



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 16th March 2025

2nd Sunday in Lent

compiled by Dean James - Worship Leader

Call to worship: Verses from Psalm 27

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? One thing I ask from the Lord, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock. Hear my voice when I call, Lord; be merciful to me and answer me. My heart says of you, "Seek his face!" Your face, Lord, I will seek. Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Saviour. I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Spend a few minutes reflecting on these words. Perhaps read them a couple of times.

Hymn:

1] Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;

Abide in Him always, and feed on His

Word.

Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,

Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

2] Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;

Spend much time in secret, with Jesus

alone.

By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;

Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.

3] Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide;

And run not before Him, whatever betide.

In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,

And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.

4] Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,

Each thought and each motive beneath His

control.

Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,

Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

William Dunn Longstaff (1822-1894)

Prayer of Repentance

Heavenly Father, we come before You with humble hearts, acknowledging our weaknesses and the ways we have fallen short. Lord, we ask for Your mercy - wash us clean and renew our spirit. Help us to turn away from sin and walk in the light of Your truth. Teach us to accept Your forgiveness and to forgive others as You have forgiven us. May this Lent be a time of true repentance, where I surrender my burdens and embrace the freedom that comes through Your grace. Thank You for never giving up on us.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of abundance, we thank You for the gifts of Creation, for the land that sustains us and the family and friends that nurture us. We thank you for Your unending love and faithfulness, which guides us through trials and triumphs alike. Fill our hearts with gratitude.

Prayer for serving others

Gracious Lord, You call us to love one another as You have loved us. Open our eyes to the needs of those around us and give us a heart that is quick to serve. Whether through giving, encouraging, or simply being present for someone who is hurting, help us to reflect Your kindness and compassion. May our acts of charity be done not for recognition but as a response to Your love. Use us, Lord, to be Your hands and feet in this world. In Jesus' name.

Hymn:

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, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

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 man'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 victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever
befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

Irish 8th Century

Translated by Mary Elizabeth Bryne (1888-1931)

Throughout Lent we are preparing ourselves to experience afresh the events of Easter week, Jesus' death on the cross and glorious resurrection. Can we make sense of our lives as a part of the establishment of God's kingdom in our world? Or are we frightened from our mission by circumstances or authorities and rulers? If Jesus were to speak prophetically to us, what would his message be? How have we resisted God's messages and kingdom? How have we recognized God's messages and kingdom, and how can we continue to do so?

Reading: Genesis 15: 1-6

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward. But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." Then the word of the Lord came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars - if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him

Reading Luke 13: 31-35

At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you." He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day - for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem! "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'

Reflection:

God comes to Abram in Genesis 15:1 and says, 'Abram, I am pleased with you. I know the difficult decisions you had to make, but it was the right decisions and I am your great reward'.

In this world, making a decision to trust in God is not always easy. It can mean people turn their back on you, or even persecute you for your decisions. God says to Abram, "Do not be afraid, Abram." Whenever God says, "Do not fear", He then tells us why we should not fear. God gives Abram two reasons not to fear. The first is that God Himself will be Abram's shield. God will protect Abram. Maybe Abram is scared that the armies he defeated will regroup and then return for revenge. With God as a shield, Abram has nothing to fear. The second reason is that God would give Abram descendants that would outnumber the stars in the sky! He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars - if indeed you can count them. So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness. God told Abram in verse 1, "I will be your great reward" and now Abram has received God's righteousness as part of that reward.

In our reading from Luke, we are not told if the Pharisees mentioned were genuinely concerned for Jesus' welfare or more likely wanted to scare Him away. Jesus declared His intention to continue His kingdom ministry. He has God as His shield! Jesus gives a picture here that is the same as the assurance God gave Abram, 'I am your shield, your protection'. The fox couldn't defeat him, but like a mother hen gathers her chicks beneath her wings to protect them, Jesus will willingly give himself to save his children - even though they and we have rejected him time and time again.

Jesus loves God's children. He still wants to gather us in his arms and protect us and care for us. Sometimes we stray away, but Jesus still loves us just the same. Jesus was determined to complete the work God sent Him to do. He would be ready to go only when the work was completed. He refused to be intimidated. The time of His death was approaching, and He wanted to reach as many people as possible before He died. When He faced down the Pharisees, Jesus showed us how to act courageously. He didn't flee from the challenge. He met it head-on. This shows Jesus' character. Jesus shows us that vulnerability is essential for courage. Courage gives us strength to be open to the needs of people around us. Jesus uses the image of a hen gathering her brood of chicks to her for protection and safety to illustrate God's love and concern for His people.

Jesus died because of people like Herod. Jesus died because He paid attention to those the world deemed to be insignificant. Jesus died because He proclaimed a God who loved everyone and embraced everyone. His resurrection is a story of triumph of sacrificial love over death, hatred, injustice and everything that opposes God. If we want to show Christ to the world-our lives have to be grounded in the truth of Christ. God calls us to make our voices heard no matter how small the act of love or the witness of hope.

We are no different than the chicks in Jesus' illustration. The season of Lent invites us to realize that we are dependent on God. Lent is a time to realize that, just like the chicks in Jesus' illustration, we are helpless on our own. Lent is the time in the church year when we practice the spiritual gift of letting go. One of the ways we let go is again turning away from the things that stand in the way of becoming new beings in Christ. When you believe God's Word, specifically when you believe what it says about Jesus, that God gives eternal life to everyone who believes in Jesus, like Abram, you are declared righteous by God. Abram believed the promise and so was justified. God gives Himself to us through our faith in Jesus, His nature is given to us through His Spirit. Let us reflect on this great promise of God in this time of Lent and let it change how we live our lives for Him.

Hymn:

Faithful One, so unchanging;
Ageless One, you're my rock of peace.
Lord of all I depend on you,
I call out to you, again and again,
I call out to you, again and again.

You are my rock in times of trouble,
You lift me up when I fall down;
All through the storm
Your love is the anchor
My hope is in you alone.

Brian Doerksen (b.1965)

Prayers

Father God In times of uncertainty and change, renew our hope in Your unchanging goodness.
As Abram did, help us to trust in you guiding us in Your ways
Heavenly Father, I pray for your healing touch upon those suffering in body, mind, or spirit.
May Your comforting presence bring restoration and peace.
Merciful God, bring healing and comfort to those afflicted with illness.
May they experience Your presence and receive the medical care they need.
Comforting Father, be near those who mourn.
Provide comfort in their loss and hope in their despair, reminding them of Your eternal love.
Lord of peace, we pray for individuals and communities in conflict.
Soften hearts, heal divisions, and lead them to reconciliation.
Sovereign Lord, guide our leaders with wisdom, integrity, and a heart for justice.
Help them to serve for the common good.
Lord, guide Your Church in truth and love.
Empower its witness to Your Kingdom, uniting believers in Your purpose. In the name of Jesus we pray.
Amen

Hymn:

1] I serve a risen Saviour He's in the world today.
I know that He is living, Whatever men may say.
I see His hand of mercy; I hear His voice of cheer;
And just the time I need Him He's always near.

*He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.*

3] Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, Lift up your voice
and sing
Eternal hallelujahs To Jesus Christ the King!
The Hope of all who seek Him, The Help of all
who find,
None other is so loving, So good and kind.
He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!....

Alfred Henry Ackley (1887-1960)

2] In all the world around me, I see His loving care,
And though my heart grows weary, I never will despair;
I know that He is leading, Through all the stormy blast;
The day of His appearing Will come at last.
He lives, He Lives Christ Jesus lives today!.....

Blessing

May the love of Christ be active in our hearts
be heard in our words, be seen in our actions
and inform our choices every day. Amen

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