

Sermon Sunday 17.05.2026

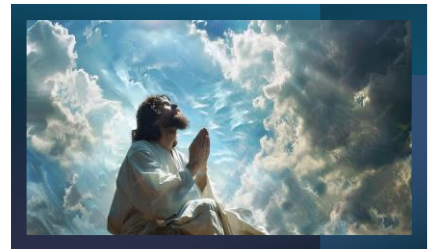


On Thursday evening we had a service to celebrate Ascension Day, which commemorates Jesus Christ's bodily ascent into heaven to the right hand of God. This is the completion of his earthly ministry and his exaltation as Lord. This took place in the presence of His disciples forty days after his resurrection from the dead. This is where Jesus continues intercessions on our behalf to care for us all.

Think about the times you look up at the sky, what do you see? The sun, the clouds, the moon, the stars and a rainbow. How many times when we pray do we look upwards as if we are saying and sending our prayers up to God.

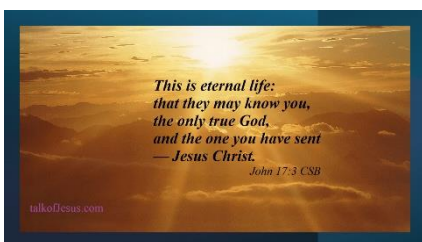
How do you pray. Do you sit more formally in church, close your eyes, put your hands together and sit still? Do you sometimes shout out phrases like 'God help me' when you are going through some of life's many challenges that we face daily? Do you kneel down as many people in church use to – though if many of us kneel down today we might have difficulty getting back up again. Are you sat out in the garden with a drink in hand, or out walking in the park, sitting on a beach, walking the dog. There are many ways to pray but sometimes it is difficult to know how to pray and what to pray for.

In our reading from John's gospel, we are privileged to listen to Jesus as He prays to His Father. How do you pray and for what do you pray? Within the Bible we hear of Jesus as he prayed before his arrest, before his trial, before the cross. At these times Jesus lifts his eyes upwards to heaven and speaks to his Father. These prayers are personal prayers from Jesus to God his Father. The prayers can be seen as being comforting as they help us to see what matters most in the heart of Jesus.



We hear Jesus speak about glory and eternal life and what the Father has given him. He speaks personally about God, salvation and about his people. When we listen to the reading, we are drawn into understanding and learning to know more about Jesus and his relationship with his Father and the trust Jesus has in the events that has taken place in his life. This is a time where we are reminded who Jesus is, what he gives to his people and the love he has for us, his children.

We hear of Jesus seeking the Father's glory now that the hour has come. Jesus asks God to glorify him so that he can glorify God. This may be seen as an insight into Jesus' mission and His intimate relationship with the Father. It challenges us to reflect on our own purpose, deepen our prayer life, and seek ways to glorify God through our actions and sacrifices. We live in a world that keeps pushing us to chase recognition, status and approval, but the true glory we can achieve is through sharing in the faithfulness of God. We can do this through showing humility, undertake prayer, work in quiet obedience and show love in our lives even when life is not easy for us.



The reading it talks about Jesus giving each one of us eternal life and what this means for each one of us. Here we are not looking at what happens to us when we die, or when people try many different ways of trying to find eternal life through taking pills and potions, having cosmetic surgery to make us feel good, or even thinking of being cryogenically frozen, it is about how we get to know and follow God

now. We are brought God through Jesus, which is through having grace, communion and belonging in our life today which will carry on into eternity. The key thing is having that relationship with God throughout our Christian life, where we get to know God and be known by God and to walk with Jesus. This we can do daily through prayer, through reading the scriptures, through sharing time together in worship and sharing that with others through how we act in our daily lives.

Jesus spent time living with his disciples and teaching them his ways, even though at times it was hard for them to understand him. The events of the death and resurrection confused them and they knew they were to travel the world to spread Gods word, something for which they were persecuted. Their faith was tested and challenged on many occasions, just as our faith can be challenged on a daily basis. Throughout all our trials and tribulations, we need to remember that God, through Jesus is with us and Jesus prays for us.

Listening to Jesus pray in the gospel reading gives us a message that we need to hear today. Jesus seeks his Father's glory, Jesus gives eternal life and he keeps and looks after his people. In the busy, noisy and uncertain world we live in today we need to trust God through Jesus and surrender our worries and woes to him.



Wherever you are and whatever you are doing, spend time in prayer as this teaches us to seek first the honour of God rather than our own desires. There are times in our lives when we are impatient but we need to trust that God has the timing right for us. When we are fearful, allow God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. When we get distracted let us remember the mission of Jesus and follow that in our lives. As we are the church we are called to bear witness to God's glory through humility, faithfulness and love. Eternal life begins in our knowledge of God, not just in the hope of heaven. In the past few weeks as we worshipped in the church, we had to sit much closer to each other and talk to each other, more than we usually do, and this worshipping life we have shared here helps us shape us in the knowledge that God keeps us near to Jesus. As Jesus prays for His people, so are we asked to pray faithfully for one another. Amen

Tina Titley