

28th June 2020

Gates

**“O enter then his gates with praise,
Approach with joy his courts unto;
Praise, laud and bless his name always,
For it is seemly so to do.”**

William Kethe, All people that on earth do dwell, 1561

The gates of our churches have been closed for some time, and it looks like a return to the days when they are thrown open in unconditional welcome are still a long way off. So, how are people supposed to “enter then his gates with praise” when the church gates remain firmly shut?

For 40 years in the wilderness the Hebrew tribes carried with them the “Ark of the Covenant”, a visible symbol for the people of the promises and holiness of God. But they had no building to house God’s presence. They were a “tent people”, moving from place to place, taking time to “approach with joy his courts unto” right where they were. Does the same God not go with us too? Are we not aware of his holiness where we are?

For many years, the great Church of Scotland Communion praise has been verses 7-10 of Psalm 24, to the rousing tune, *St George’s Edinburgh*.

*Ye gates, lift up your heads on high;
Ye doors that last for aye,
Be lifted up, that so the King
Of Glory enter may.*

This is not a physical throwing open of the gates of a church, or a temple, or a sanctuary. This is a metaphor of the wonder of worship that might be possible in the presence of the King of Glory. This is the height of praise our God deserves. Need that be confined to bricks and mortar?

Let’s throw open the gates of our hearts to the holiness of God. Let’s throw open the gates of our minds to more of God’s message of grace for the world. Let’s throw open the gates of our imagination so that the King of Glory might be found in all of our living. “Ye gates”, never, ever closed.

A prayer for today

Remind us, ever-present God, that you will not be confined by our structures or our buildings, and that you challenge us to know you on all the journey of faith. Amen.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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