



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 6th October 2024

compiled by Angela Banfield - Circuit Lay Assistant

Welcome to our service. My prayer is that you will find space within our worship to draw close to our wonderful God.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We pray:

Almighty God, your majesty and might fill the universe; and yet you care for all of your creation. Such amazing and unfathomable depths of love are beyond our imaginations. We echo the Psalmist with his words, 'What is man that you are mindful of him' and are humbled and filled with gratitude that you answered mankind's longing to know, when you sent your Son to be both our Saviour and our loving Lord. And so in confidence and in Jesus name we say, Amen.

Hymn: 690 STF

1] The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is his new creation by water and the word;
from heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

2] Called out from every nation, yet one through all the earth,
her charter of salvation one Lord, one faith, one birth;
one holy name she blesses, and shares one holy food,
as to one hope she presses with every grace endued.

3] In toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation of peace for evermore;
til with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
at last the Church victorious shall be the church at rest.

4] Yet she on earth has union with God the Three in One,
and mystic, sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy! Lord give us grace that we,
with them the meek and lowly, in heaven your face shall see.

Samuel John Stone (1832-1900)

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.

Psalm 26. Of David. Plea for Justice and Declaration of Righteousness

Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity,
and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.

Prove me, O Lord, and try me, test my heart and mind.

For your steadfast love is before my eyes,
and I walk in faithfulness to you.

I do not sit with the worthless, nor do I consort with hypocrites;

I hate the company of evildoers, and will not sit with the wicked.

I wash my hands in innocence, and go around your altar, O Lord,
singing aloud a song of thanksgiving, and telling all your wondrous deeds.

O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell, and the place where your glory abides.

Do not sweep me away with sinners, nor my life with the bloodthirsty those in whose hands are evil
devices,

and whose right hands are full of bribes.

But as for me, I walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me.

My foot stands on level ground; in the great congregation I will bless the Lord.

I wonder what you think about this Psalm and how do you think today's Christians feel about such words?

Are you comfortable with them? Or do they seem at odds with Jesus teaching that it is the sick who need the Doctor. Mark 2: 7

Jesus also tells us to abide in him for without him 'we are nothing' John 15:5

Someone who would probably have agreed with Psalm 26 was Job. We shall hear about him now.

Job 1:1 and 2: 1 -10

There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.

One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. The Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the Lord, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.' The Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. He still persists in his integrity, although you incited me against him, to destroy him for no reason.' Then Satan answered the Lord, 'Skin for skin! All that people have they will give to save their lives. But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.' The Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, he is in your power; only spare his life.' So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and inflicted loathsome sores on Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes.

Then his wife said to him, 'Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse God, and die'. But he said to her, 'You speak as any foolish woman would speak. Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?' In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Reflection

I'm sorry, neither of these readings is very cheerful and certainly not to my taste. I would much rather read about Jesus feeding the 5,000; or of him walking on the waters of Lake Galilee. But here we are, looking at two Old Testament readings and both leave us with a sense of unease.

Surely the smug judgmental attitudes of whoever wrote Psalm 26, should not be attributed to King David, as they are. We only have to read about his adult life to know the two do not add up. Job on the other hand appears to have truly lived a blameless life and we read that God held him up to Satan as a perfect example.

How awful we think, for God, who was supposed to love Job, to allow Satan to torture him and cause such misery. Suffering and sadness are still all around us in the world today. Is it that God allows Satan such liberties with all mankind? Or is it that until mankind truly and freely, seeks God's will and ways, we manage quite well enough on our own, to waste the money that could buy the food, the medicine, the knowledge, and the peace, that indeed would end all pain and sorrow.

If there was room to print another reading, I would include the set reading from Hebrews it is chapter 1 verse 1 - 4 and then ch.2: 5 - 12. Please look these verses up and perhaps read through the sermon to this Hebrew church. Overall, the message is that Jesus is superior to all things. Be them angels, priests or ancestors; even the law.

Whatever view the writer of Job had of God, we can confidently know that Jesus, in whom God was pleased to have 'all his fullness dwell within' truly reveals the nature of God and his mercy and steadfast love is beyond question, even in our suffering world. If our aim with God's help is spiritual holiness, perfection and obedience, there is a very sure hope that God's Kingdom will come, and his will be done, on earth as it is in heaven and suffering and sadness cease.

Prayers of intercession

Our Father we pray for those who need healing today.

Enable us to bring comfort and help to those in distress;

In Jesus' name we pray.

Our Father we pray for those in danger today.

Especially those who are afraid or in danger of those who should protect and love them;

In Jesus' power we pray.

Our Father we pray for those who are hungry today.

Give us generous hearts to share of our bounty with those who have so little.

In Jesus' love we pray.

Our Father we pray for our world.

For those suffering climate changes, for our world that is poisoned by chemicals and waste, for mankind's imprint when it is cruel and careless.

In Jesus' hope we pray. Amen

Hymn: 705 STF

1] It is God who holds the nations in the hollow of his hands;
it is God whose light is shining in the darkness of the land;
it is God who builds the City on the Rock and not on sand;
may the living God be praised!

2] It is God whose purpose summons us to use the present hour;
who recalls us to our senses when a nation's life turns sour;
in the discipline of freedom we shall know God's saving power:
may the living God be praised!

3] When a thankful nation, looking back, has cause to celebrate
those who win our admiration by their service to the state;
when self-giving is a measure of the greatness of the great:
may the living God be praised!

4] God reminds us every sunrise that the world is ours on lease:
for the sake of life tomorrow may our love for it increase;
may all races live together, share its riches, be at peace:
may the living God be praised!

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

Blessing

May the Lord bless you, and keep your hearts and minds safe in the knowledge of Jesus. May God be close to you and God become your joy. May you know, how much you are loved. Amen

Songs published under CCLI No 558764