

**Weekly Devotions
South Holburn Church
8th February 2022**

READINGS

You hem me in--behind and before;
you have laid your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:5-7, 11-12, 23-24

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:13-16

REFLECTION

How would you describe God? One description offered by the Ghanaian scientist, Lailah Gifty Akita, states "*God is all-powerful. God is all-capable. God is all-knowing.*"

For some people, the fact that God is all-knowing is a terrible thing! Like Adam and Eve, they want to hide from God, because they are ashamed of their lives. And, if each of us is honest, we understand that feeling, for there are things in all our lives which we really want to hide from other people and from God. And so, it is a terrible thing to realise that God sees clearly into all those dark places in our lives that we really don't want people to know about.

And yet, there is also an immense sense of joy when we realise that God sees into the darkness of our lives. We may not like the secrets that lie there, but the Christian faith shows that there is no sin, no darkness in our lives, that is too big for God to forgive through the death of his son, Jesus. Therefore, we need not be ashamed of our lives. We need not be ashamed of the things that we have done. In Christ, God has already brought the light of his love into the darkness.

Far from being a terrible thing, the idea that God knows all is so wonderful! It brings such a sense of peace. God knows us exactly as we are, not as we pretend to be. God knows us, even though we hide our true selves from other people. And knowing us exactly as we are, God still loves us and reaches out to us. Its not the case that if God knew what you were really like then God would turn away from you. Rather God does know you, the real you, and still loves you, and still calls you worthy, and still gives everything for you to make you family.

As a Church, what the message we bring to the world! A message of honest hope, acceptance and love! The Church is so much more than traditions and hymns and buildings. It is a community where people are welcomed just as they are - far from perfect, far from worthy, but perfectly loved by God, perfectly made worthy by God's good grace.

That is a message of hope that is missing from our world today. So, we must be the ones who point others to that light. We must be the ones who say, "Look at me! Look at what God has done for me!"

And unless we do that, all else that we do with our Church is meaningless. What is the point of a Church that has a well-maintained building and well-oiled structure, if it does not point to the light of God's loving forgiveness? What is the point of a Church that has no light to offer?

Equally, for each of us, part of the call of faith is to let the light shine from us to those around us. To offer the love and the welcome and the forgiveness that God offers to us.

Have you shone the light today?

Amen

PRAYER

Father,
You are so mighty,
So powerful.
All knowing, all seeing -
Nothing is hidden from you.
And yet you are defined not by destruction, but by love.
In loving power, you deal with sin.
In love you bring light into the dark places of our lives,
And in love you replace our sin and our hurt, with your forgiveness and your peace.
In love you put your kingdom in our hearts.

Thank you all knowing, all seeing, all loving God.

Place in our hearts also a desire to let other people experience your light in their dark places,
Equip and enable us to point other people to the light where they can experience you for themselves.

In the name of Jesus
Amen

