

Call To Worship

Coming confidently yet boldly into the presence of Almighty God our Heavenly Father through the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ:

Whether individually or in a fellowship group let us say: We are part of the Body of Christ, the firstborn, the Head of all Creation, in whom God has recreated our lives and in whom we live and flourish for ever.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you have worked salvation on our behalf, including your great victory when you submitted yourself to eternal forsakenness on the cross for our sakes. We cherish your gift to us and wish to learn more and more of your loving work for us. Enrich us with that knowledge on this day as we read and think over the message in this service. In our Lord's name, who makes all things to do with Life happen and flourish for us.

Hymn; by Steve J. Hindalong, Marc Byrd.

Lord of all creation, Lord of water, earth and sky
The heavens are your Tabernacle, Glory to the Lord on high

*And God of wonders beyond our galaxy: You are holy, holy
The universe declares Your majesty: You are holy, holy
Lord of heaven and earth, Lord of heaven and earth*

So, early in the morning I will celebrate the light
As I stumble in the darkness I will call your name by night

Hallelujah! To the Lord of heaven and earth

The God of wonders beyond our galaxy, You are holy, holy
Precious Lord, reveal Your heart to me, Father, holy, holy.

The universe declares Your majesty,
You are holy, holy, holy, holy

Hallelujah! To the Lord of heaven and earth

© 2000 Never Say Never Songs – Used by permission CCLI 509237

Scriptures:

- Daniel 7.9-14
- John 8.54-59
- Hebrews 1 (Ponder in this Scripture chapter the reason why Jesus is rightly supreme over all rulers and being)

The Crisis of truth in Australia focused; Seeking the true God.

One day I will never forget was when as a small boy my father had disciplined me about something which made me inwardly mad and angry. He had explained something in clear and definite terms and inside I was red-cheeked rebelling!

I lifted up my head and with a flushed face blurted out that; “anyway when I grow up, I'm going to be a Buddhist”. How and where I even knew that word and where I pulled it from, I have no idea. But even at that young age, I sensed to know the truth about God was important. So petulantly, I tried to hit a sensitive point on my father's heart because he knew and loved God. What was his response? He just laughed and called me ‘a pot soon hot’. I haven't forgotten.

Somehow, my red face and pouted lips just melted away in the truth that the one who loved me most knew best. I look back on that moment and think of the great enduring truths lying behind it.

Our Heavenly Father, the Mighty God, the Creator and revealer of all mysteries, so longs for us to know him that he has put signposts all around and even within us all, even in and beyond our foolishness. Sounds, colours, and voices embedded in his creation with information about himself. Perhaps the greatest mystery is that human beings not only don't see the signs but even more weirdly try their best to avoid themⁱ.

But the gems of knowledge are there for all to find, for all to know and experience the wonders of knowing God. We must find them. I believe in everybody's life there was a particular moment a critical moment when the Heavenly Father reveals himself unmistakably, compellingly, and each and every person to meet with God, the Provider and lover of our soulsⁱⁱ.

Another moment I will never forget is a word from an aunt who was a midwife at my birth-mother's delivery. She promised to watch over me from adoption through to my growing boyhood. One day with warmth and candour she simply said at an opportune moment; ‘Dear boy, you must know God.’ How valuable are those persons who take our souls seriously.

Jesus came onto this earth to illuminate the truth about God and to activate a platform for the Holy Spirit to speak into the hearts of all people. A knock on the door of the heart and conscience, a clear opportunity to meet God or slam the door shut and walk away. The encounter of Jesus with the ‘rich, young ruler’ after Jesus invited him to join his learning group of disciples reveals how this happensⁱⁱⁱ.

It is clear our nation is in a crisis of truth. The most important truth of all; who is God? And as important, where and how does he reveal himself and make known to humanity what he wishes us to know? And what should we do to respond to him?

The Bondi pogrom has brought this question to the forefront of the minds of our Prime Minister, Government, opinion writers and theologians. Indeed, anyone willing to think a little about it.

The haste to address and do something about this horrific event has evoked gun laws, tightened federal surveillance, and the matter of laws to govern how we speak about each other; hate speech. And proposed hate speech laws are causing the greatest controversy because of their possible infringement on freedom of speech, i.e., bringing into question interpretations and expressions of violence in so-called religious texts.

The irony is, however, that the perpetrators of the deadly violence were not guilty of hate speech as far as we know. They just killed people.

It is well known that the perpetrators belonged to a view of Islam which justified the use of violence against 'Infidels' or unbelievers in Islam, which in the Quran and Muhammadan traditions are Christians and Jews, amongst others.

And most know too that Christians are not mandated in their sacred texts to kill non-Christians. If they do, they will find no justification in any verse in the Bible. However, the Quran or the interpretations of it by authorised clerics do endorse and exhort such violence.

We should be free, therefore, to debate, discuss, preach and teach the texts that form the basis of our beliefs. Sooner or later, we will realise that the claims of the Quran and the Bible clash. We should do this, notably around who is the true and reliable messenger of God? Who speaks for the creator of all things and the Judge of all men?

It is Jesus who is supreme, as Scripture testifies. And what is the result in human life and national life of the belief that Jesus is supreme in contrast to those who declare Muhammad's finality?

Muhammed is revered at his tomb in Medina. Jesus is worshipped as the resurrected appointed Lord of heaven and earth. The One of whom God audibly affirmed, 'this is my beloved Son, listen to him'^{iv}.

The evidence for Jesus' resurrection is sounder than the evidence for any other person or event of that time or before, even much after. Christianity is evidence-based and we need to have a fresh focus on the facts of the Bible.

So this is the crisis of truth before our nation at this very moment, and indeed before each one of us. And especially the saints and you reading this sermon for whom the name of Jesus is truly known. We are the called, ordained bearers of the One true messenger, the Apostle of God in the world, the Lord Christ himself. We are called by the Great King, by royalty, to display honour for this name both in word and deed, fearless before men, with gentle certainty.

*"I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel"^v.
Declared the prophet, Ezekiel.*

Jesus taught the necessity to decide on who is the true Messenger of God;

"I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him"^{vi}.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, whose Name declared at the Day of Judgment and Glorification will evoke confession and the bending of knee of all humanity; grant us grace to honour your name, for you are the only mediator between God and humanity, the only one whom the Father has sent not only to speak and reveal but also to redeem. You installed Jesus as Saviour of all peoples and to restore all creation. You have gently and convincingly shown us who you are. Help us to treasure that knowledge. Forgive us for past failures and equip us with unwavering confidence to be useful and true witnesses to your person, we ask.

Amen.

Hymn; *by Keith and Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend*

In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all. Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness scorned by the ones He came to save
'Til on that cross as Jesus died the wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid. Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground, His body lay, light of the world, by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave, He rose again
And as He stands in victory sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man can ever pluck me from His hand
'Til He returns or calls me home. Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

© 2001 Thankyou Music Ltd – used by permission CCLI 509237

This service was prepared by Rev Ian Clarkson for HopeNet SA

ⁱ Romans 1.18,19

ⁱⁱ 2Corinthians 6.2 , Hebrews 3.15

ⁱⁱⁱ Mark 10.17ff

^{iv} Matthew 17.5

^v Ezekiel 39.7

^{vi} John 5.43