



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 26th October 2025 – Bible Sunday

compiled by Michael Winter – Local Preacher & Anglican Lay Minister

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55 vv10-11

Let us pray

God,
whose life dances in and beyond all creation,
whose song resounds throughout the universe and beyond,
you call us to add our voices to your harmony
and long all voices to be part of your song of infinite grace.
May we have the courage to raise our voices to join your song
and the sensitivity to enable all voices to be heard.
May we know and rest in the silence that births new melodies.
May all hearts echo with the resonance of your love.
May our voices be raised in shouts of protest,
in howling cries of grief and in gentle sounds of comfort.
May we join the yearning choir in the reality of deep lament
that longs for change and brings healing into being. Amen

Rachel Bending, Chair, Southampton District

Hymn - STF 748

1] Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God.
He whose Word cannot be broken
formed thee for His own abode.
On the Rock of Ages founded,
what can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
thou may'st smile at all thy foes.

2] See, the streams of living waters,
springing from eternal love,
well supply thy sons and daughters
and all fear of want remove.
Who can faint while such a river
ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace, which like the Lord, the Giver,
never fails from age to age.

3] Saviour, since of Zion's city
I through grace a member am,
let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy name.
Fading is the worldling's pleasures,
all his boasted pomp and show;
solid joys and lasting treasures
none but Zion's children know.

John Newton (1725-1807)

Prayers

In baptism we died with Christ,
so that as Christ was raised from the dead,
we might walk in newness of life.
Let us receive new life in him as we confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Jesus Christ, Our friend and Redeemer,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.
We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,
as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone,
and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Lord, hear us and help us.

The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Psalm 84

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!
My soul longs, indeed it faints for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.
Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts,
my King and my God.
Happy are those who live in your house, ever singing your praise. Selah
Happy are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.
As they go through the valley of Baca they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.
They go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion.
O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah
Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed.
For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than live in the tents of wickedness.
For the LORD God is a sun and shield; he bestows favour and honour.
No good thing does the LORD withhold from those who walk uprightly.
O LORD of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in you.

Hymn - STF 504

1] May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling
All I do and 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 forgetting,
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 (1859-1928)

Reflection

CS Lewis was one of the great students of the Bible and Christian apologists of the twentieth century. Here on Bible Society are some words of Lewis to reflect on:

In an essay titled “Answers to Questions about Christianity” he gives a general introduction to the scope of the Bible:

The Bible can be divided into two parts – the Old and the New Testaments. The Old Testament contains fabulous elements. The New Testament consists mostly of teaching, not of narrative at all: but where it is narrative, it is, in my opinion, historical. As to the fabulous element in the Old Testament, I very much doubt if you would be wise to chuck it out. What you get is something coming gradually into focus. First you get, scattered through the heathen religions all over the world – but still quite vague and mythical – the idea of a god who is killed and broken and then comes to life again. No one knows where he is supposed to have lived and died; he’s not historical. Then you get the Old Testament. Religious ideas get a bit more focused. Everything is now connected with a particular nation. And it comes still more into focus as it goes on. Jonah and the Whale, Noah and his Ark, are fabulous; but the Court history of King David is probably as reliable as the Court history of Louis XIV. Then, in the New Testament the thing really happens. The dying god really appears – as a historical Person, living in a definite place and time. If we could sort out all the fabulous elements in the earlier stages and separate them from the historical ones, I think we might lose an essential part of the whole process.

In “The Weight of Glory”, Lewis tells us that:

if we take the imagery of Scripture seriously, if we believe that God will one day give us the Morning Star and cause us to put on the splendour of the sun, then we may surmise that both the ancient myths and the modern poetry, so false as history, may be very near the truth as prophecy. At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get in.

And from his “Reflections on the Psalms”:

We may observe that the teaching of Our Lord Himself, in which there is no imperfection, is not given us in that cut-and-dried, foolproof, systematic fashion we might have expected or desired. He wrote no book. We have only reported sayings, most of them uttered in answers to questions, shaped in some degree by their context. And when we have collected them all we cannot reduce them to a system. He preaches but He does

not lecture. He used paradox, proverb, exaggeration, parable, irony; even (I mean no irreverence) the 'wisecrack'. He utters maxims which, like popular proverbs, if rigorously taken, may seem to contradict one another. His teaching therefore cannot be grasped by the intellect alone, cannot be 'got up' as if it were a 'subject'. If we try to do that with it, we shall find Him the most elusive of teachers. He hardly ever gave a straight answer to a straight question. He will not be, in the way we want, 'pinned down'. The attempt is (again, I mean no irreverence) like trying to bottle a sunbeam."

The Collect

Faithful Lord
whose steadfast love never ceases
and whose mercies never come to an end:
grant us the grace to trust you
and to receive the gifts of your love,
new every morning,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn - STF 455

1] All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2] Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil we fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3] God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of nought.
Evermore
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

4] Daily doth the Almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

5] Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

Prayer of Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you; May the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you;
may the Lord lift up his continuance upon you, and give you peace.
And may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, be amongst us, and remain with us
always. Amen