**Home Service Sheet for Sunday 6th March 2022**

**Call To Worship:                Psalm 145:1-7**

**1**I will extol you, my God and King,
    and bless your name forever and ever.
**2**Every day I will bless you
    and praise your name forever and ever.
**3**Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,
    and his greatness is unsearchable.

**4**One generation shall commend your works to another,
    and shall declare your mighty acts.
**5**On the glorious splendour of your majesty,
    and on your wondrous works, I will meditate.
**6**They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds,
    and I will declare your greatness.
**7**They shall pour forth the fame of your abundant goodness
    and shall sing aloud of your righteousness.

**Opening Prayer**

Gracious God we bring You our praise today for You are all powerful and all loving. In You is found both mercy and justice, and You have graciously made Yourself known to us in and through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Even though we are just lowly creatures You have drawn us into Your family as adopted children through the sacrifice of Your Son. Lord we praise You and worship You today! In Your Word You have revealed Your character to us and shown us how to live life in all the fullness that that You intended. Help us today to see You as You truly are and worship You as You deserve. In Jesus’ Name we pray, amen.

**Hymn:**                                  **O God beyond all praising** by ***Michael Perry***

[**https://youtu.be/PnnQpC9oLxU**](https://youtu.be/PnnQpC9oLxU)

O God beyond all praising, we worship You today
And sing the love amazing that songs cannot repay;
For we can only wonder at every gift You send,
At blessings without number and mercies without end:
We lift our hearts before You and wait upon Your word,
We honour and adore You, our great and mighty Lord.

Then hear, O gracious Saviour, accept the love we bring,
That we who know Your favour may serve You as our King;
And whether our tomorrows be filled with good or ill,
We'II triumph through our sorrows and rise to bless You still:
To marvel at Your beauty and glory in Your ways,
And make a joyful duty our sacrifice of praise.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Bible Reading:                    Hebrews 7:1-10**

**1**For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, **2**and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace.**3**He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

**4**See how great this man was to whom Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils! **5**And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to take tithes from the people, that is, from their brothers, though these also are descended from Abraham. **6**But this man who does not have his descent from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. **7**It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. **8**In the one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. **9**One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, **10**for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

**Reflection**

This week we return to the little known priest Melchizedek who we learned a few things about earlier in our series from the letter to the Hebrews. In of himself Melchizedek is not a particularly important person, but he is important in that he points us towards Jesus. Melchizedek is presented to us as being like Jesus, the Son of God, in a few specific ways. So as we look at what our reading has to say about Melchizedek let us keep our eyes and minds focused on Jesus.

Melchizedek was both a priest and a king, an odd and unusual combination, and yet Jesus is also both King and Priest. His very name points towards him being a ‘king of righteousness’ (v.2), and of course Jesus truly was and is the King of righteousness. In fact only Jesus is truly righteous, as the Apostle Paul reminds us in the third chapter of his letter to the Romans. It is only through Jesus’ righteousness that we can be made right with God, as Jesus fulfils His priestly role on our behalf before His Heavenly Father. Also, just as Abraham received the blessing of Melchizedek, so in a similar way we receive the blessings of our High Priest through faith in Him. We receive the offer of forgiveness for our sins and the promise of eternal life through adoption into God’s family. Jesus is our King of peace, making peace between God and us through His perfect sacrifice.

So far these basic facts can be found also in Genesis chapter 14 (vv.18-20). However, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the author of this letter goes further by pointing to the similarities between Jesus and Melchizedek that are not written down for us in Genesis. If you like, this is a case of filling in the blanks, although we should not try to do this ourselves, using our own intellect because we’re likely to come to wrong conclusions. It’s important to stick to what God has revealed to us in and through His Word alone.

In verse 3 we are pointed to two key similarities. Firstly, Melchizedek’s family or genealogy are not recorded for us. This is actually extremely odd as Genesis generally is at pains to point out the family and lineage of those about whom it tells us. Yet Melchizedek’s lineage is strangely left out. His priesthood is not based on being of the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, which all other priests needed to be. In the same way, Jesus’ priesthood is not reliant upon His lineage, as humanly speaking He was of the tribe of Judah and the family of David. This did, however, qualify Jesus to be the true King of Jerusalem.

Secondly, we are not told when Melchizedek was born or when he died. This is not important information for us to have, but it does point us towards Jesus who is described elsewhere in Scripture as the alpha and omega (beginning and end). In the beginning was the Word – Jesus has always existed and continues to exist for all eternity. As an aside we should realise that just because we are not told Melchizedek’s family history, it doesn’t mean he didn’t have one. Melchizedek was a flesh and blood king and priest with a human father and mother. He was born and he died, it’s just that Scripture does not record these details for us.

Our reading now turns to comparing Melchizedek to the Levitical priests of the family of Aaron. In verse 4 he is described as great, and later in verse 7 he is described as superior to Abraham. Despite knowing so little about Melchizedek we are encouraged to see him as special and above other mentioned human beings. If Melchizedek is great and superior, then how much more so is Jesus both great and superior to all of us? If Abraham gave one tenth of his spoils of war to this priest, how much more do we owe to Jesus Christ who has waged battle on our behalf against sin and death and been victorious?

Look again at verse 6, “But this man (Melchizedek)… received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises.” In this verse I believe we see the main point. We should see ourselves as being something like Abraham. We are lesser and have received wonderful promises from God. In coming before God we have nothing of our own to offer that God needs. What we do have has already been given us by God’s provision, and the promises that we have been given are not reliant on any action of our own, but rather upon the grace of God. The promises of forgiveness of our sins and eternal life may only be received through grace alone by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

As we come to Jesus, our great High Priest of the order of Melchizedek, we simply bring ourselves by faith, and in return we are blessed by Jesus with forgiveness and salvation unto eternal life. How much greater blessings are these than any that Abraham or his descendants received in the past? Let us be thankful to God for His promises to us in and through His Son, and for the blessings He gives us in fulfilling His promises to us.Amen!

**Pastoral Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Word and for all that You teach us from it. We are amazed to realise that Jesus was born into His own creation, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. We rejoice in knowing Your wonderful plan of redemption, whereby Jesus was born to be King of Peace, King of Righteousness, and our heavenly High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Thank You that by faith in Him, we might be redeemed from our sin. Keep us from being dazzled by the passing temptations this world has to offer, and thank You that Jesus is our great High Priest of heaven, who is interceding for us day and night, and pouring untold and eternal blessings upon us, for which we praise and glorify Your holy Name. In Jesus' Name we pray, amen.

**Benediction**

Heavenly Father, as You blessed Abraham with great promises for him and his descendants, may You also bless us today as Your children. Help us to know and appreciate the joy of Your salvation, and may Your Holy Spirit empower us to share the life-giving message of the Gospel with those whom we meet. We ask this in the precious Name of Jesus, amen.