

# 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022 – Morning Service

Martyn Filsak

## Call to Worship - Psalm 107:1-2

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures forever. So let them say who were redeemed by the Lord.

## StF 51 – Great is thy faithfulness

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| 1) Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father<br>There is no shadow of turning with thee<br>Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;<br>As thou hast been thou for ever wilt be:          | 2) Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,<br>Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,<br>Join with all nature in manifold witness<br>To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love:          |
| Ch) <i>Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness<br/>Morning by morning new mercies I see<br/>All I have needed thy hand hath provided<br/>Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.</i> | 3) Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,<br>Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;<br>Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,<br>Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! |

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## Prayers

Great is your faithfulness, Lord our God. There is no other God, nor anyone to compare with you in power and majesty and love. There is no other commitment like yours, to a people belonging to you by faith. You are the same God today as you were in the past, and you will be the same tomorrow and into eternity. We give you our praise and thanks, for your love endures for ever. Nothing in the world endures, but you are for evermore. Your goodness and mercy never fail but they pursue us day by day. You are looking for opportunities to show goodness to your people and are only limited by our capacity to receive.

In the beginning you made humanity perfect but by our free will we chose the wrong path, yet you did not abandon us but sent your precious Son to be our Saviour. Though we are weak in our human strength you sent your Holy Spirit to give us power and to be our Companion on our Christian way of life.

Lord God, Holy Trinity, Saviour, Master and Friend, we give you glory and thanks and praise. **Amen.**

God, our Saviour, we desire to serve you with a perfect heart, yet even so we fail you each day. In our thoughts, words and deeds we fall short of your standards and sometimes don't live up to our own expectations. Yet your love never fails and we always belong to you. We acknowledge that sometimes we do harm rather than good, and sometimes we miss opportunities to bless others with our words and actions. We confess our sins and shortcomings and we give you our thanks that you do not condemn us or send us from your presence, but that by the sacrifice of your Son you forgive us and continually cleanse us from wrong. Our sins are forgiven and you remember them no more! We give you our thanks and confidently stand before you in the righteousness of Christ, which is your gift to us. Thanks be to God.

**Amen.**

## StF 447 – Jesus be the centre

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| 1) Jesus, be the Centre,<br>Be my Source, be my Light, Jesus. | Ch) <i>Be the fire in my heart,<br/>Be the wind in these sails;<br/>Be the reason that I live, Jesus, Jesus.</i> |
| 2) Jesus, be the centre,<br>Be my hope, be my song, Jesus.    | 3) Jesus, be my vision,<br>Be my path, be my guide, Jesus.   |

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## Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

## StF 504 – May the mind of Christ my Saviour

- 1) May the mind of Christ my Saviour  
Live in me from day to day,  
By his love and power controlling  
All I do or say.
- 2) May the word of God dwell richly  
In my heart from hour to hour,  
So that all may see I triumph  
Only through his power.
- 3) May the peace of God my Father  
Rule my life in everything,  
That I may be calm to comfort  
Sick and sorrowing.
- 4) May the love of Jesus fill me,  
As the waters fill the sea;  
Him exalting, self abasing -  
This is victory.
- 5) May I run the race before me,  
Strong and brave to face the foe,  
Looking only unto Jesus  
As I onward go.

*Katie Barclay Wilkinson*

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## Reading: Luke 12:13-36

Someone in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' Jesus replied, 'Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?' Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.' And he told them this parable: 'The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops." Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.'

Then Jesus said to his disciples: 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: they do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you – you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.'

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.'

## Sermon

Are you a person who holds minimal possessions, just as much as you need, or are you perhaps a hoarder. Do you find it difficult to let go of things in case they are useful some time in the future? We sometimes hold things for that proverbial rainy day. When moving house (I have done so on several occasions) it highlights just how much stuff has been accumulated and I find items that I had forgotten I had and haven't used for years. Perhaps others of us are highly disciplined and will get rid of things that we no longer need or use, where possible passing them on to others who can make use of them. There is a human desire to make sure that we are well provided for. Perhaps in the first group of people I have just mentioned there is an underlying fear that if we let something go the day will come when we find that we needed it after all.

Jesus, in the gospel passage seeks to replace this fear of lack with confidence in God. The story of the man whose land yielded a good harvest and the teaching on trust in God that follow are meant to teach us to look toward God and others rather than to look inwardly and hold on tightly to things. I wonder what was at the root of the rich man's tendency to hold tight. It seems to have been that he could see an opportunity to sit back and take life easy. He was using his wealth for his own purposes rather than to meet the needs of others. He could have sold the produce and done a lot with the proceeds. The sale of the produce would have allowed it to feed others and he could have given away some of the revenue, invested some and still had more than enough for his own needs. He was focussed on himself rather looking outwards. The rich man may also have had a fear of lack in the future, hence he hoarded rather than invested the harvest.

We too have the temptation to hold back because of fear. We fail to be generous because of fear of lack. We fail to reach out to others because of fear of looking silly. We fail to love others because of fear of rejection. Fear can keep us imprisoned. Fear and selfishness are related to each other and result only in misery. Openness and generosity result from faith and often lead to joy and celebration! There is a wonderful example of this in 1 Chronicles 29 when King David made contributions of gold and silver for the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. The leaders of the community followed and brought their contributions and the people glorified God and rejoiced greatly.

Jesus doesn't ask us for what we don't have. We may not have silver and gold or very much money to share, but we can all do something by using what we have wisely and not withholding it. Sometimes the things that we offer can be less tangible, such as love and friendship, perhaps hospitality and time for listening to others and sharing the grace of God with them. We may need to risk failing or being rejected, but all of us can do something to build up the Kingdom of God.

The teaching of Jesus that follows the story of the rich man encourages the disciples to have a completely different mindset. Instead of a selfish, fearful disposition, looking inward, we need to be trusting in God and have our minds set on his kingdom. If we do this, says Jesus, all of our other needs will be met as well. The short passage from Colossians reinforces this by pointing us towards a heavenly perspective, an eternal one. We see things in the context of a wonderful future that God has given us. We will be revealed with Christ in glory!

With this heavenly perspective let us remind ourselves of some confidence-boosting facts:

- God is generous.
- God is powerful.
- God is all-wise.
- God is good.
- God cares for us.
- God is love.

John tells us in his first letter that perfect love banishes fear (1 John 4:18). Hence if we understand the true extent of the love and grace of Christ in our lives then we are enabled to obey his command not to worry or be afraid. With the current uncertainty in the world (economic, ecological and political) combined with challenges in the church (membership numbers, resources, ministry) it would be easy to give in to fear and “batten down the hatches” for a storm, becoming insular and self-absorbed. We need to resist this tendency and do the opposite! With confidence in God we can look forward to an exciting and bright future. We may have to accept that the future may look very different from the past and change the way that we do things, but this is not a time to hold back, it is a time to reach out. It is a time to look not at what we don’t have but at how we can make maximum use of what we do have. It is a time to recognise that there is a great harvest to be reaped in terms of a world and society that needs the gospel, when we are the people who can preach that gospel in deed and word.

It is a time not for holding tight but for investing, not for negativity but for rejoicing, not for fear but for confidence. Trust in Jesus. Live in faith, not fear. Rejoice. Give (resources, time, love). Don’t hoard, but invest. Use what you have. Rejoice again! Amen!

### StF 489 – All I once held dear

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| 1) All I once held dear, built my life upon,<br>All this world reveres, and wars to own,<br>All I once thought gain, I have counted loss;<br>Spent and worthless now, compared to this. | 2) Now my heart's desire is to know You more,<br>To be found in You and known as Yours.<br>To possess by faith what I could not earn,<br>All surpassing gift of righteousness. |
| <i>Ch) Knowing you, Jesus, knowing You<br/>There is no greater thing<br/>You're my all, you're the best,<br/>You're my joy, my righteousness,<br/>And I love you, Lord.</i>             | 3) Oh to know the power of Your risen life,<br>And to know You in Your sufferings.<br>To become like You in Your death, my Lord<br>So with You to live and never die.          |

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### Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

God, our Lord and our perfect Heavenly Father, we give you thanks that through your Son you have given us assurance of eternal life. Help us to live in the joy and confidence that this knowledge gives. **Amen.**

We offer to you the needs of this world. We pray that leaders will work together to deal with the challenges of climate change and provision of food and water for the whole population, that all people will be enabled to prosper. We pray for areas of the world affected by conflict, and especially the Ukraine, giving thanks for signs of hope offered by the agreement to allow grain to be exported. We pray for an end to this war and all other conflicts, that all people may be able to live in peace and flourish.

L: Lord, in your mercy, **R: hear our prayer.**

We offer to you the needs of our country. We pray for the process that will result in the choice of our next Prime Minister, and that the person chosen will be someone that you can work with to bring about your purposes in this nation and the world. We pray for wisdom from you to be given to our politicians in order that they can deal with the economic problems faced by many people. We thank you for the consistency of leadership and Christian witness given by our Queen in 70 years of service, and ask that she would continue to be strengthened to serve.

L: Lord, in your mercy, **R: hear our prayer.**

We pray for our Circuit, for each church and our ministers, stewards and officers, members and community roll, people who serve you in the public eye and those whose jobs are faithfully done behind the scenes. Guide us on the way forward into the next stage of your plan for us. Help us to embrace the right kind of change that enables us to move forward into the bright future that you have planned for us.

L: Lord, in your mercy,                   **R: hear our prayer.**

We pray for our communities and for our role in them. May your church be part of your plan for our society and nation. Help us to fulfil our unique calling to bring spiritual nourishment to those around us, that they may know you for themselves. Give us courage to meet practical as well as spiritual needs. We pray for people in our congregation and also those who are not part of it who have particular needs at the moment, whether for healing, consolation, strength, wisdom or practical resources.

L: Lord, in your mercy,                   **R: hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **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 526 – Lord of all hopefulness**

- 1) Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,  
Whose trust, ever childlike,  
no cares could destroy,  
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,  
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord,  
at the break of the day.
- 2) Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,  
Whose strong hands were skilled  
at the plane and the lathe,  
Be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,  
Your strength in our hearts, Lord,  
at the noon of the day.

- 3) Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,  
Your hands swift to welcome,  
your arms to embrace,  
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,  
Your love in our hearts, Lord,  
at the eve of the day.
- 4) Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,  
Whose voice is contentment,  
whose presence is balm,  
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,  
Your peace in our hearts, Lord,  
at the end of the day.

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### **Blessing**

The Lord is good and his love endures for ever. Therefore go and live a life of joy and generosity.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen.**