

## A service for Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 13

**Hymn:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H99CYTHagSg>

- 1.
2. Captain of Israel's host, and Guide  
Of all who seek the land above,  
Beneath Thy shadow we abide,  
The cloud of Thy protecting love;  
Our strength, Thy grace, our rule, Thy Word;  
Our end, the glory of the Lord.
3. By Thine unerring Spirit led,  
We shall not in the desert stray  
We shall not full direction need  
Nor miss our providential way;  
As far from danger as from fear,  
While Love, almighty Love, is near.
4. We've no abiding city here,  
but seek a city out of sight;  
thither our steady course we steer,  
aspiring to the plains of light;  
Jerusalem the saints' abode,  
whose founder is the living God.

***Charles Wesley (1707-1788)***

### **Prayers:**

Creator God, I praise you for the beauty of the world that you have made, for richness of texture, colour, and form in nature, and for the caring communities around me. Forgive me when I fail to be thankful for the good things in my life.

God is full of grace and mercy; I receive his forgiveness and his love. **Amen.**

*Today is Methodist Conference Sunday and it is a day when we remember that we are part of a world Church, linked through time and space with our brothers and sister around the world and reaching back over two hundred and eighty years of history. It is interesting to note that I had great difficulty finding a YouTube clip of our opening hymn, here is another alternative that you might be interested to see*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fnnSS-Q0ec>

### **Old Testament Reading      Genesis 22: 1-14**

I always considered this story to be one of the greatest act of faith that I could imagine and honoured Abraham as a faithful man, in that his obedience to God was greater than his love for his own dear child. He became an even bigger man in my opinion when it dawned on me how long Abraham and Sarah had longed for this child.

Then the story was used in a safeguarding seminar I attended, and the very thought of any man being prepared to kill his own child to please God, brought a whole new thought process into play. I might well be able to reconcile my thoughts by accepting that God had always intended to stop Abraham, before the child came to any harm, but I have never been able to escape the torture the man must have experienced and what did the whole episode do to Isaac, as his father bound him and laid him on the Altar?

*Consider:*

- *What emotions run through your mind as you read this story?*
- *Is God testing Abraham? Or is he showing Abraham that if he has sufficient faith, God will provide?*
- *Can you think of times in your life when God has tested you? Do you feel that your faith is sufficient to recognise that God will provide for you?*

**Hymn:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBb-xZEem9g&list=RDHBb-xZEem9g&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBb-xZEem9g&list=RDHBb-xZEem9g&start_radio=1)

- 1.
2. When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,  
and when we're dying, it is in the Lord.  
Both in our living and in our dying,  
we belong to God; we belong to God.
3. Through all our living, we our fruits must give.  
Good works of service are for offering.  
When we are giving, or when receiving,  
we belong to God; we belong to God.
4. 'Mid times of sorrow and in times of pain,  
when sensing beauty or in love's embrace,  
whether we suffer, or sing rejoicing,  
we belong to God; we belong to God.
5. Across this wide world, we shall always find  
those who are crying with no peace of mind,  
but when we help them, or when we feed  
them,  
we belong to God; we belong to God.

**Epistle                  Romans 6: 12-23**

How often have you seen somebody fall foul of circumstances and thought “there, but for the Grace of God go I”? Grace is a strange concept, the theory can so easily be misconstrued, God’s main desire is to forgive those who love him. I can remember saying to my girls when they were younger “I don’t mind you making mistakes and I’ll forgive you whatever, but, so long as you learn from your errors and try not to do it again” reflecting on that though, I think I still hold that same principle today, when my children are grown up.

I’m not suggesting that God’s Grace is conditional, I don’t believe it is, but I think that we have a responsibility ourselves, to hear God’s words of grace and strive to amend our ways in the future. I believe that when we come to God, full of remorse for our actions and seeking forgiveness, he will cleanse us, and we can move on.

*Consider:*

- *Do you think that there are any misdemeanours that are beyond God’s forgiveness? Pushing that a stage further, if the answer is “no” are there any action YOU would feel that you could not forgive?*
- *Do you believe that when a person finds God’s forgiveness for committing a serious crime, they should be freed from the sentence placed on them by a court of law?*
- *In recent weeks, we have seen rules bent causing human outcry, statues toppled, and errors of judgement made, and people have cried out for a public apology. How import is it for you for people to apologise when they’ve done something wrong? How quickly do you apologise for your errors?*

**Take a time to sit quietly**

Let us pray for the church, for the world and for ourselves.

Loving God,

We pray for your guidance and wisdom as your church finds new ways of reaching out into the world with the good news of your generous love and forgiveness. Gift leaders with the innovation and inspiration that comes from your Holy Spirit so that your church may be more effective witnesses of your saving grace.

Lord Jesus, as the world continues to suffer the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, we pray for compassion and fairness in sharing practical resources and medical expertise so that there might be healing and wholeness for all.

We pray that all those who have influence over the lives of others, might make decisions based on kindness and for the common good. We pray Holy Spirit that you infuse with love the hearts of those who use war as a weapon of power. Hear our prayers for an end to all conflict, and for recognition and support to be given to refugees and displaced people around the world.

Compassionate Christ, we pray for comfort and strength for those who are still isolated, for parents and children, for the elderly and those suffering long term illness. Lord, lift anxiety from those who are worried about the future, their jobs, businesses, and their financial situation. May they know that they are not alone, that Jesus is always with them.

Holy Spirit we pray for ourselves, for our plans that have been changed, for the people we have lost and miss still, for our hopes and dreams for the future. Strengthen our faith, deepen our commitment to your ways and help us to better serve God and to see Jesus in everyone we meet.

Thank you, Lord, that you that your love never fails

***The Lord's Prayer:***

**Hymn**                    <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDdvReNKKuk>

- 1.
2. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now am found  
Was blind but now I see
3. Was Grace that taught my heart to fear  
And Grace, my fears relieved  
How precious did that Grace appear  
The hour I first believed
4. Through many dangers, toils and snares  
We have already come  
T'was Grace that brought us safe thus far  
And Grace will lead us home
5. When we've been there ten thousand year  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we first begun.
6. Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost but now am found  
Was blind but now I see

*John Newton (1725-1807)*

**Gospel                    Matthew 10: 40-42**

Even though it is years ago in my story now, I can still remember sitting in the school assembly on my first day at high school and being told that wherever we went wearing our school uniforms we were ambassadors for the school, create a good impression and that spoke volumes about the school, misbehave and we would bring the whole school into disrepute. Maybe that lesson years ago has influenced my decision making over the years, I have always recognised that I am not only my own person but represent others as I live.

Our Gospel lesson reminds us that whatever Jesus did, he was representing God and he was explaining to the disciples that whatever they did, they were representing him. Therefore, two thousand years on as the people of

God in the modern world, we are representatives of God in the power of the Spirit and what ever we say or do reflects on God.

*Consider:*

- *As an ordained minister, my clerical collar is an outward sign that I am an ambassador for Christ. Most of us in the Church do not wear such statement clothing, what are outward signs of your faith?*
- *Do you think being ambassadors for God causes us to behave in different ways and have different values? Does it matter to you that people might think of you differently because you are "A church person"?*
- *What do you think should be the outward signs of a disciple of Christ?*

**Hymn:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CV\\_Tg55aXig](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CV_Tg55aXig)

1. Give me the faith which can remove  
And sink the mountain to a plain;  
Give me the childlike praying love,  
Which longs to build thy house again;  
Thy love, let it my heart o'er-power,  
And all my simple soul devour.
2. I would the precious time redeem,  
And longer live for this along,  
To spend and to be spent for them  
Who have not yet my Saviour known;  
Fully on these my mission prove,  
And only breathe, to breathe thy love.
3. My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,  
Into thy blessed hands receive;  
And let me live to preach thy word,  
And let me to thy glory live;  
My every sacred moment spend  
In publishing the sinner's Friend.
4. Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart  
With boundless charity divine,  
So shall I all my strength exert,  
And love them with a zeal like thine,  
And lead them to thy open side,  
The sheep for whom the Shepherd died.

### **A prayer of blessing**

Receive these words into your heart.

Jesus opens his arms to welcome and accept you, whoever you are and whatever your circumstances. Open your heart and your hands to receive him now, and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and those whom you love, now and always. **Amen.**