

Worship • 21st March 2021

Team

Reflections: Katherine Harris

Music: Michael Crowley

Readings: Derek Gilfillan

Technology: Tony Edmonds

CCL 7011



Lent 5B - *ignite your heart*

As you prepare to worship, light a candle and pause for a moment of silence.



When the music fades (Heart of worship)

(SoF 1113)

When the music fades, all is stripped away,
and I simply come;
Longing just to bring something that's of worth
that will bless Your heart.

I'll bring You more than a song,
for a song in itself
is not what You have required,
You search much deeper within
through the way things appear;
You're looking into my heart.

*I'm coming back to the heart of worship,
and it's all about You,
all about You, Jesus.
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it,
when it's all about You,
all about You, Jesus.*

King of endless worth, no one could express
how much You deserve.
Though I'm weak and poor, all I have is Yours,
every single breath.

I'm coming back ...

welcome

Welcome to our live-stream service on this 5th Sunday in Lent. My name is Katherine Harris. We began our worship with Mike Crowley leading our music, Derek Gilfillan will be reading the Bible for us, and Tony Edmonds is handling all the technical logistics.

Easter and spring are right around the corner, and we are nearing the end of Lent, but we're not there yet.

Lent is a season when Christians focus on being more faithful. We notice what might be getting in the way of our relationship with God. We strive to grow closer to Jesus in different ways — maybe by reading the Bible or praying, exploring spirituality in new ways, or by acts of compassion and service.

I've got a question for you: How are things going?

I don't know about you, but I'm not where I'd like to be. I'm distracted. I'm not focusing on the essential things. I'm not doing Lent well.

So here is a new start. A time to reset. A time for new possibilities. A time to be real ... with God and with ourselves.

Psalm 51

adapted from *Psalms/Now* by Leslie F. Brandt

O God, may the measure of Your eternal love
be the measure of Your mercy.
And may the measure of Your mercy
be sufficient to blot out my great sins
and cancel out the guilt of my wrongdoing.

I have failed, O Lord, and my failures
weigh heavily upon my heart.
I cannot share them all with my brother or my sister
lest they weigh too heavily upon them
and may even threaten my relationship with them.
But You know what they are, O God,
and how far I have fallen short
of Your standards and expectations.

I am only human, Lord.
It was not by my choice that I was propelled
into this fractured world.
The weaknesses that plague me
are not all of my doing,
nor can I handle them by my strength alone.

I know that nothing can be hidden from You.
I can only acknowledge my indictment
and accept Your loving forgiveness.
Purge me of my guilt, O Lord;
heal the hurts of those
who have been afflicted by my failures.

Revive my flagging spirit, O God.
Restore to me the joy and assurance
of a right relationship with You.
Reinstate me in Your purposes,
and help me to avoid
the snares and pitfalls along the way.

It is only then that my tongue will be set free
to sing Your praises
and my hands to perform the tasks
You have set before me.
It is only then that I can relate
deeply and meaningfully to my brother and to my sister
and communicate to them
the message of reconciling love.

I bring You no oblation of sacrifice, my God —
only a foolish and self-centred heart.
I do come to You with a sincere desire
to be Your servant,
to walk in Your course for my life,
to receive Your love and channel it
to my fellowmen and women around me.

I thank You, God, that this is acceptable to You,
and that I will remain Your child for ever.

what's in your heart?

How is that for honesty? The author of this psalm, King David, holds nothing back. He is honest with God and brutally honest with himself. Honest about how short he has fallen from the mark (which is what 'sin' actually means). Honest about his failures and guilt. He knows he has hurt others and damaged relationships. He knows he cannot hide it from God, and he cannot fix it by himself.

And yet, despite his foolish and self-centred heart, he longs for it to be different. He prays for God to create a clean heart within him, to renew his spirit. He relies on God's mercy and love to do what he cannot do for himself.

The question for us is: Do we trust God's mercy enough to dare to take such an honest look at ourselves? **What is in your heart?**

What combination exists side by side within you — the good, the bad and the ugly? What mixture of faith ... hope ... love ... greed ... envy ... hate ... joy ... despair ... self-centredness ... compassion ... sin ... Take just a moment to reflect on this..

Now take just a moment to give all those thoughts to God ...

And allow the Holy Spirit's transformational power to work within your heart ... [*demonstration of sinfulness being removed from a paper heart*]



There must be more than this (Consuming fire)

Tim Hughes

There must be more than this,
O breath of God come breathe within,
There must be more than this,
Spirit of God we wait for You.
Fill us anew we pray,
Fill us anew we pray.

Come like a rushing wind,
Clothe us with power from on high,
Now set the captives free,
Leave us abandoned to Your praise.
Lord, let Your glory fall,
Lord, let Your glory fall.

*Consuming fire fan into flame,
A passion for Your Name,
Spirit of God fall in this place,
Lord have Your way,
Lord have Your way with us.*

Consuming fire ...

Jeremiah 31:31-34

NLT

“The day is coming,” says the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the Lord.

“But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days,” says the Lord. “I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbours, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, ‘You should know the Lord.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already,” says the Lord. “And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”

ignite your heart

It's mind boggling to think about the choices God has made. God's chose to share boundless creativity and endless divine love with one creature in particular: human beings. Think about it: people are intended to carry God's presence in this world (what being created 'in God's image' means).

God's divine purposes are worked out through a *partnership* with humanity. God doesn't *need* us. But God *wants* us. God *chooses* us. This is what the covenant is all about: a partnership with human beings. And God gives us the *choice* of how to respond!

The perfect God choses to work through imperfect human beings. What a risk!

But actually it is this risk that demonstrates how much God loves us. God is willing to risk rebellion and rejection in order to allow us the freedom to *choose* whether or not to enter this divine partnership. Or do we choose to run the show on our own?

In the Jeremiah passage, God promises a new covenant - a new partnership, a new relationship. But what was the old covenant? Simply stated: 'I will be your God and you will be My people.' The rules of agreement for this covenant are sometimes referred to as the Ten Commandments. [*show example of stone tablets*]

So what happened to this covenant? In simple terms, God kept the agreement, we did not. We broke the covenant agreement and it broke God's heart. But God didn't give up on us.

God's Law was no longer to be written on stone tablets but placed deep within us. God's Law of Love becomes flesh. [*demonstration of stone tablets being transformed into a heart*]

God made an astonishing choice to become a human being. In Jesus, the invisible God was made visible. Jesus was the first and only human being who perfectly fulfilled God's Law of Love. He opened the way for the new covenant - a new relationship. And God was willing to risk rejection in order to give us the freedom to *choose* whether or not to enter into this new covenant - a relationship with Jesus.

But some chose not to accept Jesus. He was betrayed, denied, rejected and finally crucified - executed on a cross. Paradoxically, instead of destroying the new covenant, Jesus' death and resurrection was the means by which it was made unbreakable and everlasting.

Our sins were erased on the cross. Then God chose to forget that they ever existed. Hearts wiped clean, except for love. It is not we who had loved God, but God who has loved us.

It is love that marks us as Jesus' disciples. It is love that marks us as God's people. Jesus said it is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciple.

It is love that ignites the heart: God's love to us and through us.

To ignite your heart, reflect on this love. It is a deep way of praying - praying without speaking, listening to God's Law of Love written on our hearts.

Music from the Taize community can help us ignite our heart in love ... as we think about those we know and love ... those we do not love ... and those who are unwanted.



Holy Spirit come to us (*Tui Amoris Ignem*)

Taize

Holy Spirit come to us.
Kindle in us the fire of Your love.
Holy Spirit come to us.
Holy Spirit come to us.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zasyz-tJkOg>

blessing

May you deepen your trust in God's love and mercy.
May your relationship with Jesus grow ever closer.
May the Holy Spirit kindle ignite your heart with love.
Amen.



Jesus, be the centre

StF 447

Jesus, be the centre,
be my source, be my light,
Jesus.

Jesus, be my vision,
be my path, be my guide,
Jesus.

Jesus, be the centre,
be my hope, be my song,
Jesus.

Be the fire in my heart...

*Be the fire in my heart,
be the wind in these sails;
be the reason that I live,
Jesus, Jesus.*

Jesus, be the centre,
be my source, be my light,
Jesus.