

9th October 2022 – Morning Service

Jill Martin

Call to Worship - Psalm 111 verse 1

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

StF 78 – Give thanks

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given
Jesus Christ, His Son.
Give thanks with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given
Jesus Christ, His Son.

And now let the weak say 'I am strong',
Let the poor say 'I am rich',
Because of what the Lord has done for us.
And now let the weak say 'I am strong',
Let the poor say 'I am rich',
Because of what the Lord has done for us.
Give thanks.

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Prayer of Adoration

We come in reverence to your house, Lord - we come in humility to this holy place.

We have learned of your purity and holiness - you are enthroned in glory, high and lifted up.

We rejoice that you have bridged the gap between us, that from your throne, high and lifted up you came in Christ and laid your glory by. And so we come, not only in reverence and humility, but also in the knowledge of your active love.

We come in faith, for you have stretched out your hand to us and we put our hands in yours, not only our God, but our Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer of Confession

Father, we ask in this time of confession we may truly be open before you. We bring to you the times when we have left undone the things we should have done, the words we should have spoken and the words which should have been unsaid, the judgements we have made and the unkind thoughts, the need to be right and so make others wrong. Father in the silence we focus on you and confess all our sins[Silence]

We trust in your unending love and hear the words of Jesus - "Your sins are forgiven, go in peace." Amen

StF 544 – As the deer pants for the water

1) As the deer pants for the water,
So my soul longs after You.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.

Ch) *You alone are my strength, my shield,
To You alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.*

2) I want You more than gold or silver,
Only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of my eye.

3) You're my Friend and You are my Brother,
Even though You are a King.
I love You more than any other,
So much more than anything.

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Reading: 2 Kings 5: 1-3, 7-15

Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy. Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, 'If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.'

As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, 'Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!' When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: 'Why have you torn your robes? Make the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.' So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, 'Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.'

But Naaman went away angry and said, 'I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?' So he turned and went off in a rage. Naaman's servants went to him and said, 'My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, "Wash and be cleansed"!' So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, 'Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant.'

Reflection

From the beginning of Naaman's story, we know a few things about him. He is a foreigner, particularly a powerful foreigner, commanding the army of Israel's enemy, Aram. Naaman also has leprosy. It appears that Naaman's leprosy did not carry the stigma of social and cultic alienation in Aram, such as is described in Leviticus 13-14. At the same time, it is clear from the story that this leprosy is something that Naaman (and perhaps his wife) wanted to be rid of.

An essential character in the story is the Israelite slave girl. Taken captive, she has come to serve the wife of Naaman. Though nameless in the story, her role is pivotal. Breaking out of the silence of slavery, it is her speaking that begins Naaman's healing. Though a displaced insider, she is the one who directs Naaman to the healing power of the Lord, the God of Israel, by way of Israel's prophet. She is the initiator of hope. It is upon her word that Naaman approaches the king of Aram with a request to follow this lead toward his own healing. And as quickly as she enters the story, she fades into the background.

From powerful to powerless, the focus shifts to the king of Aram and a bit of political tension. Seemingly bent on having his commander restored and unable to do so himself, the king of Aram sends a letter, not to the prophet, but to the king of Israel. In so doing, the king of Aram not surprisingly disregards the word of the slave girl. The contents of the letter are accompanied by a small fortune, perhaps a catalyst for healing. Initially, the letter has the inverse result. It drives Israel's king into mourning, for he knows that God alone can give life and assumes that this is the king of Aram picking a fight.

The narrative then turns to Elisha's intervention. Upon the arrival of Naaman and his entourage, Elisha does not see him but sends a messenger with the prescription — seven washes in the Jordan — simple instructions. What follows is a give and take. Naaman is upset at the simplicity and the locality. Are not the rivers of Aram as good as the Jordan? Calmed by his servant, he follows Elisha's instructions. His flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy.

StF 553 – I am a new creation

I am a new creation,
No more in condemnation,
Here in the grace of God I stand.
My heart is overflowing,
My love just keeps on growing,
Here in the grace of God I stand.

And I will praise You Lord,
Yes I will praise You Lord
And I will sing of all that You have done.
A joy that knows no limit,
A lightness in my spirit,
Here in the grace of God I stand.

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Reading: Luke 17: 11-19

Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus travelled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, 'Jesus, Master, have pity on us!' When he saw them, he said, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were cleansed.

One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him – and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, 'Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?' Then he said to him, 'Rise and go; your faith has made you well.'

Reflection

At the beginning of his ministry, Luke tells us that having been tempted in the wilderness Jesus returned to his home town of Nazareth, word had already spread through the territory as Jesus taught in Synagogues and was praised by everybody, until he was questioned at Nazareth. He made it clear that God's love is for everyone and repeated the story of Elijah feeding the widow and Elisha who cured Naaman the Syrian. The reaction of the crowd listening in the synagogue was to attempt to throw Jesus off the cliff on which the town was built.

In the healing story of today, Luke again tells us that Jesus was making his way towards Jerusalem, moving between the regions of Samaria and Galilee. The animosity between Jews and Samaritans was deeply entrenched, in fact Samaritans were probably the lowest of the low and farthest from God in the eyes of the Jews. After the break up of the Kingdom ruled by David and then Solomon into Judah and Israel, it became weak and regularly invaded by other regimes, the Assyrians took control many people of Judah, the Northern Kingdom, were exiled and whilst they tried to remain faithful in their worship they soon adopted elements of Pagan worship. The people of Samaria, Jews, moved away from the purity of Jewish worship in Jerusalem and thus the alienation from pure Jews began.

As Jesus entered a village, 10 lepers, keeping to the rules of society keeping their distance called out to Jesus to heal them. Jesus told them to go to their priests, on the way they were all healed. One of them, realising he had been healed turned around and went back. He threw himself at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. It was only at this point in the story Luke tells us the man was a Samaritan. Jesus asked the question of the other 9, weren't they healed as well yet only the foreigner returned.

What does this tell us about thanks and humility? Naaman was a foreigner who was sent to a Jewish prophet, he was insulted when Elisha refused to meet him, he was insulted when told to bathe in a Jewish river, weren't the rivers in his home land superior? Nevertheless Naaman swallowed his pride did as told and was healed. The story continues, that by way of thanks, Naaman offered Elisha payment, which was refused, but Naaman asked for two buckets of soil to take back with him acknowledging the God of Israel was in the land of Elisha.

Were the 9 lepers healed by Jesus Jews? Why did they leave and not give thanks? They were all told to go to their priests to be made clean were the Priests held in higher esteem than God, than Jesus? Does it mean those 9 lepers still felt superior to the one Samaritan? Was the Samaritan praising God for the life changing experience a double healing, from an unclean disease and also from the depths of society? Jesus reached out to those on the extremes of society, going out of his way to actively demonstrate love to all people, as disciples we are called to do the same.

StF 409 – Let us build a house

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| 1) Let us build a house where love can dwell
And all can safely live,
A place where saints and children tell
How hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
Rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions: | 3) Let us build a house where love is found
In water, wine and wheat:
A banquet hall on holy ground
Where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
Is revealed in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us: |
| Ch) <i>All are welcome,
All are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.</i> | 4) Let us build a house where hands will reach
Beyond the wood and stone
To heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
And live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
Bear the image of God's face;
Let us bring an end to fear and danger: |
| 2) Let us build a house where prophets speak,
And words are strong and true,
Where all God's children dare to seek
To dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
And as symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus: | 5) Let us a build a house where all are named,
Their songs and visions heard
And loved and treasured, taught and claimed
As words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
Prayers of faith and songs of grace,
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter: |

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Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty Father, we give you thanks that you have revealed your power and your glory through your mighty act of creation and that you have shown your redeeming and transforming love through your beloved Son. We thank you for Jesus, who suffered and died for the sake of the world, whom you raised again from death to be praised and exalted for ever. We thank you that we have been called to his service and that those you call you equip for their tasks. We thank you for men and women in many times and places who are strengthened by your grace, sustained by faith, hope and love. Lord we are your servants, we pray that not only by the words we speak but by the lives we live, we may spread the word of the Gospel of Christ and bring others to him. Amen

Prayer of Intercession

Jesus was met by 10 men with leprosy. They...called out to "Jesus, master take pity on us"
Healer and Saviour, we are the ones who call out to you for help. We are the unclean, whose dis-ease with ourselves, one another and you needs your cure. We pray that you will touch those sick in body, mind or spirit, the sorrowful and the anxious, the guilt ridden and the depressed, soothe their pain, cleanse and restore them.

“they were made clean. One of them ... turned back, with shouts of praise to God. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet and thanked him”

Healer and Saviour, help us to be the ones who turn back to you, to be a thankful people whose own healing and forgiveness shows itself in faith and love. We pray that you will touch your church, uniting us in praise and service, filling us with enthusiasm and joy, increasing and confirming our faith in you, that through us the world may come to Christ, to be cleansed and restored.

“And Jesus said to the man, ‘Stand up and go on your way, your faith has cured you.’

Thanks be to you, Our God, for your saving love, known in Jesus Christ, that lifts us up, sets us right and sends us on our way. 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 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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Blessing

StF 771 – May the love of the Lord rest upon your soul

May the love of the Lord rest upon your soul.
May his love dwell in you throughout every day.
May his countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you.
May his Spirit be upon you as you leave this place.

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The blessing of Lord God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon us and amongst us now and forever. Amen