

Sunday July 3rd 2022 –

A service of worship for use at home

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Bible Month Week 3. Isaiah: Faithful Servant

Hymns in Singing the Faith (StF)

Introduction

This is the third week of Bible Month in Isaiah. You may remember Week One was *Tough Love* & Week Two *Light to the World*. Now we pick up the theme of relationship with God with some very familiar scriptures. If you remember how, Down Under, Christmas comes at midsummer, it may help!

Call to worship Isaiah 7, 14-16 *Emmanuel, God with us*

“Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: A virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. He will be eating curds and honey before he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose right, for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.”

Hymn StF 193 *Born in the night, Mary's son*

1 Born in the night, Mary's Child,
a long way from your home;
coming in need, Mary's Child,
born in a borrowed room.

3 Truth of our life, Mary's Child,
you tell us God is good;
yes, it is true, Mary's Child,
shown on your cross of wood.

2 Clear shining light, Mary's Child,
your face lights up our way;
Light of the world, Mary's Child,
dawn on our darkened day.

4 Hope of the world, Mary's Child,
you're coming soon to reign;
King of the earth, Mary's Child,
walk in our streets again.

Prayers of Adoration, Confession and Thanksgiving

Generous and ever-living God, Father of light, creator, provider, sustainer of life, we worship you; faithful servant, loving Son of the Father, obedient in life, obedient in death, obedient in love, we worship you; Holy Spirit, always flowing, over-flowing, ever flowing from the heart of love, flowing from both the Father and the Son, we worship you.

We delight in the wonder and glory of your world. *Pause*

We confess that there is darkness in our world and in our lives. *Pause*

We are grateful that you meet us on the road, run to greet us, wrap us in your arms, restore, renew and redeem us from death. Thank you that you, in love, come down at Christmas into the darkness of this world. **Amen**

Let's share together in the prayer Jesus taught us: *Our Father ...*

Reading 1

Isaiah 9, 1-2, 6-7 *Unto us a son is born*

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past the Lord humbled the land of Zebulun & the land of Naphtali, but in the future, the Lord will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan:

² The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Hymn StF 272 *From heaven you came (Servant King)*

1 From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled;
not to be served but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the servant king,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the servant king.*

2 There in the garden of tears,
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'yet not my will but yours,' he said.

This is our God...

3 Come, see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God...

4 So let us learn how to serve,
and in our lives enthrone him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God...

Reading 2

Luke 4, 14-21 *Today, this scripture has been fulfilled*

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in the synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Reflection *Becoming a baby*

The shock of it is, not that God would come, but that God comes as a baby.

A king we could cope with. A messiah? OK. A man, or a woman, even; but a baby? What is going on? The thing about a baby, as God points out to King Ahaz in Isaiah 7, is that it knows nothing. Nowt. Absolute Zero.

A baby has to start from the beginning.

In Hebrews (5, 8), the writer says that Jesus 'learned obedience'. Paul says that Christ, Faithful Servant, was 'obedient to death, even death on a cross' (Philippians 2, 5-8) and exhorts us, his readers, to have the same mindset.

If Jesus, Faithful Servant, God-With-Us, has to start from the beginning as a baby, then so do we. This is the force of Jesus comment to Nicodemus (John 3) that he has to be 'born again'. And the consequences are stark. In his encounter with the 'Rich Young Ruler' (Luke 18,18), Jesus makes it clear: everything must go. Much of the time, we dodge the implications of this passage because, I guess, it challenges our comfortable way of life.

The thing is, it is not for our benefit but for the benefit of the whole world: 'Sell everything you have and give the proceeds to the poor'. It is only this kind of unreserved, unstinted generosity that saves the world. It is what Christ does and it is what we have to do. It's tough.

Today, perhaps especially today more than at any other time in history, we can see that this is exactly what is needed. How else to save the planet?

Pause for response

Loving and generous God, help us to give up everything and give away our riches. To give away our comforts and power and prestige, our influence and authority. To give up our small ambitions.

For your sake and for the sake of others and for the sake of your wonderful world, help me, by your Spirit, to become a little child possessing nothing but your love. Amen

Hymn StF 446 *I will offer up my life*

1 I will offer up my life in spirit and truth
Pouring out the oil of love as my worship to You
In surrender I must give my ev'ry part
Lord, receive the sacrifice of a broken heart

Chorus

Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring,
To so faithful a Friend to so loving a King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung
As a praise of Your name for the things You have done?
Oh, my words could not tell, not even in part,
Of the debt of love that is owed by this thankful heart

2 You deserve my ev'ry breath for You've paid the great cost
Giving up Your life to death, even death on a cross.
You took all my shame away there, defeated my sin,
Opened up the gates of heav'n and have beckoned me in

Chorus ...

What can I give, what can I bring?
What can I sing as an offering, Lord?
I want to please Your heart.

Prayers of Confession and Supplication

Father, we confess that we have so much and that this 'so much' can often stand in the way of heaven's kingdom of peace and joy and love. Forgive us and heal us, we pray, and bring us to new birth in Christ. **Amen**

Lord God, you are Creator & Sustainer of all things. *Let the earth rejoice!*

We confess that there is much wrong with our world and so we pray:

For those in need

For those in our hearts our minds

For our neighbourhood and local community

For people in positions of power and responsibility
 For the people who give everything in humble obedience
 For ourselves, that we may take the next step along the way

Silence

We pray especially for Yemen and Ukraine, for Syria and Eritrea, for East African countries suffering floods and droughts; for the Indian subcontinent and other places experiencing extreme heat. What shall we do?

Help us to give up our power and convenience and give away the proceeds so that all people everywhere can live in peace and security and so that the wonderful world you have made can thrive and flourish. **Amen**

Hear our prayers for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn *Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour*

1 Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour
 All for love's sake becamest poor
 Thrones for a manger didst surrender
 Sapphire-paved courts for stable floor
 Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour
 All for love's sake becamest poor

2 Thou who art love beyond all telling
 Saviour and King, we worship thee
 Emmanuel, within us dwelling
 Make us what Thou wouldst have us be
 Thou who art love beyond all telling
 Saviour and King, we worship Thee

3 Thou who art God beyond all praising
 All for love's sake becamest man
 Stooping so low, but sinners raising
 Heavenwards by thine eternal plan
 Thou who art God beyond all praising
 All for love's sake becamest man

Closing prayer

Thank you, Father. Your love in Jesus gives us the chance to start again through the power of your Spirit again and again and again. Help us to live our lives with unbounded generosity; to be just like you. **Amen**

Blessing

The blessing of God be upon you and remain with you, and with all whom you love and care for, this day and for ever. **Amen.**