

30th July, 2023

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe,

light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

Come, thou Fount of every blessing;
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.

Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unchanging love!

Here I raise my Ebenezer;
hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart; O take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

The Sermon by Rev. Howard Wright.

God is Famous. Read Psalm 76

The Psalms give voice to our own feelings, questions, and fears. They are a rich resource of songs of praise, lament, and complaint. Some are personal and some generic, some, perhaps all, are prophetic, and yet they also are earthy and real. It's taken me a while to really appreciate them – but I'm so glad I now do!

Psalm 76 comes after Psalm 75 – who would have thought? Psalm 75 anticipates deliverance, and Psalm 76 celebrates it.

This is possibly from the attack of Sennacherib the Assyrian king in 701 BC who besieged Jerusalem during the time of Hezekiah, but who then left after 185,000 of his army died in 'mysterious' circumstances. Sennacherib was himself assassinated by his sons on his return home.

God is renowned (:1) – he is famous! But famous for what?

Firstly, His Presence with his people (:2). In the psalmist's time the temple was a visible representation of the presence of God and His earthly dwelling. We cannot under estimate the importance of this to the people of God.

Today for us the presence of God is among his people – the new temple. Read 1 Corinthians 6:19 and 1 Peter 2:4-6. Meeting together important – see Hebrews 10:25. When you're not able to be here, watch online, read the paper service, but when you're able to be here – be here together with others in the presence of God.

Jesus is revealed as Emmanuel, God with us. God promises, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' This is stated from Genesis to Revelation, from Abraham to us, and even to the end of this age.

Secondly God is renowned, famous, for His victories and deliverance (:3). Sennacherib was the most powerful man on earth at the time, but God is greater! Read the confident declaration in verses 8, 9, and 12. God who saves and is above all.

In the past, we people used to shake our fists at God and protest, today in our society, we simply ignore God and his direction, pursuing our own whims and not his commands which are for our best. But God is almighty, he wants the best for us and to reject him is fraught with danger and ultimately destruction (See verses 5-6, and Matthew 7:13-14, which we

looked at a couple of weeks ago). The message of Jesus is repent (turn) to God for the forgiveness of sins, believe, and follow me.

Today we face threats of all kinds, pandemics, wars, and climate change producing famines and fires. God is here and he is not silent. He can be trusted – just read Revelation, which speaks forcefully about how God is limiting the damage we can do to ourselves and calling to us in love into his safety, before justice comes, all is put right, and we find ourselves with God or outside of his presence against him.

Thirdly, God is renowned for His beauty & majesty (:4). God is seen in light, as against darkness. This light of God is seen both in his love (see Exodus 34:6) and in his justice (:8-9).

God's light, love, and justice are so beautifully seen in Jesus, in his teaching, sacrifice, and resurrection. He invites us into presence, welcomes us into his family, and honours us with home.

So God is rightly renowned and famous. What is our response?

We are encouraged to make a commitment (:11). Our God is famous and to be respected (See :7). What commitment do we make? God asks for everything of us, for all of himself – it's not a fair exchange at all. God gives his life, to enable us to enter his fullness of life. He leaves his presence and enters our world in human form that we can be transformed and see him face to face. He battles for us that we can share in his victories. He endures the ugliest of human behaviour that we can share his beauty.

We bring our all in worship (:11). Worship is service, not just music, but our whole live in service to God. Following Jesus in our attitudes and behaviours, following Jesus with our whole heart. Entering through the narrow gate, and building on Jesus' teaching, and shining like lights as we looked at a couple of weeks ago and through the Sermon on the Mount series. .

So let's bring our worship in response to God's renown (See verse 10).

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.

Collect: Eighth Sunday after Trinity: Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed.16th August at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 23rd August at 11am in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise TBA.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays.
- COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.