

PRAYER AND REFLECTION

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Friday 5th June 2020



Opening Psalm 139:1-3

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you
discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down, and are
acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you
know it completely.
You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your
hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so
high that I cannot attain it.

Prayer:

We praise you, O God, for your precious gift of
yourself.

Spirit of the living God, from brooding on the waters
of creation to being with us in our homes today, you
have been gently and powerfully at work in our

history. We praise you, O God, for your precious gift of yourself.

Spirit of the living God, breathing life into all that lives and loves, inspiring work and choices, guiding and moulding, you are still gently and powerfully at work in our world. We praise you, O God, for your precious gift of yourself.

Spirit of the living God, from knitting us together in our mother's wombs to embracing us while we draw our last breaths, you are gently and powerfully at work in our lives. We praise you, O God, for your precious gift of yourself.

Enable us to be known as your people by our love and joy, our peace and patience, our kindness and generosity, our faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. May we shine as lights in the world to the glory of God.

We praise you, O God, for your precious gift of yourself. Amen

Reading: Acts 4:33-37

With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person

among them, for as many owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the disciples gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"). He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Reflection:

We all know how important names are. Using people's names helps us to deepen our relationship with them. A teacher knows that addressing a pupil by their name is more likely to get their attention. Think of how we choose our children's names, choose what our grandchildren call us or give someone close to us a special name – those names become filled with meaning and love. We also know how hurtful name-calling is, particularly in the school playground, and know that some of those names can stick with us and hurt for a long time afterwards.

When we read scripture, we may be aware of people who have experienced a change of name: Abram becomes Abraham meaning father of many, Sarai becomes Sarah meaning princess, Simon

becomes Peter meaning the rock. In this passage, Joseph becomes Barnabas, meaning son of encouragement.

I wonder how it made him feel to be given this name. We don't read that he had performed signs and wonders like some of the disciples. He wasn't in the limelight as a prophet or a teacher. He didn't draw the crowds. All he did, I think, was to plod quietly along, living the faith in his own simple way, caring, and sharing as he believed Christ would have him do.

But here we are shown that he is greatly valued by the apostles as he puts into practice his gift of encouragement. A generous gesture, a word of praise, an expression of trust, an act of love, all can lift people's spirits in a way that maybe signs and wonders can never do. It may not be something that we hear much about, as it is not a very public gift in many ways, but to the individual on the receiving end it can make a world of difference.

We all need encouragement from time to time and we all need to know that, even if our gifts are not in the public eye, they are of great value. When my father died last year, most of the cards written to the family expressing sympathy, spoke of him as "a true gentleman". He would have loved to have known that people thought of him that way. Have you ever thought what name someone would give

you? Son / daughter of...? Perhaps today spend some time reflecting or ask a close friend what they would say! You may find it very encouraging!

“And you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give you shall be called My Delight is in her.” (Isaiah 62:2b,4)

Prayer:

God of wind and fire, as your Spirit was poured out upon the first disciples, by your love rest upon us this day.

Inspire our faith and empower our resolve, that growing in the likeness of Christ, we may be unafraid to use the gifts you have given us and live this day to your praise and glory.

Amen

Blessing:

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways.

The Lord be with you all.

Amen