**worshipping together while we are apart**

**Morning Prayer for Wednesday 7 October 2020**

**Readings**: Psalm 19, Exodus 20.1-9

# Reflection

Psalm 19 is one of those bits of Scripture that instantly sets music off in my head. In this case, it’s ’The Heavens Are Telling’ from Haydn’s Creation:

The heavens are telling the glory of God,

The wonder of his work displays the firmament;

Today that is coming speaks it the day,

The night that is gone to following night.

The heavens are telling the glory of God,

The wonder of his work displays the firmament;

In all the lands resounds the word,

never unperceived, ever understood.

The heavens are telling the glory of God,

The wonder of his work displays the firmament.

It is based on verses 1, 2 and 4 and it always makes me giggle that verse 3 is missing because that is the verse that says, ‘no sound is heard from them’. A full orchestra and choir performing this piece is a wonderful sound and I am very glad that Haydn didn’t let verse 3 deter him!

The passage from Exodus is the first four of the ten commandments. These are the commandments that are concerned with our relationship with God. The other six commandments are all to do with how we relate to one another. The four commandments in our reading are summarised by Jesus in Mark 12.30 as “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength”. It’s clear from this summary that Jesus is saying that God must come first in our list of priorities.

If our relationship with God takes all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, what do we have left for anyone else?

A remarkable thing happens when parents have a second or subsequent child. I distinctly remember a conversation with my Mum, 30 years ago – probably almost to the day. Our daughter Samantha was 20 months old and I was heavily pregnant with Oliver, who will be 30 this month. I was exhausted and tearful (probably my hormones!) and during a telephone conversation with my Mum I said something like ‘I’m worried I haven’t got any love left for this baby, I love Samantha so much it takes all of me”. I’m one of four children so my Mum has plenty of experience of this situation and she is also very wise. She simply said, “Don’t worry, your capacity to love grows”. I don’t think I was convinced at the time, but she was right, and I loved Oli just as much as I loved Sammy from the moment he was born.

What happens with us and our relationship with God is similar, I think. The more we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, the more our capacity to love others grows. We all know people who we struggle to love, even those closest to us test our capacity for love sometimes. Yet, Jesus is clear that we are to love everyone – our families, our friends, our neighbours, people who are different to us and even our enemies. That’s not something we can do alone or in our own strength. The only way we might possibly be able to manage it is through God equipping us, expanding our capacity to love through the power of the Holy Spirit.

What prevents you from loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? What are your distractions? Perhaps you could spend some time this week praying about those distractions or asking God to help you identify them. My prayer for myself, and all of you, is that God will help us to love him more so that our capacity to love others will increase way beyond anything we can manage on our own.

**The Collect**

Gracious God,

you call us to fullness of life:

deliver us from unbelief

and banish our anxieties

with the liberating love of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Prayers**

Including:

* Prayer for Roads in our parish – this week we are praying for Ellesmere Road and George Street
* Those known to us who are unwell, continuing to pray for Rebecca and her mother, Susan.
* Those who are mourning for loved ones who have died.
* NHS workers, care workers and other key workers.
* People who are lonely or frightened.
* Those who are struggling financially or fear losing their jobs.
* People who are fearful or feeling vulnerable or uncertain as guidance keeps changing.
* Those working towards a vaccine for Covid-19.
* For asylum seekers (especially those in Bourne End), refugees and all those without a safe place to call home.
* For the work of DENS in feeding the hungry and helping the homeless.
* For our mission partners.
* For rest and refreshment for Rebecca while she is on leave.
* Leaders of the nations of the world, for wisdom in their decision making.
* Leaders of all churches, including Archbishop Justin and our Bishops: Alan, Michael and Richard.
* For our Churchwardens, Elders and PCC.