

24th July 2022 – Morning Service

Teach us to pray

Rev Chris Watson

Call to Worship

Come and receive that which is beyond words, that which is beyond price, that which will never let you down. Come and receive the love of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Come. **Amen.**

StF 186 – Tell out my soul

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| 1) Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord! Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice; Tender to me the promise of his word. In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice. | 3) Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might! Powers and dominions lay their glory by; Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight The hungry fed, the humble lifted high. |
| 2) Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name! Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done His mercy sure, from age to age the same; His holy name - the Lord, the Mighty One. | 4) Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word! Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure. Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord To children's children and for evermore! |

Timothy Dudley-Smith © Timothy Dudley-Smith CCL No. 515642

Prayer of Approach

Heaven and earth are here and the space is thin between them. Distance may divide but Christ's promise unites those bounded by time, those blessed by eternity.

L: Let heaven be glad; **R: let the whole earth cry glory**

Heaven and earth are here, the Church above and below is One, we are one with God's family of all ages and generations, we are joined with churches across the nations, with all races of God's people.

L: Let heaven be glad; **R: let the whole earth cry glory**

Heaven and earth are here and the God who made them is present. The Lamb, glorious on the throne, sits beside us; the spirit of God, the dove, makes her resting place among us. God inhales the breath of our prayers and spreads a table for our satisfaction.

L: Let heaven be glad; **R: let the whole earth cry glory**

Blessing and honour, glory and power be to our God for all eternity.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven

Lord God, you have asked us to call you our Father, for you are the Father of us all. We come as your children, knowing you long to hear us and to reveal more of yourself to us. We pray for those whom the word Father has been corrupted and spoilt by the experiences of imperfect earthly fathers. May they come to know your fatherhood as something good, something safe and secure. Enable us to grow in understanding of your fatherhood and never let us take our relationship with you for granted.

Hallowed be thy name

Lord God, we hallow your name; we call you holy, for that is what you are. | We pray that every time we use your name it will be with an awareness of whom we are speaking about. May all people learn of your holiness and may we never take your name in vain.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Lord God we pray so glibly for your will to be done, for your kingdom to come. Help us to grasp what it means for your will to be done in each of our lives. Give us strength and courage as we commit ourselves to seeking and doing your will. May all Christians let your kingdom come in them.

Give us this day our daily bread

Lord God, we pray for all that we need to live well each day, food for body, mind and spirit. Help us to use wisely of the abundance we have. We pray for those for whom daily bread is a luxury. We remember their needs. We ask for vision and motivation to change a world where some die of hunger whilst others have much more than they could ever use.

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lord God, we confess our sins to you, the sins of omission and commission. Forgive us we pray, and restore us into a right relationship with you. We pray for those who find forgiving others an impossible task. Be patient with them, Lord and help us to be understanding. We ask that they will continue to seek your forgiveness, and that they will come to a place of healing and release, finding courage to forgive those who have hurt them. Lord, teach us how to forgive each other that we may live in harmony and be restored into a right relationship with each other.

Lead us not into temptation

Lord God we are so easily led, so easily tempted. Keep us close to you so that when temptation comes we might be able to resist it in the strength that Christ gives. We pray for those who have given into temptation and feel lost and devastated. May they find your loving presence and forgiveness and be able to move on from this time of trial. We pray for each other that we might not be misled by the apparent good in life but seek always to do your will in your way.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen

StF 113 – O worship the King

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| 1) O Worship the King, all-glorious above; O gratefully sing his power and his love: Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days, Pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise. | 4) Your bountiful care what tongue can recite? It breathes in the air, it shines in the light; It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain And sweetly distils in the dew and the rain. |
| 2) O tell of his might, O sing of his grace, Whose robe is the light, whose canopy space; His chariots of wrath the deep thunder-clouds form, And dark is his path on the wings of the storm. | 5) Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail, In you do we trust, nor find you to fail; Your mercies how tender, how firm to the end, Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend. |
| 3) The earth with its store of wonders untold, Almighty, your power has founded of old; Established it fast by a changeless decree, And round it has cast, like a mantle, the sea. | 6) O measureless Might, ineffable Love, While angels delight to hymn you above, Your humbler creation, though feeble our praise, With true adoration our voices we raise. |

Robert Grant CCL No. 515642

Reading: Psalm 113

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord, you his servants; praise the name of the Lord. Let the name of the Lord be praised, both now and for evermore. From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised. The Lord is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of his people. He settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the Lord.

Reading: Luke 11:1-13

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'When you pray, say: "Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation."' "

Then Jesus said to them, 'Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him." And suppose the one inside answers, "Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything." I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

'So I say to you: ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

StF 248 – I heard the voice of Jesus say

- 1) I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, O weary one, lay down
Your head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad,
I found in him a resting-place,
And he has made me glad.
- 2) I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in him.
- 3) I heard the voice of Jesus say:
'I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto me, your morn shall rise,
And all your day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk,
Till travelling days are done.

Horatius N Bonar CCL No. 515642

A time of silence as we prepare to hear God's word

Sermon

In this passage from Luke's Gospel we see the disciples coming to Jesus and they ask him to teach them to pray, they have seen him pray and like all good disciples they want to emulate their teacher. This leads to an interesting question. Why don't they know how to pray? The Jewish people had plenty of good quality prayers and a strict pattern of prayer. Prayers were to be said at the third, sixth and ninth hour of every day. Prayer was and is at the centre of their day. The Shema is a well known daily prayer, recited at the beginning and end of daylight, a great prayer based upon Deuteronomy 6 which at its simplest states: "*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.*"

There were many other prayers which formed the liturgy at the synagogue and more which covered all aspects of daily life. So why did the disciples need to be taught how to pray?

The disciples would have known the formulas used for prayer in the scriptures but they came wanting more. They had seen how Jesus prayed - how he went to a quiet place, how he didn't make a song and dance about it, didn't use the usual flowery language to impress others. Perhaps they had glimpsed some of the relationship he had with God and maybe, just maybe, they wanted something like it. Perhaps they knew that the way to a relationship with God was to know how to communicate with God.

So Jesus tells a story as he often did to illustrate his point. It goes like this. A man has a visitor late at night and he asks for some bread but the man has no bread available. Laws of hospitality in this world say that he must provide for his visitor, so he goes in search of bread to his friend. The friend says he is in bed and getting up will mean disturbing his family and animals, but because the man persists, the friend gets up and gives the bread so the laws of hospitality can be fulfilled. Is this a story telling us to be persistent in prayer to get what we want or need? Should we nag God?

There are other teachings in the Bible about prayer, Jacob struggled with God all night until he got a blessing. Hannah prayed persistently for years until she got a son. Then there was the story of the unjust judge and the widow who persisted until she got justice. So what is prayer? Is it a formula whereby certain words produce results?

So Jesus gives a framework for prayer; did he give them the exact words of the Lord's Prayer? Some believe so, some don't. Jesus doesn't talk about the importance of stillness, of posture or focusing the mind. He teaches his apostles to talk to God, to bring the whole muddle of life to him, so we can ask for the coming of God's kingdom and for our needs in virtually one breath.

So how should we pray? Do we need to get it right? Will God be angry if we don't address him in the right way with the right titles? Do we need to cover all the bases? Do we need to appease God first, stroke his ego? If we don't address him properly will he not hear or refuse to listen? Do we need long prayers or short? Do we need to shout or raise the volume?

What answer does Jesus give to all these questions? He says 'Don't worry, God knows what we need before we ask it before we know it. Talk to God as a Father - as our Father.'

Our Father. That's not a remote deity but up close and personal, dialogue based on a relationship between God and mankind, God and children. For the disciples this was radical, this was new. God whose name was too holy to be written is now introduced as not just formal Father but, in Jesus's language, this was Dad or Daddy.

Jesus often taught by taking things that were familiar and giving them new meaning or extracting more from them or by turning them upside down. When he was asked, by a scribe, which was the most important commandment he answered with the Shema prayer but added to it:

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:29-31

The Lord's Prayer isn't just about us and God but God, us and others. The prayer sums up what all our prayers should be about. It's not all about me and my needs, it's about God and it's about us. Love God, love others. It's about our Father, our daily bread, forgive us as we forgive others, your kingdom, your will. These words are packed full of significance, covering the spiritual realm, our physical needs and the relational aspects of our lives. The first half of the prayer puts God at the centre not us. It makes us aware of how great God is and yet he is interested in our needs, daily and other wise, interested in the small detail of our lives.

William Barclay is quoted as saying., "The Lord's Prayer brings the whole of life into the presence of God, and brings the whole of God into the whole of life." Jesus encourages us to bombard God, to talk to him about all aspects of our lives, to tell him everything, to talk to him constantly, to build up this Father/child relationship, to talk during the week not just on Sundays in church, not just through set prayers, not just by saying amen at the end of someone else's prayer. God wants to have a dialogue with each of us on our own, any time, anywhere. Amen

StF 545 – Be thou my vision

- 1) Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
Be thou my best thought in the day and
the night,
Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.
- 2) Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
Be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord;
Be thou my great Father, thy child let me be;
Be thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.
- 3) Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
Be thou my whole armour, be thou
my true might;
Be thou my soul's shelter, be thou
my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power
of my power.
- 4) Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise:
Be thou mine inheritance now and always, -
Be thou and thou only the first in my heart:
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 5) High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys after vict'ry is won;
Great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

8th Century Irish. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Burn, versified by Eleanor Henrietta Hall CCL No. 515642

Prayers of concern

Let us pray as citizens of heaven where God is Lord and King:

For the citizens of the world, whose rulers are human and fallible; for countries where governments oppress or exploit their citizens. For countries divided by barriers, of class, wealth, race or religion
For countries where people suffer the ravages of warfare or famine We pray that in the governing of their citizens the rulers of the world may govern according to the will of the King of kings who is wisdom, justice, mercy and compassion.

Let us pray as citizens of heaven brothers and sisters to Jesus Christ our Lord.

For those whom we as servants in the kingdom of God are called to love, that we might meet their needs and not our own. For those who have little status in the eyes of most, the destitute, the criminal the outcast. For those whose human rights have been infringed, the hungry, the persecuted, the tortured, the neglected. For those who find it hard to play a full role in society, for the unemployed, the lonely the housebound For all those we know who are ill, or anxious or sad. For those facing the reality of the boundary between life and death. We pray that we may show that in God's kingdom there is comfort and healing, acceptance and hope, abundant life for all.

Let us pray as citizens of heaven whose lives are ruled by God's Holy Spirit.

For the church, that her members may be the people of the kingdom of God, remaining loyal to their vision of God through all the difficulties and compromises of life, for the institutions and committees of the church, that they might retain proper priorities, patience, wisdom and love. For ourselves that we may take up our Christian responsibilities with enthusiasm and in faith. We pray that the work and witness of the citizens of heaven past and present may speed the full coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Amen

StF 167 – Colours of day

- 1) Colours of day dawn into the mind,
The sun has come up, the night is behind.
Go down in the city, into the street,
And let's give the message to the people we meet.
- 2) Go through the park, on into the town;
The sun still shines on, it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again;
The people of darkness are needing a friend.
- Ch) *So light up the fire and let the flame burn,
Open the door, let Jesus return.
Take seeds of His Spirit, let the fruit grow,
Tell the people of Jesus, let His love show.*
- 3) Open your eyes, look into the sky,
The darkness has come, the sun came to die.
The evening drawn on, the sun disappears,
But Jesus is living, His Spirit is near.

SueMcClellan, John Paculabo & Keith Ryecroft © 1974 Thankyou Music CCL No. 515642

Blessing

As we go from this time of worship into a time of service, speak to us in the different places we go and through the different people we encounter as we seek to do your work. Let us go in the name of God our creator, Jesus our saviour, and the Holy Spirit, our challenger.