

**Worship for 18<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (complete text. A video version is also online)  
Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.**

*GOD IS MOST GLORIFIED WHEN WE ARE MOST  
SATISFIED IN HIM*

Hello, you catch me sitting here enjoying a beautiful freshly baked chocolate croissant and a mug of filter coffee – pure satisfaction! Our preacher for today, Nigel Saxton, has entitled today’s worship “God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in him. I’m most satisfied right now with my delicious breakfast, but how can I become more satisfied in God? My name is Michael Sharman, this is the South Warwickshire Methodist Circuit weekly online worship service. – Stay with me as we share together in glorifying God and discovering more about God’s desire for us to be filled with his joy and glorifying him in all that we are as people inhabited by the Holy Spirit and so loved by our creator

I personally find that I draw closer to God through music and hearing beautiful choirs singing with such passion helps me to focus on God’s Glory – so I invite you now to join with me in listening to this beautiful rendition of the classic hymn “To God be the Glory”. For those of you who use the hymn book “Singing the faith” this is number 94)

Hymn: StF 94 – To God be the Glory

**1. To God be the glory, great things he has done!  
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,  
who yielded his life in atonement for sin,  
and opened the life-gate that all may go in:  
*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!***

*Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;  
and give him the glory — great things he has done!*

**2. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
to every believer the promise of God!  
And every offender who truly believes,  
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives:  
*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;  
and give him the glory — great things he has done!***

**3. Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,  
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
but purer, and higher, and greater will be our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:  
*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;  
and give him the glory — great things he has done!***

Frances Jane van Alstyne, (Fanny Crosby) (1820–1915)

## Opening Prayers

Another way that Christians can glorify God is through prayer – prayer can take many forms, however I invite you now to join with me in a prayer of praise and glory. If prayer is not part of your usual tradition, feel free to use this time to sit quietly and maybe let my words speak to you at this time.

Heavenly Father, Hear the praises of your children.

Heavenly Father, we love to praise your name.

Your will be done

- in our lives, in our time  
and in our communities
- we live to praise your name
- we live to glorify you
- be with us here as we meet in the mystery of your time and space
- though we are not gathered in a way that we recognise – we are gathered in your sight as your people.

Thank you oh Lord for your great creation of the world

- for the beauty of nature,  
for fields and trees, and plants  
and for all your majestic creatures.

We come today seeking more of you, more of your love.

Some come with confusion and questions,  
some with hurt and pain,  
some come with rejoicing and glad hearts  
others with sadness and loneliness in their hearts.

Some come seeking forgiveness for times they have made mistakes

- whatever we bring to the table today we hear your gracious invitation that all are welcome at your table.

We hear you boldly claim “you are my child – I love you”

- and we know that whoever we are,  
no matter how far we have strayed,  
no matter how many people have rejected us
- here at your table Lord God
- we are clean
- we are welcome
- because you say so.

And now as people reminded of our place with you at the table, we come with open hearts to glorify your name and to hear your word.

**Amen**

In preparation for Nigel’s reflection today he has been reading three pieces of scripture from the Bible, an Old Testament story about King David, a Psalm and a New Testament reading about Jesus.

Jan Tyrrell and Katherine Peacop from Whitnash and Stratford Methodist Churches respectively have kindly offered to read these scriptures for us after which Nigel will speak.

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

2 Samuel 11:26-12:13 (NRSVA)

<sup>26</sup>When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him.

<sup>27</sup>When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son.

### *Nathan Condemns David*

But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord, <sup>12:1</sup>and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, ‘There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup>The rich man had very many flocks and herds; <sup>3</sup>but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with

his children; it used to eat of his meagre fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. <sup>4</sup>Now there came a traveller to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him.' <sup>5</sup>Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, 'As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; <sup>6</sup>he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.'

<sup>7</sup>Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; <sup>8</sup>I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. <sup>9</sup>Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. <sup>10</sup>Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. <sup>11</sup>Thus says the Lord: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun. <sup>12</sup>For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.'  
<sup>13</sup>David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' Nathan said to David, 'Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die.'

Psalm 51:1-12 (NRSVA)

*Prayer for Cleansing and Pardon*

- <sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.
- <sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.
- <sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.
- <sup>4</sup>Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgement.
- <sup>5</sup>Indeed, I was born guilty,  
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- <sup>6</sup>You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- <sup>7</sup>Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- <sup>8</sup>Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- <sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.
- <sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.
- <sup>11</sup>Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- <sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

John 6:24-35 (NRSVA)

- <sup>24</sup>So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.
- <sup>25</sup>When they found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you

come here?' <sup>26</sup>Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup>Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.' <sup>28</sup>Then they said to him, 'What must we do to perform the works of God?' <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.' <sup>30</sup>So they said to him, 'What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?' <sup>31</sup>Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." <sup>32</sup>Then Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' <sup>34</sup>They said to him, 'Sir, give us this bread always.'

<sup>35</sup>Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

Sermon

*2 Samuel 11 v 26 -12, 13a and John 6 v 24 -35*

As you know I was taught to isolate the dominant thought before giving any talk. You also know I do not preach as though I have got things all stitched up. I am one of you, standing among you, I preach as much to myself as to anyone listening. Now to the lectionary passages read to us for this Sunday. They involve David's being called to account by Nathan for his actions regarding Bathsheba and her husband Uriah, his repentance for these sins and from the New Testament Jesus' foundational claim in John 6

about being the bread of life. So I am going to pull these three readings together under the following title which is "*God Is Most Glorified When We Are Most Satisfied In Him*".

Lots of verses in the Psalms indicate that David was totally satisfied in God: in Psalm 16 v 11, it says "In your presence is fullness of joy, in your right hand there are pleasures forever"; in Psalm 63 v 3 David writes "the steadfast love of the Lord is better than life". Given statements like these, adultery with Bathsheba and the arranged death of her husband are more than shocking. What went wrong? One fact about scripture is its honesty. There is no whitewashing to keep David clean as an example of perfection to us all. But with this truth of scripture comes mystery. You may disagree, but I feel that as readers of the Word of God, rather than have prolonged agony about certain issues telling ourselves - "I've got to know the answer" we sometimes have to live with mystery. Anyway, back to David. A theologian with the same Christian name, who is David Pawson, says that the trials we all have in life are of two kinds – testing from God who expects us to win through, and temptation from the devil who expects us to fail. How do we know which it is when we have big problems? Good question. We need discernment from the Holy Spirit who is now available to us all – not just to selected prophets as in the O.T. - and from fellow believers which (in a way) is what Nathan is doing to David. Let us not forget that David had 8 wives whose names are listed, others whose names are not, and around 300 concubines. Given that truth and the level of satisfaction in God expressed by David in the Psalms, David's major plunge into sin is quite depressing, so (preaching to myself as always) I'll try to answer the big question – since David failed so spectacularly – what hope is there for us?

Our answer is given to us by Jesus in our reading from John where Jesus says “I am the bread of life, no-one who comes to me will be hungry again. Those who believe in me will never thirst.” Not only that, those who truly believe will never die. This is made clear in Hebrews 2 v 15 in which it is written “... since the children share in the flesh and blood, He himself partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.” Because God has justified us, we are free from fear of death. Since that is our greatest enemy, we need not fear anything and that gives us freedom, freedom to serve others and free to have satisfaction in God. We need to take hold of the fact that Jesus brings a new dimension to having faith in God. Unfortunately, most of us have been brought up with the thinking that duty, not delight is the way to glorify God. We need to take on board the truth that Jesus brings the opportunity for believers to have a faith in God at a level above that of David. Through Jesus we can be totally satisfied in God and on account of that God is glorified. Let me use an example. I have had insulin dependent diabetes for nearly 40 years. Insulin is a vital hormone produced by cells called the islets of Langerhans. When these cells fail, insulin is not produced, and life expectancy is a maximum of six months. One hundred years ago Frederick Banting and his assistant Charles Best isolated insulin and used it as a life- saving cure. Every day I give myself up to six injections. What insulin is to me in the physical realm – bringing life, Jesus is to us all as believers, being the bread of life in the spiritual realm.

Delight in God is not an add on or an optional extra, it is the most basic demand on us all. One of the reasons Jesus departed was to enable the

Holy Spirit of God to indwell us. In the three persons of the Trinity revealed in scripture, we see God at first coming to the Israelites at a distance, then coming closer with His feet actually on the ground in Jesus, and finally being even closer than alongside us – coming to indwell us by the presence of the Holy Spirit. So, we are not trying to delight in God alone in our own strength. The Holy Spirit is a divine being sent to be with us. Just as I need insulin to keep physically fit, we need the Holy Spirit to be fully spiritually fit. How can we tell if our delight in God holds number one place in our lives? I'll suggest two ways of checking – not that they stand alone. The first is to answer honestly whether Jesus is Lord in all areas of our lives. This is a list that I have found for us to run a check, by asking ourselves Is Jesus Lord of my spirit and all my worship, of my mind and all my attitudes and thinking? Is Jesus Lord of my emotions and my feelings, my will and my decisions, my sexuality and its expression? Is Jesus Lord my family and all relationships, my material goods, my finances and my hobbies and interests? By answering 'Yes' to the supremacy of Jesus in these things does not mean we cannot take pleasure in them, they are gifts from God, but they must not be seen as our first love. It helps us to put them in their proper place by remembering that they are all temporary. We should have labels stuck on all things that are from God but not God Himself, the labels read temporary, temporary, temporary.

A second way to assess our level of being satisfied in God is to ask ourselves “Does it continue during adversity? This is a tough one, as our delight in God cannot always be a 'mountain top' experience and, we generally speaking, live comfortable lives in a nation listed as the 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world with a population of 66 and a half million. Our economy is slightly

bigger than that of India BUT their population is approaching one thousand 400 million so wealth per capita is a fraction of ours. This is NOT to say that poverty is not a major issue for millions in this country.

Of course there are other adversities apart from finances that hit us such as health problems, difficulties in relationships, failure of expectations, the list goes on and on. Maybe if most things are OK regarding our circumstances, we do not concentrate enough on being satisfied in God? I suggest that if that is the case, now is the time to take action, so to finish I have found an extreme example of how having delight in God can bear fruit even in the most desperate places. It is taken from a book by Philip Yancey entitled 'Find God in Unexpected Places.' In one chapter of this book he describes a ministry called Prison Fellowship who take the Gospel to prisons. Those who visit on behalf of this organisation find that the worse the conditions are, the more success they have. This causes Philip Yancey to ask what is the worst they have ever encountered, and I now read from the answer given in his book by one of the prison visitors. "In one of the worst prisons in Africa we are led to a secret inner prison, built at the centre of the main one, where we approach a steel cage like building, covered in wire mesh. Cells line the outside of the cage surrounding an area 5 metres by 15 metres. This is the exercise area for prisoners who are kept in cells so small that they cannot all lie down at once for 23 hours every day. For one hour a day they are allowed to walk in the exercise cage. The African sun has heated up the whole place so that the air is unbearably foul. This is because there are no sanitation facilities and prisoners are forced to defecate in their food pans. And yet, here is what happened when our arrival was announced. Eighty or so of the 120 prisoners began to sing

hymns in a beautiful four part harmony. The contrast between their peaceful faces and the horror of their surroundings was absolutely overwhelming." It seems that one truth about life is that severe human need makes us particularly receptive to the grace of God, so let us battle against the baubles of material comfort that surround us in our fight for joy. This battle involves putting Jesus at the centre of our lives. For a song to resonate with this talk, the obvious choice is 'Jesus be the centre', as we sing, let us ask ourselves - "Do I *really mean* what I am singing here."

Hymn: StF 447 – Jesus be the Centre

1. **Jesus, be the centre,  
be my source, be my light,  
Jesus.  
Jesus, be the centre,  
be my source, be my light,  
Jesus.  
*Be the fire in my heart,  
be the wind in these sails;  
be the reason that I live,  
Jesus, Jesus.***
2. **Jesus, be the centre,  
be my hope, be my song,  
Jesus.  
Jesus, be the centre,  
be my hope, be my song,  
Jesus.  
*Be the fire in my heart,  
be the wind in these sails;  
be the reason that I live,  
Jesus, Jesus.***
3. **Jesus, be my vision,  
be my path, be my guide,  
Jesus.  
Jesus, be my vision,  
be my path, be my guide,**

Jesus.

*Be the fire in my heart,  
be the wind in these sails;  
be the reason that I live,  
Jesus, Jesus.*

4. Jesus, be the centre,  
be my source, be my light,  
Jesus.  
Jesus, be the centre,  
be my source, be my light,  
Jesus.

Michael Frye

#### THE RESPONSE

Thank you, Nigel, for your words, and thank you for choosing that beautiful song.

Prayers of intercession

At this point in our worship we usually pray once more, and that is what we will do, our prayers at this stage usually focus on prayers for the world and for people in need. With our theme today it can be so easy to think that all is well with the world and that God keeps us in a permanent bubble of blissful unawareness, but the truth is, as we all know, that is not the case. So we come now to God carrying our hurts, fears and anxieties in the knowledge that God hears us and cares for us. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, Hear the cries of your children.

For a world polluted with hatred – for the evil of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and any other hatred based on the individuality of the way you created your children to be  
**May we stand firm in our resolve to combat hatred**

For a world polluted by violence – for the evil of domestic abuse, hate crime, war, famine, persecution, people smuggling, ethnic cleansing,

rape, modern day slavery and all that takes away the dignity and worth of your children.

**May we stand firm in our resolve to combat violence**

For a world polluted by inequality – for the evil of low pay, substandard housing, neglect of the vulnerable, tax avoidance by our most wealthy, systems of Government that hold people back. In our prayers and actions help us to shine your love to your neglected children.

**May we stand firm in our resolve to combat inequality**

For a world polluted by environmental destruction – for the evil of rain forest clearance, plastic waste, for litter and the neglect of public spaces. For failure to combat climate change and a reluctance to embrace cleaner energy sources to hand on to our children.

**May we stand firm in our resolve to combat the destruction of your world**

For a world enriched by young children – for the joy of holidays, days out, play and laughter, for our children's mission work here in our circuit – for our uniformed groups, Sunday groups and new expressions of family engagement – may our churches be places where all children may come in.

**May we stand firm in our resolve to be a place of welcome for children**

For a world enriched by those who work in service for others – for the service of doctors, nurses, paramedics, police, fire, social workers, teachers, street cleaners and so many more – may these brave people know your rest and your comfort at this time.

**May we stand firm in our resolve to be a place of comfort for public servants.**

For a world enriched by experience and lifetimes of knowledge and growth, for those entering

retirement years, for those having to give up roles they have held for so long due to ill health or frailty, for those whose minds are affected by dementia or other conditions, for those facing the end of life and the promise of new life with you in Heaven. May these faithful believers know your peace at this time.

**May we stand firm in our resolve to be a place of love and support to our elderly.**

For a world enriched by ordained and lay workers in our churches, for Barbara stepping down from a lifetime of ordained ministry, for Sam exploring the path you have set for him, for Jemima and Audrey taking sabbaticals around this time, for Iain, Jeongsook, Richard and for Sally who will be joining us soon. May your servants receive from you a vision for spiritual growth in our churches.

**May we stand firm in our resolve to support and encourage those who are sent by you to travel with us on our path to glorifying you.**

And we conclude all our prayers now in the words of the Lord's Prayer... (Traditional form)

**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 who 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**

Hymn: 10000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

**Bless the Lord, O my soul**

**O my soul**

**Worship His holy name**

**Sing like never before**

**O my soul**

**I worship Your holy name**

**The sun comes up; it's a new day dawning**

**It's time to sing Your song again**

**Whatever may pass and whatever lies before  
me**

**Let me be singing when the evening comes**

**Bless the Lord, O my soul**

**O my soul**

**Worship His holy name**

**Sing like never before**

**O my soul**

**I worship Your holy name**

**You're rich in love and You're slow to anger**

**Your name is great and Your heart is kind**

**For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing**

**10,000 reasons for my heart to find**

**Bless the Lord, O my soul**

**O my soul**

**Worship His holy name**

**Sing like never before**

**O my soul**

**I worship Your holy name**

**And on that day when my strength is failing**

**The end draws near and my time has come**

**Still my soul will sing Your praise unending**

**10,000 years and then forever more**

**Bless the Lord, O my soul**

**O my soul**

**Worship His holy name**

**Sing like never before**

**O my soul**

**I worship Your holy name**

**Bless the Lord, O my soul**  
**O my soul**  
**Worship His holy name**  
**Sing like never before**  
**O my soul**  
**I worship Your holy name**  
**I worship Your holy name**  
**I worship Your holy name**

*Matt Redman*

The Offering & prayer

We're coming now to the end of our time together, I want to thank all those who have been involved in putting together this service, both those who you have seen on screen and those who have worked hard in the background to make this all possible. I want to thank also **you**, for joining with us today, I pray you were blessed by the experience and that you will go away from this time eager to Glorify God further. I want to also thank those who support the work of the South Warwickshire Circuit with financial giving – without which we could not do all that we do.

So before we share our final song which will be sung for us today by the young people of Wesley Memorial Church in Oxford, let's commit all of these thank yous to God in prayer and then bless each other as we go off back into the world:

Almighty God, giver of all good things, who is most glorified when we are most satisfied in you – accept our gratitude for all that you give us, accept the labours of your people, for the skills and the voices of your people given in your service. And accept our offerings of money given freely trusting in this circuit to spend it wisely and to your glory. Amen

And now, may the God who satisfies the hearts and souls of all who seek him, all who willingly

take up their seats freely offered at his table be with you this day and forever more as you go into the world singing praises and glory to his great name Amen

THE DISMISSAL

Hymn: StF 487 – You shall go out with joy

**You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace,**  
**and the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you.**  
**There'll be shouts of joy and the trees of the field**  
**shall clap, shall clap their hands,**  
**and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,**  
**and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,**  
**and the trees of the field shall clap their hands,**  
**and you'll go out with joy.**

*(Sing 3 times)*

Stuart Dauermann (b. 1944) and Steffi Geiser Rubin

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StF 447 – Jesus be the Centre

Michael Frye

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10000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

*Matt Redman*

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StF 487 – You shall go out with joy

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StF 94 – To God be the Glory

Frances Jane van Alstyne, (Fanny Crosby) (1820–1915)

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