

11th June 2023 – Morning Service

Trust
Jill Martin

Call to Worship - Psalm 33 : 1-5

Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.
Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.
Sing to him a new song; play skilfully, and shout for joy.
For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.
The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.

StF 88 – Praise to the Lord

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| 1) Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King
of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health
and salvation!
All ye who hear, brothers and sisters, draw near,
Praise him in glad adoration. | 4) Praise to the Lord, who, when darkness of
sin is abounding,
Who, when the godless do triumph,
all virtue confounding,
Sheddeth his light, chaseth the horrors of night,
Saints with his mercy surrounding. |
| 2) Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work
and defend thee;
Surely his goodness and mercy here daily
attend thee:
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
Who with his love doth befriend thee. | 5) Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me
adore him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with
praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again:
Gladly for aye we adore him. |
| 3) Praise to the Lord, who doth nourish thy life and restore thee,
Fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever before thee,
Then to thy need he like a mother doth speed,
Spreading the wings of grace o'er thee. | |

Joachim Neander translated by Catherine Winkworth and Rupert E Davies

Prayer of Adoration

Eternal God and Father, in you is the source of all life, the fount of all wisdom, the well spring of all grace. Your days are without end; your loving mercies without number. We depend on you; and remember your goodness to us and to those who have gone before us. We tell your story in every generation: you are our familiar God, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, God of a pilgrim people, your Church. But you are not a captive God, not a God of our own making, not bound by us, not controlled by us. Ahead of us, leading us, guiding us and calling us, you are the Lord God, all wise all compassionate. To you we lift our hearts and we worship you, one God for ever and ever. **Amen**

Prayer of Confession

Father, we rejoice in your dependability throughout all ages. Nothing can separate us from your love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Relying on that love we turn to you in penitence and faith; moved by your holiness we confess our sin. You call us to place our confidence in you. You have assured us of eternal life in Christ. You have declared us to belong to you in the sign of baptism, and you have poured your Spirit into our lives. But only with great timidity do we call you "Father", we hesitate to claim Christ as Lord. We keep the Spirit's gifts to ourselves. Assure us again, good Lord, of your goodness. Make us afresh to be your living Church. Raise in us a hymn of praise that we may be joyful children of a loving Father; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

StF 419 – Almighty God we come to make confession

- 1) Almighty God, we come to make confession,
For we have sinned in thought and word and deed.
We now repent in honesty and sorrow;
Forgive us, Lord, and meet us in our need.
- 2) Forgiving God, I come to make confession
Of all the harm and hurt that I have done;
Of bitter words and many selfish actions,
Forgive me, Lord, and make me like your Son.
- 3) Forgiving God, I come to make confession
Of all that I have failed to do this day;
Of help withheld, concern and love restricted,
Forgive me, Lord, and lead me in your way.
- 4) Redeeming God, we come to seek forgiveness,
For Jesus Christ has died to set us free.
Forgive the past and fill us with your Spirit
That we may live to serve you joyfully.

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Reading: Genesis 12: 1-9

The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'

So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there. Abram travelled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

From there he went on towards the hills east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord. Then Abram set out and continued towards the Negev.

Reflection

Abram, his original name, was well settled with his wife Sarai. They lived alongside family and community and made a living for themselves. I imagine it was a comfortable life. Abram had already moved with his father Terah and new bride Sarai from Ur intending to live in Canaan, but when they came to Harran they settled there and remained there where they established their community. We are told in Genesis 11 that Terah lived 205 years! So we hear that without warning the Lord spoke to Abram telling him to uproot himself and his wife and take all his possessions and move to a new land which God would show him. They were to turn their backs on their way of living, their kindred and set off to where?

Imagine hearing this instruction, there was no way Abram could know what was to happen, no way of knowing for certain that it was indeed God speaking. Wasn't it just foolish to gather his life and possessions and just set out into a new terrain full of possible danger taking everything he had in the world with him? Even the promise that God made 'I will make of you a great nation'. Tell that to Sarai, she had left everything behind once before when she was a new bride, why was God giving this instruction? Why had God chosen Abram? Did Abram want to become leader of a new nation, he was 75, no spring chicken he was settled and comfortable where he was.

But whilst other mortals might have ignored the instruction Abram not only showed he had a deep faith in God he demonstrated this by showing complete trust in what he was instructed to do. We are not told of any debate, nor argument, trying to make sense of what God was telling him to do, he did it! Gathering his possessions, his wife Sarai and Lot, his brother's son and all their servants they left behind all that was familiar and travelled into a personal wilderness, not knowing where they would end up.

Imagine what the reaction of their community would have been, was Abram ridiculed for his decision, did the community help them prepare for the journey, did they show sadness at the departure, or was this such a regular thing that no one did anything. At the time were all people nomadic, following their dreams to find a rich new land where they could live in peace and prosperity?

We follow the route to Canaan and when he arrived we are told that God now appeared to Abram, "To your offspring I will give this land". Abram's first deed in this land was to build an altar to God where God had appeared to him. Abram continued his journey until he reached where he was to settle and again he built an altar to God and "invoked the name of the Lord" Abram then continued his journey by stages.

God spoke to Abram and Abram responded, God appeared to Abram and as a result Abram built an altar a visible sign of God's presence and as his journey continued, stage by stage, he surely built more altars taking God with him through the land, marking not only Abram's ownership of the land but the presence of God travelling and continuing to lead him.

In the words of the hymn "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform". Has God spoken to you asking you to do something which felt too much? What did you do?

StF 481 – The Lord's my shepherd

1) The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me lie in pastures green,
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul.

*Ch) And I will trust in you alone,
And I will trust in you alone,
For your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.*

2) He guides my ways in righteousness,
And he anoints my head with oil;
And my cup - it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.

3) And though I walk the darkest path -
I will not fear the evil one,
For you are with me, and your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know.

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Reading: Matthew 9: 9-13, 18-26

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'

While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, 'My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.' Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples. Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.' Jesus turned and saw her. 'Take heart, daughter,' he said, 'your faith has healed you.' And the woman was healed at that moment. When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and the people playing pipes, he said, 'Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep.' But they laughed at him. After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. News of this spread through all that region.

Reflection

Jesus has just returned from crossing the lake from the land of Gaderenes, he had released a possessed man from the demons which had taken him and as a result the people from the town begged him to leave. He had on his return healed a paralysed man saying, "Take heart, son your sins are forgiven." This was enough to invoke an outraged reaction from the scribes that Jesus was blasphemous, who was he to forgive sin?

Having upset the scribes but filling the watching crowds with awe and allowing them to glorify God, Jesus continued walking and came upon Matthew sitting in a tax booth. In the days of Jesus tax collectors were almost below the level of Gentiles. They were hated because they worked for the Roman authorities, they handled Roman, therefore unclean coins and also were believed to be thieves, stealing from their own kind. Matthew would have clearly known his worth in the Jewish community. Jesus saw Matthew and said "Follow me." Matthew heard and reacted, he left behind his livelihood and followed Jesus. No debate, no time of consideration but a display of absolute trust

Jesus went on to have dinner with other tax collectors and sinners. This time Pharisees saw what was happening but instead of questioning Jesus they questioned his followers about what Jesus' reason was to sit with those who were unclean. When he heard the questioning Jesus explanation was clear, those who consider themselves free of sin do not need him but those who acknowledge their need for peace and forgiveness in their life do. "For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners"

Later on and in complete contrast, Matthew tells us that a leader of the Synagogue came to Jesus and knelt before him. A leader of the Synagogue would have been a very powerful man within his community, certainly not someone who would kneel before anyone. A man who had obviously heard of Jesus, maybe heard him speak and had respect for him, maybe someone who had witnessed a healing miracle. He demonstrates an incredible faith and trust in Jesus because he tells of his daughter's death but trusts that Jesus will be able to help her by just laying his hands on her. Jesus then becomes a follower taking with him his disciples following the man to his home and daughter.

But then another person appears, a woman who should not be in public, she is unclean because of her medical condition. Matthew shares her thoughts with his readers, her faith and trust is that Jesus is so powerful she does not need to speak just to touch his cloak is enough for her healing. She reaches out and touches the fringe of his cloak and immediately she is healed. Jesus turned round and tells her "Take heart, daughter your faith has made you well"

Jesus continues to the home of the dead girl and sees the mourners, musicians and crowd, he turns them away by saying the child is sleeping, they laugh at him. Jesus goes into the house, where there is supposedly a dead body and takes her hand, the girl gets up. Jesus breaks yet another rule - in the parable of the Good Samaritan, it is clear that Rabbi and religious rulers must not have contact with a dead body or they become unclean until they can follow the ritual of cleansing.

Word of this miracle spreads throughout the district. In Mark's Gospel we are told that the girl is the 12 year old daughter of Jairus and the the woman with the haemorrhage had been bleeding for 12 years. Her touch of Jesus' cloak was felt by Jesus, as the woman was healed.

The call of Matthew and the two healings demonstrate to the audience both trust and faith. There is no great show of power but a belief that a word or a touch show God's love for all people through the gift of his son. Jesus is never too busy or otherwise engaged to see, feel and know our deepest needs and we know that when we go to Jesus in faith and trust our needs will be met. We may not receive instant healing as the woman and the daughter but Jesus will always respond and be with us.

StF 531 – What a friend we have in Jesus

- 1) What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!
- 2) Have we trials and temptations,
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged:
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness:
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
- 3) Are we weak and heavy-laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge -
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In his arms he'll take and shield you,
You will find a solace there.

Joseph Melicott Scriven

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord God, when we hear your story, we recognise your presence: the same God, yesterday, today and forever. You placed men and women at the heart of your creation, and all you provided for us is good. You dared to give us co responsibility with you for life itself. Time and again through prophet and patriarch, through faithful men and women you recalled your people to your loving purposes for them. At the right time your Son Jesus Christ lived our life, died our death and raised us up, and through his Spirit we call you Father. Today we thank you for the power of Jesus to heal and save, we rejoice with those who come to Him openly or in secret and we praise you for the faith which makes us whole. Father, fill us with your Spirit that we may boldly declare your love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen**

Prayer of Intercession

Loving God, we pray for those governments who put their trust in might and strength and not in right and justice. We put our trust in people who put their trust in leaders who manipulate and deceive them. We pray for the needy, the oppressed, the persecuted who are no longer able to trust those in power. Lord we ask for a world that follows the vision of your kingdom, a world ruled by justice, wisdom and compassion. God our rock and salvation help us to build our lives on you.

Loving God, we pray for our society which puts its trust in success and belongings and not in goodness and love. We pray for those who have been hurt and let down by those they trusted, abused children, betrayed friends and lovers, broken families. We pray for the unemployed, the lonely, the frail and all who have been let down by our society. Lord we ask for a society built on lasting values, a society where we learn to respect and care and love. God our rock and our salvation help us to build our lives on you.

Loving God, we pray for ourselves, for the church, too often putting our trust in our adherence to religion, rather than living in faith in you. We pray for those who have looked to the church and been let down by its shortcomings. We pray for the spiritually hungry, the guilt ridden, the lonely and all those who long to know and trust you. Lord, we want to be a church that always puts you first, a church equipped to spread the gospel of salvation. God our rock and salvation help us to build our lives on you. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

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.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

StF 464 – God it was who said to Moses

- 1) God it was who said to Abraham,
'Pack your bags and travel on.'
God it was who said to Sarah,
'Smile and soon you'll bear a son.'
Travelling folk and aged mothers
Wandering when they thought they'd done -
This is how we find God's people,
Leaving all because of One.
- 2) God it was who said to Moses,
'Save my people, part the sea.'
God it was who said to Miriam,
'Sing and dance to show you're free.'
Shepherd-saints and tambourinists
Doing what God knew they could -
This is how we find God's people,
Liberating what they should.
- 3) God it was who said to Joseph,
'Down your tools and take your wife.'
God it was who said to Mary,
'In your womb, I'll start my life!'
Carpenter and country maiden
Leaving town and trade and skills -
This is how we find God's people,
Moved by what their Maker wills.
- 4) Christ it was who said, 'Zacchaeus,
I would like to eat with you.'
Christ it was who said to Martha,
'Listening's what you need to do.'
Civil servants and housekeepers,
Changing places at a cost -
This is how Christ summons people,
Calling both the loved and lost.
- 5) In this crowd which spans the ages,
With these saints whom we revere,
God wants us to share their purpose
Starting now and starting here.
So we celebrate our calling,
So we raise both heart and voice,
As we pray that through our living
More may find they are God's choice.

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Blessing

Jesus we know you will be us to the end of the age, we ask to know your love surrounding us and the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit walk with us every day. **Amen**