



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 2nd November 2025

compiled by Vicki Penfound - Lay Assistant

Opening words: Psalm 65 v 1 - 4

Praise is due to you,
 O God, in Zion;
and to you shall vows be performed,
 O you who answer prayer!
To you all flesh shall come.
When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us,
 you forgive our transgressions.
Happy are those whom you choose and bring near
 to live in your courts.
We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house,
 your holy temple.

Hymn 90 Singing the Faith

1] Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
to praise thy Name, give thanks and sing,
to show thy love by morning light
and talk of all thy truth at night.

2] Sweet is the day of sacred rest,
no mortal cares shall seize my breast.
O may my heart in tune be found,
like David's harp of solemn sound!

3] My heart shall triumph in my Lord
and bless his works and bless his Word.
thy works of grace, how bright they shine!
how deep thy counsels, how divine!

4] Then shall I see, and hear, and know
all I desired and wished below;
and every power find sweet employ
in that eternal world of joy.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Prayer:

Praise be to you, O God.
In your love, you created us,
In your mercy you redeemed us,
In your strength you empower us.
Praise be to you, O God
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn 479 Singing the Faith

1] The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
and he is mine for ever.

2] Where streams of living water flow,
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow,
with food celestial feedeth.

3] Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love He sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

4] In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me.

5] Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

6] And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never:
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house for ever.

Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)

Reading: Luke 19 v 1 – 10

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

Reflection:

Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem and goes through Jericho, it had a rich history, being the first city overcome by the Israelites on their way into the Promised Land. By Jesus' time it was a thriving oasis city known as "The city of palm trees", it was a well-known stop for pilgrims en route to Jerusalem for festivals. Herod the Great built his winter palace there. There was a lot of money in Jericho.

Luke is keen for us to know that Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, we know that Matthew the disciple was also a tax collector, but Zacchaeus had a higher position. Tax collectors working for the occupying Roman forces were despised by the Jewish population because they were collaborating with an oppressive pagan regime. They had to swear an oath of allegiance to Rome which was bad enough, but a chief tax collector had to go a step further to secure their position. Zacchaeus would have made an offering at the local shrine to Caesar. Emperor worship was part of the functioning of the Empire by Jesus' time and was something that outraged the Jews, who worshipped One God only. So, Zacchaeus was a traitor to his people and his culture. Tax collectors did not receive a salary either, it was a commission-based income, and it was accepted that a

portion of what they collected was for their own pockets. However, it was a system open to corruption and exploitation. It's ironic that the name Zacchaeus means "righteous", his behaviour was quite the opposite. He had lost everything in the pursuit of riches – he was an outcast.

Yet something compelled him to see Jesus. We can only guess at the motivation which led him to climb the sycamore fig tree, they grow big and are very leafy, bearing fruit of various sizes all year round. For a man with authority in the community, climbing a tree was compromising his dignity, but he obviously thought it was worth it and probably hoped nobody would notice him. How wrong he was! Jesus saw through to Zacchaeus' heart, a man whose choices in life had left him sad and lonely. Not only did Jesus publicly recognise him, but he affirmed him by announcing he was going to his house. Zacchaeus is restored; he gives back money he owes plus a load more. Not that his salvation cost him money, but that his change of heart made him want to put things right. Jesus recognised human fruit in that tree, fruit which would change many lives and shake the city. I wonder how the Roman authorities in Jericho responded to what happened.

The crowd is shocked and disapproves of Zacchaeus' rehabilitation as a "son of Abraham", how dare Jesus accept this treacherous crook? If we were in that crowd, how would we react? Would we want the downfall of Zacchaeus rather than his redemption? It's easy to be judgemental of others, easier to gossip about people we disapprove of rather than pray for them. Jesus turns upside down the notion of who is the "right kind of person", he sees the heart, not outward appearances. The grace of God is amazing, and humbling. Whoever we are, whatever we have done, we are never out of his reach. "I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see."

Let us pray:

Gracious God,
Help us to see your hand at work,
Take away the blinkers we put on,
Hindering us from seeing the full breadth of your mercy.
May we live in the light of your love,
May we see people as you do
And pray for them.
Holy Spirit, aid us in our prayers for this hurting world.
Bring true righteousness and peace,
Liberation to the oppressed
and change hearts of the oppressors.
We trust in the Light of Christ to overcome,
As bearers of that Light, lead us to make a difference. Amen

Hymn 416 Singing the Faith

1] There's a wideness In God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice
Which Is more than liberty.

2] There is plentiful redemption
In the blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members
In the sorrows of the Head.

3] There is grace enough for thousands
Of new worlds as great as this;
There is room for fresh creations
In that upper home of bliss.

4] For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

5] But we make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own.

6] If our love were but more simple
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be illumined
By the presence of our Lord.

Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

Blessing:

May God the Father who tenderly holds you
Bless you in love and grace.
May Christ Jesus bring you his peace
Along life's journey
And may the Holy Spirit lead you
Into Light Eternal. Amen