



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 11th October 2026

compiled by Rev. Melvyn Cooke

Call to Worship

Lord, teach me to seek you,
And reveal yourself as I look for you.
For I cannot seek you unless you first teach me,
Nor find you unless you reveal yourself to me.

St Ambrose (340 – 397)

Hymn: 161 StF

1] Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of your holy word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
All Your purposes, for Your glory.

2] Teach us Lord full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.
Cause our faith to rise
Cause our eyes to see,
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

3] Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us.
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises;
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, 'til your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory.

Keith Getty (b. 1974) & Stuart Townend (b.1963)

Prayer – *This week we reflect on Prisoners week*

Lord, you offer freedom to all people.

We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist.

Support with your love all prisoners, their families and friends,
prison staff, and all who care.

Heal those who have been wounded by the activities of others, especially the victims of crime.

Help us to forgive one another, and to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ
in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day. Amen

Reading **Phillippians 4: 1 – 9**

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Hymn: 691 StF

1] What shall our greeting be:

Sign of our unity?

JESUS IS LORD!

May we no more defend

Barriers he died to end:

Give me your hand, my friend:

One Church, One Lord!

2] What is our mission here?

He makes his purpose clear:

One world, one Lord!

Spirit of truth descend,

All our confusions end:

Give me your hand, my friend:

JESUS IS LORD!

3] He comes to save us now:

To serve him is to know

Life's true reward.

May he our lives amend,

All our betrayals end:

Give me your hand, my friend:

JESUS IS LORD!

Fred Pratt Green (1903 - 2000)

Reflection

There is power in God's word. Indeed, more than often I would suggest that we give it credit for! We can read it as a text, compare the context of the times in which it was written, explore the depths of the meaning, and even sometimes we can try to make application of it to our lives. Naturally when we take time out of our day to read our devotions, whatever format they may take, we reflect upon the meaning and are grateful for the challenge that comes through the thoughts and writings of others. However, it is still true I would hold that there is power in God's word more than we comprehend.

When I was a teenager, in my home church we would go street to street, knocking at people's door and asking if we could pray for them. After introducing ourselves and simply saying that we would like to pray for them. Surprisingly, rarely did anybody decline or close the door upon us, and after this brief introduction and before we asked for topics to pray for, we would read Phillippians 4: 4 – 7 *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* I cannot tell you the number of times, that before we even got to the end of that passage, the person on the other side of the door would be in tears and would then open their hearts up to us and then speak to us of the things that were causing them concern. The power in God's word did more than our own words could ever do to open opportunities for ministry.

For many years I had the privilege to be a Prison Chaplain, and once again, were amazed how on countless times when having to break bad news to a prisoner, or try to find supportive words to someone whose life saw nothing of hope, or in times to riots in prisons, attempting to support staff stressed beyond human tolerance, the opportunity came to speak God's word from scripture, without putting my own interpretation or explanation, I witnessed God's word calm the troubled soul, and comfort those who were distressed.

One discipline in my spiritual life has been learning verses of scripture by heart. The advice I received was simple: "Learn them; do not worry about fully understanding them at first but store them in your mind and heart. You may forget you have learned them, but one day, in a particular situation, the Holy Spirit will recall a verse or passage that speaks directly into that moment, whether in your own life or in someone else's." I have come to recognise this as profound advice, and I have seen its truth clearly demonstrated on many occasions.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" Psalm 119:105. There is power in God's word.

Prayers

We pray for the Church throughout the world. May we faithfully proclaim the good news that all are invited into God's kingdom. Give us grace to welcome those who feel forgotten, excluded or ashamed, and help us to reflect Christ's compassion in all that we do.

We pray for all who are in prison. For those who are afraid, lonely or despairing; for those who carry deep regret; for those seeking a new beginning; and for those who have found faith while in custody. May they know that they are not beyond God's love and that Christ walks beside them even in the darkest places.

We pray for victims of crime and for all whose lives have been marked by violence, abuse or loss. Bring healing where there is pain, peace where there is fear, and hope where there is despair. Help us always to seek justice with compassion and truth with mercy.

We pray for prison chaplains, prison officers, governors, probation staff, healthcare workers, volunteers, and all who serve within the criminal justice system. Grant them wisdom, patience, integrity and compassion in their daily work, and sustain them in the demanding responsibilities they carry.

We pray for families affected by imprisonment. We remember spouses, partners, parents, grandparents and especially children who live with separation, face stigma, uncertainty and loss. Strengthen them with your love, surround them with supportive communities, and give them hope for the future.

We pray for those leaving prison and beginning again. Open doors of opportunity, provide suitable accommodation, meaningful work, supportive friendships and welcoming churches.

We give thanks and offer our prayers for all those organisations working on the resettlement of those leaving prison. Help us to see each person not through the lens of their past but through the hope of the new life that Christ offers.

We pray for ourselves. Where we have judged others harshly, forgive us. Where we have ignored your invitation, draw us back. Clothe us with the new life of Christ, that we may live as people transformed by your grace and become faithful witnesses to your kingdom.

Merciful Father,
Accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

We say together the Lord's Prayer in the version, and language you are most comfortable using.

Hymn: 553 StF

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.*

Dave Bilborough (b. 1965)