

1 Welcome

It is a great privilege to lead a time of worship both in the church and amongst those who are dependent on a written sermon.

As usual, I suggest that you find a comfortable place to sit, where you will not be disturbed. In addition to your Bible, you will find it helpful to have a notebook or diary to record a thought or something God is saying to you. It is my prayer that you will hear the voice of God speaking to you to bring guidance and encouragement in this time of fear and uncertainty.

2 Call to worship

Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15)

3 Prayer

Read Psalm 70:1-5, aloud, if possible. This is a desperate prayer for God's intervention. Note down any thing in this psalm that has meaning for you.

4 Scripture passages

Joshua 24:1-25 The covenant is renewed
Matthew 25:1-13 The virgins and their lamps

5 Competing loyalties

1. A great challenge for the Israelites, as they settled in the Promised Land (Canaan) was to retain their special relationship with God. This was the subject of Joshua's farewell address:
 - (a) It was God who had revealed himself to Abraham and his descendants and who had taken them to Egypt in the time of famine;
 - (b) It was God who had led them out of slavery in Egypt to the promised land;
 - (c) It was God who had led them in the conquest of Canaan.
 - (d) It was God who gave each tribe their own portion of land.
2. Despite the amazing evidence of God's care for the Israelites and their commitment to serve him, they struggled to denounce the claims of the heathen gods of the canaanites

6 Reflection

As we reflect on our scripture readings, two thoughts come to mind:

1. God sent prophets to instruct the Israelites in right living. Sadly most of the prophets were ill-treated and ignored and the relationship with God steadily deteriorated. This continued till, ultimately, God allowed the Babylonian emperor to defeat the Israelites and deport them to Babylon.

2. The Psalm that addresses the teaching of God's Law is Psalm 119. Verse 105 states,
"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path!"
The more we read God's word, the more we will discover what God wants us to be doing.
3. Reflect on the parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25. What do you think the lighted lamps signify?
4. Ask God to help you to ensure that His light (His word) shines in your life.

7 Prayer of intercession

1. Speak to God about your desire to read his word regularly.
2. Pray for the new president of USA as he assumes office in very difficult times.
3. Pray for our own president. May he experience divine guidance as he leads our country through the challenges that Covid-19 has brought to our country.
4. Pray for members of your family who are in need.

8 Benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us, now and evermore