



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 22nd March 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent

*compiled by Michael Winter - Local Preacher
& Anglican Lay Minister*

By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same love with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. ... I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. (from Psalm 130)

Hymn STF 113

1] O worship the King, all glorious above
O gratefully sing His wonderful love
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days
Pavilioned in splendour, and girded with praise

2] O tell of His might, O sing of His grace
Whose robe is the light and canopy space
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form
And dark is His path on the wings of the storm

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.

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.

5] Frail children of dust and feeble as frail,
In you do we trust, not find you to fail;
Your mercies how tender, how firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend.

6] O measureless might, ineffable love,
While angels delight to hymn you above,
Your ransomed creation, though feeble our praise,
In true adoration our voices we raise.

Robert Grant (1779-1838)

Prayers

Look upon us, O Lord,
and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the beams of thy brightness.
Fill us with holy love, and open to us the treasures of thy wisdom.
All our desire is known unto thee, therefore perfect what thou hast begun,
and what thy Spirit has awakened us to ask in prayer.
We seek thy face, turn thy face unto us and show us thy glory.
Then shall our longing be satisfied, and our peace shall be perfect.

(St Augustine, 354 - 430)

May the God of healing restore those whose lives are broken by distress.

May the God of healing restore those whose lives are broken by fear.

May the God of healing restore those whose lives are broken by anger.

May the God of healing restore those whose lives are broken by pain.

May the God of healing restore those whose lives are broken by illness.

May the God of healing restore those whose lives are broken by sin.

God of healing gently touch our lives
and those for whom we pray this day with your Spirit.
Bring warmth and comfort, life and wholeness
restoration into fractured lives and souls. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Romans 8:6-11

The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Hymn STF 531

1] What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

2] Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

3] Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge -
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.

Joseph Medlicott Scriven (1819-1886)

Reflection

Romans 8 v 6

The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

So, we reach the fifth Sunday of Lent and the beginning of Passiontide. Inevitably these reflections are written a week or more in advance. Things are moving at such pace with the war in the Middle East and its global impacts that it is hard to envisage what we will be feeling by Sunday the 22nd March. Perhaps things will have calmed down, maybe not. Either way, for sure, there will be continuing grief and despair amongst the families of those who have lost loved ones and intense distress afflicting those who have seen their lives shattered, their livelihoods destroyed. More widely in our own nation, and across the world, the events in the Middle East will serve to increase the anxiety already felt by many, especially young people, about other wars, climate change and economic uncertainties. In the age in which we live this anxiety is magnified and sometimes distorted by social media.

We read in Romans at this start of the Passiontide season, how our minds should be 'governed by the Spirit' so that we may have 'life and peace'. As Christians it is our duty to pay deep and prayerful attention to the tribulations of the world, to share in its suffering just as Christ shared and shares, but also to walk with confidence in the love of God. There are no easy theological answers to the evils of war, so beware glib platitudes that suggest otherwise. Rather seek God's Spirit, His peace, His wisdom that we may live in His love and thereby offer comfort to those beset by anxiety.

As we come to that time of year when Jesus confronts His death and 'glory', remember that verse in the story of Lazarus: 'When Jesus saw her (Mary) weeping ... he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled' (John 11 v33). The Saviour of the world is troubled and has to reach out to God in faith through doubts and fears and uncertainties. As we look out on a troubled world, as we confront our own mortality, we need trust and faith for sure, but we should not expect that to overcome all our troubles. There is a delicate path to tread here - trusting God, but not in a way that diminishes the reality of our own or other's suffering. God does not necessarily lift us out of suffering, but he walks alongside us. Let us remember the Son of God was troubled too. And let us look beyond those troubles too for "...it is of the very essence of Christianity to face suffering and death not because they are good, not because they have meaning, but because the resurrection of Jesus has robbed them of their meaning." (Thomas Merton).

The Collect

We beseech thee, Almighty God,
mercifully to look upon thy people;
that by thy great goodness they may be governed and preserved evermore,
both in body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn STF 563

1] O Jesus, I have promised
To serve you to the end;
Lord be forever near me,
My Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If you are by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou will be my Guide.

2] O let me feel you near me;
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But Jesus, now draw nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.

3] O let me hear you speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten, or control;
Lord speak, and make me listen,
O guardian of my soul.

4] O Jesus, you have promised
To all who follow you,
That where you are in glory
Your servant shall be too;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve you to the end;
O give me grace to follow
My Master and my Friend.

John Ernest Bode (1816-1874)

Oh Son of Man, oh Son of God:
In our waking and arising
be the first thought that enters our head.
In our eating and drinking
be the first thought that enters our head.
In our walking and journeying
be the first thought that enters our head.
In our working and serving
be the first thought that enters our head.
In our sowing and harvesting
be the first thought that enters our head.
In our rejoicing and sorrowing
be the first thought that enters our head.
In our resting and sleeping
be the first thought that enters our head.

And may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit,
be amongst us, and remain with us always. Amen.

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