

**Text: Psalm 148 (NIV)**

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2020**

**Brightons Parish Church**

**Good morning everyone – I hope you’ve enjoyed today’s service as much as I have, because all the hard work undertaken by our Sunday School groups has truly provided a time of all age worship and so our thanks goes out to everyone, including the leaders and tech people for all the hours they have put into preparing for today.**

**Let us take a moment** now to pray before we think about God’s Word once more. May the words of my mouth, and the meditation of all our hearts, be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

**Boys and girls, during lockdown we’ve all spent a lot of time at home. Here are three places we might have spent some time: the garden; the bedroom; the living room. Which one do you think has been used a lot more...**

**during lockdown? Get up off your seats, come and tap on the screen! (PAUSE)**

**A lot of people have been telling me about all the time they have been spending in the...garden! So many people have been busy tidying up, playing in or simply enjoying their garden. Gardens are wonderful places to see incredible things and I want to show you a few things in my garden, so let's go outside. (WALK OUT TO GARDEN)**

**Well, here we are in the garden, where I've been spending time with Hope, Gill and Hector! One of the new things in our garden are these plants – can you guess what they might be? They're very small just now but hopefully they'll grow to be much taller over the summer! Can you guess? (PAUSE)**

**These are sunflowers**, which my dad gave me to grow with Hope, but I'm clearly not as good at growing things as my dad because **here's a picture** of his sunflowers, which have grown so tall already! Now, over the summer a beautiful flower will appear on each plant. But do you know that **each sunflower** is actually made up of over 1000 individual flowers, all held together on a single stalk. That's incredible, and it makes me marvel at this wonderful world! Let's see something else in my garden.

**(MOVE)** Up in this tree, is a bird box, and the blue tits have hatched and flown out. **Do you remember Ian** telling us about the bird box in his garden? Well, Ian sent me some pictures of the baby birds when they left the bird box, and now that they have, Ian has also been able to

**look inside the box and see the incredible nest that they built – again, I’m left marvelling at this wonderful world!**

**I’ve really enjoyed** being in the garden during lockdown but I’ve also enjoyed going out for walks – we usually go **up into Ercall Wood** and again, there have been times when we’ve stopped and marvelled at this wonderful world, even on a windy day, and **we’ve also marvelled** at the sunset from our study window.

**I wonder if that’s why** the psalmist wrote the song we read today? Did he look around and see all the incredible things in the world? And knowing that each one was made by God, is that why the psalmist calls upon everything to praise God?

**But, how does the sunflower, the bird, the field or sun praise God? Well, there's actually a clue in the psalm. We read that all the world is to **praise the Lord** because '...at his command they were created... [they] do his bidding...' (v5, 8) – basically they praise God just by being there and doing what they do! The sunflower, bird, field and sun fulfil their purpose by simply going about their business – as they blossom a thousand flowers, build intricate nests, dance in the breeze or shine with the colours of love – in just being who they are, they praise the Lord, for they are heeding His Word of creation to be a flower, a bird, a breeze in the field and the sun in the sky.**

**I wonder if the psalmist was looking out on the world around him, seeing how wonderful it all was, but maybe also hearing its collective voice of praise to the Creator, a collective voice where nothing was out of tune!**

**Beginning next Sunday**, we're going to spend five weeks looking around this wonderful creation and seeing what it teaches us of God. We'll be learning a new song, which you can hear after the service today. There'll also be interviews with scientists, dramas and much more.

**But we'd also like to hear** your questions. For the boys and girls, we are looking to answer one of your questions about science and faith every week in the service, so get someone at home to send those questions into us.

For adults and young people, we're going to have a **Question and Answer evening** on Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, but we need your questions by this Friday – so please get them in and we'll get our panel of local scientists to talk through your questions.

**One reason for doing this, is to help us see that science and faith are not opposed, for this wonderful creation points us to a wonderful Creator. **So, get your questions** in and join us for our summer services – we'll also be giving out these books to all children and young people!**

**Boys and girls, what part of the world, what part of creation, makes you go “wow!” – why don't you share that with someone at home or think about it just now for 30 seconds. (PAUSE)**

**There are so many wonderful things in our world, things that make us go “wow!” and the psalmist helps us see that all of these parts of creation sing a song of praise to God, and they sing it in perfect tune and unison.**

**Boys and girls, the person** who wrote this song didn't just say everything in the sky, and all the plants and animals on the ground, were to praise God – who else is meant to praise God? Who else did he mention in the psalm? Will I read a little bit **to you again**? '...men and women, [elderly] and children' (v12) – so who else is to praise God? (PAUSE) That's right – you and me! All of us! We're all to praise God! We're to praise God because He made us, but the psalm gives us another reason to praise God as well.

**The psalm says:** God '...raised up for his people a horn...' (v14) – that sounds very strange! Is it a horn, like on a rhino? No – that's not what he means! **But what does the horn of a rhino do?** Let's talk or think about that for 30 seconds at home just now. (PAUSE)

**I think a horn helps** to protect the rhino, especially when it's in danger. The horn also helps the rhino have a good life because with a horn, a rhino can do more things.

But the psalmist isn't talking about a rhino, the psalmist is talking about a person, a person who helps protect and rescue people, a person who helps others find life. I wonder, does that remind you of anyone? It reminds me of Jesus, **because He said:** 'I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full.' (John 10:10)

**Jesus also said,** 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.' (John 10:11)  
Jesus was saying He would help us receive this eternal life, by dying on the cross, for you and for me.

**So, that's another reason to praise God – because God loved us so much, that He died, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, God in a human body, died on the cross, for love of you and me, so that we could be rescued, protected and given eternal life by coming to know Father God for ourselves, when our sins are forgiven.**

**When we realise all that God has done for us, we're supposed to add our voice to the whole of creation and join in praise to God! And when we do that, and only when we do that, are we then also singing in tune to our Creator, the One who loved us enough to die for us.**

**I pray that all of us, young and young at heart, may add our own voices to the great song of creation and invite others to do so as well! May it be so. Amen.**