



**'Let us run the straight race that is set before us in the royal road of love. Let us keep an even pace rooted in the faith of the saints. Let us be grounded in true catholic love, until we are consumed by your grace for ever.'** Amen (John Wesley.)

**Hymn: STF 436 What shall I do, my God to love**

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?

My trespass was grown up to heaven;  
But, far above the skies  
In Christ abundantly forgiven,  
I see your mercies rise.

Thy sovereign grace to all extends,  
Immense and unconfined;  
From age to age it never ends,  
Enfolds all humankind

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

Throughout the world its breadth is known,  
Wide as infinity,  
So wide it never passed by one;  
Or it had passed by me.

Come quickly, gracious Lord, and take  
Possession of your own;  
My longing heart vouchsafe to make  
your everlasting throne.

**A Prayer of thanksgiving.**

Words are inadequate to describe your love for us, and your creation O God. Help us to be silent Lord when our words fail to express your glory, but help us to remember your forgiving power and your grace which lifts us up. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Prayers of forgiveness.**

Hospitable God, when we have made the church a closed place where only those who know the unwritten rules are welcome.

**Forgive us and enlarge our hearts**

When we have made our minds a closed place.  
When only those who think as we do are welcome.

**Forgive us and enlarge our hearts**

When we have made our hearts a closed place  
Where only love as we do are welcome.

**Forgive us and enlarge our hearts**

Thank you for loving us as we are  
and for calling us into the image of your son.  
In whose name we pray.

**Amen**

(prayer by Michaela Youngson.)

## **Gospel reading is from Luke 13 vvs10-17. 'Getting priorities right.'**

### **Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman on the Sabbath**

10 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, 11 and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." 13 Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

14 Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."

15 The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? 16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

17 When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

## **The Old Testament Lesson is from Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 4-10 (The Revised English Bible.)**

'This word of the Lord came to me. Before I formed you in the womb, I chose you, and before you were born I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations.

Ah! Lord God, I answered, I am not skilled in speaking, I am too young. But the Lord said, Do not plead that you are too young for you are to go up to whatever people I send you, and to say whatever I tell you to say .Fear none of them, for I shall be with you to keep you safe.

This was the word of the Lord.

Then the Lord stretched out his hand and touching my mouth said to me, 'see I put my words into your mouth. This Day I give you authority over nations and kingdoms to uproot and pull down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant.'

## **Sermon**

I remember as a child hearing someone say about a crabby old man who lived nearby that ' he's an old Jeremiah,' meaning 'he was a miserable old man' Jeremiah was known by the people of his day as a prophet of doom and gloom. He did not have a reputation as a positive kind of person at all.

It's a description that Jeremiah has kept through history ever since

However, there is something about Jeremiah which was very bold, and he was not afraid to say important things that needed to be said. Lots of thing needed putting right in national life and in the world of his day, As much as they need saying today regarding the consequences of greed, injustice and neglect of the poor He believed that even before he was born, even before his very existence was fully developed in his mother's womb, God had a purpose for his life as a prophet.

Jeremiah was saying something that was important for all of us to remember. God can be at work even before children are born.

About ten years ago we welcomed the seven billionth child into the world. That is a tremendous number.

Human fertility has halved within recent years, but the world's population is bound to have tensions if it has large numbers to deal with – to feed, clothe and nurture but in spite of all the numbers of children of the world even today **every person every child is different. Every person is unique. Even before we are born we have different characteristics**

God, I believe sees every child as different with weak sides and good sides to their natures. All being capable of bringing special gifts. Every child in some way bears the 'image of God.' He or she has something to contribute to the human race

**All of us however have to grow up and in the process make mistakes.** We are moulded in such a way to fit in to the environment in which we live. In the process we all fall short of what we were intended to be like.

**We are all meant to help each other along the way.**

One of my favourite hymns begins 'All praise to our redeeming Lord, who joins us by His grace, and bids us each to each restored together seek his face.'

But the second verse goes on to say ""He bids us build each other up and gathered into one. To our high calling's glorious hope, **we hand in and go on.**'

Human beings for the main part are social beings. At our best, we can stimulate the best in each other. This is one of the great blessings of worship-that we activate the love of God in our hearts as we worship him together.

**Life is looked upon in Holy Scripture as being like a race that helps us to mature.** The opening words of our service today remind us that the race is not always easy but rich in experience. How interesting it has been to watch races on TV just now. Racing against others can take a lot out of people in competing alongside others, but what a sense of joy is achieved as they successfully complete the race!

**Finally, how do we inherit the promises the specialness, the uniqueness with which we began our existence?**

**We have to look again at our lives and confess our shortcomings, ask God for his forgiveness** and we also have to forgive others for the ways that they have hurt us.

Central to our forgiveness is the Cross of Jesus. The fact that Jesus died so that our sins might be forgiven gives us freedom in itself-so that we can become the kind of people God intends us to be.

We were born in such a way that we are all unique.

At the end it is the Lord's desire that we should accept God's forgiving love in Jesus and make a new beginning experiencing once more the uniqueness which is God has given and once more, we are free to make our new beginnings.

**Hymn: STF 495 Dear Lord and Father of mankind forgive our foolish ways**

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
Forgive our foolish ways!  
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,  
In purer lives thy service find,  
In deeper reverence, praise;  
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,  
Beside the Syrian sea,  
The gracious calling of the Lord,  
Let us, like them, without a word,  
Rise up and follow thee;  
Rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
The silence of eternity  
Interpreted by love!  
Interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of thy peace;  
The beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and thy balm;  
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still, small voice of calm;  
O still, small voice of calm.

**Intercessions**

Strengthen O Lord the prayers of your people by the power of your Holy Spirit wherever they may be. Today we remember your servants in Japan, and Christians in North Korea and South Korea, and in our own Islands in the Lancashire district of our church. Grant to them the ability to do the tasks that you have called upon them to do.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

Be with all who feel isolated and forgotten-those living in fear, hunger, poverty, oppression, and those needing water, homes, education, farmland and the simple need to be free to live out their own good ideals of living. through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Let us say together the Christian family prayer**

'Our Father, who art 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 our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.'

**Closing Hymn:     STF 608     All praise to our redeeming Lord.**

1 All praise to our redeeming Lord,  
who joins us by his grace,  
and bids us, each to each restored,  
together seek his face.

2 He bids us build each other up;  
and gathered into one,  
to our high calling's glorious hope,  
we hand in hand go on.

3 The gift which he on one bestows  
we all delight to prove;  
the grace through every vessel flows,  
in purest streams of love.

4 Even now we think and speak the same,  
and cordially agree;  
concentred all, through Jesus' name,  
in perfect harmony.

5 We all partake the joy of one,  
the common peace we feel,  
a peace to sensual minds unknown,  
a joy unspeakable.

6 And if our fellowship below  
in Jesus be so sweet,  
What height of rapture shall we know  
When round his throne we meet.

***Closing Prayer***

May the Lord bless you and guard you; may the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look kindly upon you and give you peace. Amen