

Sunday 28th August 2022

A service of worship for use at home

Prepared by Phil Colbourn, local preacher ex Burton Joyce.

Hymns in Singing the Faith (StF) Readings: NIV

Charity number 1134226

Introduction

The lectionary readings today offer hope in difficult times.

Call to worship Psalm 81

Sing for joy to God our strength;

shout aloud to the God of Jacob!

² Begin the music, strike the timbrel,
play the melodious harp and lyre.

³ Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon,
and when the moon is full, on the day of our festival;

⁴ this is a decree for Israel,
an ordinance of the God of Jacob.

⁵ When God went out against Egypt,
he established it as a statute for Joseph.

I heard an unknown voice say:

⁶ "I removed the burden from their shoulders;
their hands were set free from the basket.

⁷ In your distress you called and I rescued you,
I answered you out of a thundercloud;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah. [\[a\]](#)

⁸ Hear me, my people, and I will warn you—
if you would only listen to me, Israel!

⁹ You shall have no foreign god among you;
you shall not worship any god other than me.

¹⁰ I am the Lord your God,
who brought you up out of Egypt.

Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

¹¹ "But my people would not listen to me;
Israel would not submit to me.

¹² So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts
to follow their own devices.

¹³ "If my people would only listen to me,
if Israel would only follow my ways,

¹⁴ how quickly I would subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes!

¹⁵ Those who hate the Lord would cringe before him,
and their punishment would last forever.

¹⁶ But you would be fed with the finest of wheat;
with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

We continue our worship by singing a hymn:

Hymn StF 55 *Immortal, invisible*

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of
Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we
praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in
might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring
above
Thy clouds which are fountains of
goodness and love.

To all life Thou givest, to both great and
small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the
tree,
And wither and perish, but nought changeth
Thee.

Great Father of Glory, pure Father of Light
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their
sight;
All laud we would render, O help us to see:
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth Thee.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient
of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we
praise.

Prayers of Adoration, Confession and Thanksgiving

We sing for joy, for the joy of knowing you as the only wise God
We sing for joy because you remove our burdens and share our load
We sing for joy because you are unfailingly generous, loving and kind
We sing for joy because you give us the Spirit of Jesus in our lives
Alleluia. Alleluia. **Amen**

We confess that, too often, we have abandoned you, the true source of our true life, and run after
false ambitions and things that do not satisfy; we have closed our ears and not listened to your
call. Forgive us. Help us. Restore us, we pray, and heal us now, in Jesus' name. **Amen**

Loving, generous and faithful Lord, we thank you for your love. Thank you that you never abandon
us even if we abandon you. Thank you that you are calling us again today with words of hope and
salvation.
Alleluia. Alleluia. **Amen**

Hymn StF 18 *Be still and know that I am God*

Be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee.

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.

Reading **Jeremiah 2: 4-13** *I brought you into a fertile land*

Hear the word of the Lord, you descendants of Jacob,
all you clans of Israel.

⁵This is what the Lord says:

“What fault did your ancestors find in me,
that they strayed so far from me?

They followed worthless idols
and became worthless themselves.

⁶They did not ask, ‘Where is the Lord,
who brought us up out of Egypt
and led us through the barren wilderness,
through a land of deserts and ravines,
a land of drought and utter darkness,
a land where no one travels and no one lives?’

⁷I brought you into a fertile land
to eat its fruit and rich produce.

But you came and defiled my land
and made my inheritance detestable.

⁸The priests did not ask, ‘Where is the Lord?’

Those who deal with the law did not know me;
the leaders rebelled against me.

The prophets prophesied by Baal,
following worthless idols.

“Therefore, I bring charges against you again,” declares the Lord.

“And I will bring charges against your children’s children.

¹⁰Cross over to the coasts of Cyprus and look,
send to Kedar^[a] and observe closely;
see if there has ever been anything like this:

¹¹Has a nation ever changed its gods?
(Yet they are not gods at all.)

But my people have exchanged their glorious God
for worthless idols.

¹²Be appalled at this, you heavens,
and shudder with great horror,” declares the Lord.

¹³“My people have committed two sins:

They have forsaken me,
the spring of living water,
and have dug their own cisterns,
broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Hymn StF 628 *Faithful One*

Faithful One, so unchanging
Ageless One, you’re my rock of peace
Lord of all, I depend on you
I call out to you, again and again
I call out to you, again and again

You are my rock in times of trouble
you lift me up when I fall down
all through the storm
your love is, the anchor
my hope is in you alone

Reflection *Returning to the source of our life*

Carole and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary last month. We had a short holiday with our children and grandchildren. It was good. At times like these, you can't help looking back and thinking about the way you've come, through the years, reflecting on God's faithfulness. God is faithful.

In our journey together, we have arrived at another one of those periods of uncertainty we recognise as 'wilderness times'. We don't know where we are or where we are going because of a number of factors. First, the covid pandemic. Second, Carole's mum has gone into a Care Home, at 95, and so no longer needs us to care for her at home. Third, Burton Joyce Community Church has closed. Life as we knew it has changed beyond recognition and we are wondering: 'What do we do now?'

This reading from Jeremiah reminds us that we have had 'wilderness times' before. When our children were very small, the church we were attending fell apart with the minister and elders at odds with each other. We went along for a time to a new fellowship led by some of the elders but didn't feel settled. Then a new, charismatic group moved into the area and we linked up with them for a while before parting company with them, also.

We found ourselves in the wilderness. We didn't know what to do or where to go, so we prayed. By chance (whose chance I'll leave you to work out), we saw a programme on the television about John Bunyan. He preached on this passage, saying that we should go back to the source of life, the Spring of Living Water, not rely on second hand teaching. We remember it as a word in season like rain in the desert. It prepared us for a new beginning.

Not long afterwards, there was a knock at the front door and I opened it to find a nun standing on the doorstep. Sister Sheila Margaret ran a playgroup during the week in a hall near our house and, on Sundays, held a Sunday School with, once a month, a small service for local families. A mutual friend in the local spiritual diaspora had given her our names. There, on the doorstep, she said, "I need a man!" She said she needed help with her 'Sunday school church'. I remember holding our baby daughter in arms as we helped in our new 'church'. Sheila Margaret was lovely, wise and humble and it was a joy to help her, but it was not what we had expected.

You never know what good things God has in store for you. Go direct to the source. Don't rely on second-hand water, 'polluted' by other people. Where is the source of this living water? 'Come to me,' Jesus says. You don't need to go anywhere else. And, who knows? You may be surprised!

Now, in a time of quiet, a short meditation:

Meditation

Come on! Let's go back. Let's go back
When we are grieving and hurting and at our wits end
What can we do? Where can we go?
Who can we turn to?

Come on! Let's go back, go back
We are dead and destroyed and tired beyond measure
Broken down and broken-hearted
Who will help us? Who will heal?

Come on! Let's go back, go back
To the wells of living water
To the ever-living stream

We cry out but no-one hears!
Our good intentions last no more than a day
Our spirits wilt like plants in the desert

Come on! Let's go back, let's go back
To the One who will restore
To the One who recreates us
To the One who makes all things new
To the ever-loving One who gives sunshine in the morning
And all-refreshing rain

Come on! Let us return to the spring of living water
To the source of our life
Let's go back, go back, go back
To the One who is loving and kind
To the One who restores and renews
To the One who loves us beyond all measure

Pause for response

We turn to prayer: **Prayers of Intercession**

There is much hurt in the world. Let us hold up the hurt of the world to our loving heavenly Father who will not deny us, who gives grace upon grace.
Name before God the hurts of the world

There is so much joy in the world. Let us hold up the joy of the world to our loving heavenly Father who will not deny us.
Name before God the joys of the world and give thanks

There is much love in the world. Let us hold up to God all the love in the world, rejoicing in every outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
Name before God the love in the world

Creator God, take this hurt, these joys and the love in our world. Transform them in your glory. Heal the hurt. Multiply our joy. Pour out love. This we ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

We share in the Lord's Prayer:

Our final hymn: **Hymn StF 489** *All I once held dear*

All I once held dear, built my life upon
all this world reveres, and wars to own
all I once thought gain I have counted loss
spent and worthless now, compared to this

Refrain

*Knowing you, Jesus, knowing you,
there is no greater thing
you're my all, you're the best
you're my joy, my righteousness
and I love you, lord*

Now my heart's desire is to know you more
to be found in you and known as yours
to possess by faith what I could not earn
all-surpassing gift of righteousness

Refrain

Oh, to know the power of your risen life
and to know you in your sufferings
to become like you in your death, my lord
so with you to live and never die

Refrain

Closing prayer

Thank you, Father, that you love us in Jesus with an everlasting love and this means we can come to you again and again, and again, to draw our life directly from you; to learn from you and so become like you. **Amen**

Blessing

The blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you, and all you love and care for, this day and for evermore. **Amen**