you are not a failure - you are a royal priest, an heir in God's Family - God knew you and chose you before you were even born to be a Royal Priest, You are important, you are rich, you are valuable, you can make an eternal difference to the

world around you! You can transform the lives of the people you meet for the better, by remembering that you are a Royal Priest. You can change the way you think about yourself and be proud that you are known and loved by God, he has a purpose for you - change the world by living as a Royal Priest!

Now the question is how? What should a Royal Priest do today? Well, Paul (the writer of this letter to Timothy) tells what we are chosen for in the other part of the verse:

“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” Our role is to declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness.

The Message translation of the bible helps us to see what this means: "But you are chosen to be God’s instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you—from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.

Our purpose is to represent God, in the same way a priest represents God to their community or a Royal represents their nation to the world. We are God’s representatives or ambassadors of Christ. Our role is to show the amazing difference he has made in the way we live.

So in your life that might mean thinking about the words you use - how do they reflect a transformed life lived for God? Or the way you conduct yourself at work, how are you representing your saviour in your workplace? Or the attitude you have towards home school in lockdown (and this could be parents as well as kids!) how do we show the night and day difference Jesus makes in our family life too?

This is not easy, there is not silver bullet or perfect formula for life. We are all unique individuals living our own specific lives - there is no one-size fits all way to live the Christian life. What we each need to work, and be continually re-thinking, is how our faith impacts the things we do, the words we say and people we meet. How can I best demonstrate that greatness of God whilst I am stuck in lockdown? How can I show the transformative love of Jesus to those struggling in quarantine? How will my attitudes to the weird world of shopping or a single daily walk or the way I communicate on social media reflect Jesus to those around me?

You are chosen to be a Royal Priest! You are God’s special possession that he has selected to live in this place at this time - God designed you and made you who you are so that you can do good today, so that you can reflect his greatness back into his world. What can you change today so that you can bring light and love into the lives of those you come into contact with? How will you accept your God-given purpose and show others the the night-and-day difference he made for you. How can you help those you live with or meet or connect with online to find their place in God’s purposes moving from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted.