



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 2nd February 2025

compiled by Angela Banfield - Local Preacher & Lay Assistant

Welcome to our at home service for the first Sunday in February 2025

May the grace and peace of Jesus be with you all

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' *John 8:12*

A short prayer

Almighty and ever-loving God, we come in Jesus' name to worship you today. Wherever we are and whatever the hour, we are confident that as we draw closer to you in our thoughts, we will find that you are already there; waiting for us to dedicate a few minutes of our time to your praise and glory. Bless our souls with your transforming love and with the inspiration of your Holy Spirit. Amen

Hymn: 436 in STF

1] What shall I do my God to love,
my loving God to praise?

The length, and breadth, and height to prove,
and depth of sovereign grace?

2] Your sovereign grace to all extends,
immense and unconfined;
from age to age it never ends;
enfolds all humankind.

3] Throughout the world its breadth is known,
wide as infinity;
so wide it never passed by one,
or it had passed by me.

4] My trespass was grown up to heaven;
but, far above the skies,
in Christ abundantly forgiven,
I see your mercies rise.

5] The depth of all-redeeming love
what angel tongue can tell?
O may I to the utmost prove
the gift unspeakable!

6] Come quickly gracious Lord, and take
possession of your own;
my longing heart vouchsafe to make
your everlasting throne.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

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

Jeremiah 1: 4-10

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you", says the Lord. Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Reflection

There are great similarities here with the calling of Isaiah (*Isaiah 6*). Both prophets feel unworthy to speak on God's behalf, but God himself makes them worthy. They just have to go and serve. I'm sure there are times when we too feel ill equipped, to speak out or do something in Jesus' name; but if we are sure that God wants us to, we can't say no without spoiling God's plans for us and for our world. It's no good saying, "Here I am Lord, but please send someone else." (Jonah found that out.)

The reading from Jeremiah ends with the instructions to pluck up and pull down, but also to build and plant. We often see TV programs about unruly and impossibly overgrown gardens, it's a lot of hard, sometimes unpleasant, work to clear the ground in order to plant new and beautiful plants that will flourish. Some old plants could be worth pruning and training to grow well again, but some things have to go. However, after all the effort, you have a beautiful garden to walk in and enjoy. We are called to build God's kingdom in our world, so like Jeremiah and Isaiah, let's go to work.

Hymn: 663 in STF

1] I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry,
all who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

*Here I am Lord. Is it I, Lord,
I have heard you calling in the night,
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

2] I the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain;
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord

3] I the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide til their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord

Daniel L. Schutte (b.1947)

Luke 4: 24 - 30

And Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's home town. But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon.

There were also many lepers in Israel at the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Reflection

Reading this the words of St. John sound in my ears. 'He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.' How sad that people thought they knew all about Jesus, and failed to see who he truly was, and what he could do for them.

This little vignette of Jesus' life holds answers to several of the disciples' questions and possibly ours. We hear, 'He passed through the murderous crowd and went on his way' - a power he chose not to use when he was dragged before Herod and Pilate; nor as he carried his cross up Calvary's hill. I'm sure the disciples were waiting for him to repeat his earlier exit; their shock and horrified reactions bearing witness to this - and also to Jesus' choosing to die, as he did, and when he did.

We also have an example of this awful human trait of belittling people we think we know; how can they think they are qualified to speak, or lead, when they went to the same school and lived next door to us!

In prejudging Jesus, the people in Nazareth missed out on so many blessings, and still there is a danger today, especially with so much information on social media, that we don't listen to what someone is saying, unless they are from a section of society we admire. Isaiah and Jeremiah both knew, they, by human standards, were hardly qualified to speak on God's behalf, and yet God used them!

So now two challenges. The first is to serve God - whenever and wherever he asks. He is the power behind his will, so we needn't be afraid. The second is to hear God, speaking through the words of people we wouldn't usually listen to. In Hebrews 3: 15 we hear, "Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts"

Both our readings teach us to expect to be used by God and to find God in strange and wonderful circumstances. They might be strange to us; but for God, it's all in a day's work.

Hymn: 546 in STF

1] Behold the servant of the Lord!
I wait Thy guiding eye to feel,
to hear and keep thy every word,
to prove and do thy perfect will,
joyful from my own works to cease,
glad to fulfil all righteousness.

2] Me if thy grace vouchsafe to use,
meanest of all thy creatures me,
the deed, the time, the manor choose;
let all my fruit be found in thee;
let all my works in thee be wrought,
by thee to full perfection brought.

3] My every weak though good design
o'errule or change, as seems thee meet;
Jesus let all my work be thine!
Thy work, O Lord, is all complete,
and pleasing in thy Father's sight;
thou only hast done all things right.

4] Here then to thee thine own I leave;
mould as thou wilt thy passive clay;
but let me all thy stamp receive,
but let me all thy words obey,
serve with a single heart and eye,
and to thy glory live and die.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayers of Intercession

We come to you, our Father, with the cares that are in our hearts and on our minds.

We pray for our war-torn world, particularly giving thanks for the cease fire in Gaza.

May this be a lasting peace and the work of healing and restoration allowed to go ahead.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayers for all who are suffering because of conflict.

Father, we lift to you those known to us who are in special need today.

We pray for peace and healing in their lives.

For strength and courage to face each day, and an awareness of your loving presence.

We pray dear Lord for all who are hungry and thirsty in our world.

For all who are worried, and for those facing difficulties we know nothing about or fail to understand; give us Christ-like compassion and Godly understanding.

Stop us from being judgmental and enable us to share our riches generously.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen**

Hymn: 1213 in Mission Praise

1] O church arise, and put your armour on;
hear the call of Christ our captain.
For now the weak can say that they are strong
in the strength that God has given.
With shield of faith and belt of truth,
we'll stand against the devil's lies;
an army bold, whose battle cry is love –
reaching out to those in darkness.

2] Our call to war, to love the captive soul,
but to rage against the captor;
and with the sword that makes the wounded whole,
we will fight with faith and valour.
When faced with trials on every side
we know the outcome is secure,
and Christ will have the prize for which he died –
an inheritance of nations

3] Come see the cross, where love and mercy
meet,
as the Son of God is stricken;
then see his foes lie crushed beneath his feet,
for the Conqueror has risen!
And as the stone is rolled away,
and Christ emerges from the grave,
this victory March continues til the day –
every eye and heart shall see him.

4] So Spirit come, put strength in every stride,
give grace for every hurdle,
that we may run with faith to win
the prize of a servant good and faithful.
As saints of old still line the way,
retelling triumphs of his grace,
we hear their calls and hunger for the day –
when with Christ we stand in glory.

Stuart Townend (b.1963)

Blessing

We go out to please and serve the Lord, and
we rest in his presence with joy and thanksgiving.

We seek to love our neighbours as we should,
and bless each other through God's Holy love. **Amen**