

On Sunday it will be Aldersgate Sunday. We will commemorate the day that John Wesley's life changed forever. The day he had an experience that 'warmed his heart'.

This is the account from his diary that day:

Wednesday May 24, 1738.

What occur'd on Wedn. 24, I think best to relate at large, after premising what might make it the better understood. Let him that cannot receive it, ask of the Father of Lights, that he would give more Light both to him and to me.

I think it was about five this Morning, that I opened my Testament on those words, "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, even that ye should be partakers in the divine Nature." 2 Pet. i. 4. Just as I went out, I open'd it again on those Words, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." In the Afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The Anthem was, "Out of the Deep have I call'd unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my Voice. O let thine Ears consider well the Voice of my Complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is Mercy with thee; therefore thou shalt be feared. O Israel, trust in the Lord: For with the Lord there is Mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his Sins."

In the Evening I went very unwillingly to a Society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a Quarter before nine. While he was describing the Change which God works in the Heart thro' faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warm'd. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for Salvation: And an Assurance was given me, That He had taken away my Sins, even mine, and saved me from the Law of Sin and Death.

- John Wesley

The reading from 2 Peter that he refers to reads like this in The Message translation:

Don't Put It Off

³⁻⁴ Everything that goes into a life of pleasing God has been miraculously given to us by getting to know, personally and intimately, the One who invited us to God. The best invitation we ever received! We were also given absolutely terrific promises to pass on to you—your tickets to participation in the life of God after you turned your back on a world corrupted by lust.

And the part of Luther's Preface to the Letter of Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans reads

Faith is a work of God in us, which... makes us completely different people in heart, mind, senses and all our powers...

We are going to use a combination of these to guide our time with God as we reflect on what it means for us in our situation.

We are invited to God.

From our depths
we call to him,
from where we are.

God hears us
and listens.

We take some time
to be in that presence,
to hear God's invitation
to you
personally
and to me.

God is waiting,
longing to hear what you have to say
to God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Let us not put it off.

God is at work in us
making us the people
he created us to be...

With the Psalmist we say,
I will wait for you
Until my soul is satisfied.

How are you feeling today?

Are you here willingly
or unwillingly?
Because some how you feel you should be
or because you long to be in God's presence?

Are you waiting to hear what God has to say to you
or feeling that God has stopped saying anything at all?

Do you feel God
intimately,
personally?
Have you got separated from one another?
or never made a connection?

Are you carrying a burden
that you need to hand over?
Is there something wrong in your life
that you need to give God to deal with?

Is your heart warm?
Or is it broken,

confused,
racing away?

Where in your life
could you do with the warmth of God?

God invites us,
you,
me,
personally
to come to him.

To come as we are
whatever we bring,
whatever we need,
however we are

We are invited,
intimately,
warmly,
to participate
in all God brings,
all God is.

To know God's change
in our heart
and our lives.

To know for sure
God's forgiveness,
God's presence.
God's love
and God's peace.

God invites you to know those things
now
in your life,
in your heart,
in and through him.

For now bless us Lord we pray.
Where we need your forgiveness
may we know it.
Where we need stirring
agitate us.
Where we need your warmth within us
light the flame.
Where we need your peace

may we feel it deeply.
Where we need hope
may we see how you offer it.
May we know your presence
wherever we are
Father,
Son
and Holy Spirit

Amen

If God has spoken to you somehow today, If your heart has been strangely warmed, or you have realised it isn't, do please speak to someone you trust. A Christian friend, someone from your church, your Minister. Speak more with God and hear all he longs to tell you.

You can find a link to a beautiful modern version of Psalm 130, which is the anthem Wesley refers to in the link on the Circuit Website. You can use that to continue to spend time with God, to cry out to God, to share your longings, to spend time waiting with God.

<https://youtu.be/8C3WQ1G1Uso>