

A service for Sunday 5th July 2020

Bible Reading: Psalm 45: 10-17

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

1. When love is found and hope comes home,
sing and be glad that two are one.
When love explodes and fills the sky,
praise God and share our Maker's joy.
2. When love has flowered in trust and care,
build both each day, that love may dare
to reach beyond home's warmth and light,
to serve and strive for truth and right.
3. When love is tried as loved-one's change,
hold still to hope, though all seems strange,
till ease returns and love grows wise
through listening ears and opened eyes.
4. When love is torn and trust betrayed,
pray strength to love till torments fade,
till lovers keep no score of wrong,
but hear through pain love's Easter song.
5. Praise God for love, praise God for life,
in age or youth, in calm or strife.
Lift up your hearts! Let love be fed
through death and life in broken bread.

Brian Wren (b1936)

Prayers:

Lord God, I am in wonder at the world you have created and the life you have given me. I thank you for that gift of life and the joy of sharing my life with others.

I have not always lived my life as you would wish. Yet, even as I confess this to you, I know your forgiveness by the suffering and death of your Son, Jesus Christ, my Saviour. Amen.

Old Testament Reading **Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67**

One of the new gifts I have discovered during the last few weeks is the gift that different charities are giving us to attend webinars, (seminars on the computer) and over the last few weeks I have become more informed and have built up a bank of resources I wasn't previously aware of. On Monday of this week I attended one such a gathering entitled "Everyone and Evangelist – Even you" during which participants were reminded of all the opportunities God gives us to speak of faith and perhaps equally importantly to live our faith.

I mentioned Hagar a couple of weeks ago as one of the important women of old testament times, this week we read about Rebekah. After the birth of Isaac, Sarah has died and now Abraham sends Eliezer to go and find a bride for Isaac, but not from the Canaanite people and it is at the well that Eliezer meets the young woman Rebekah as she comes to collect water, he asks for a drink, and not only does she provide what he requires, but she goes the extra mile and provides water for his camels as well. Common hospitality in the time of Abraham would have been to provide a drink for a traveller, but there was no requirement to do any more.

The One Show on the BBC have been honouring people who have gone far and above what has been expected of them during the last few weeks and I have heard remarkable stories of people who have made queuing at supermarkets an enjoyable experience, people delivering food, people doing training on line instead of sitting back and waiting, they have honoured people who have gone the extra mile, done the unexpected and endeavoured to make life as good as possible for others during these extreme times.

Consider:

- *What has been your experience (if any) of unexpected kindnesses during this time of lock down?*
- *Maybe in the past we have become suspicious if people have been kind and thoughtful assuming that there is a hidden agenda somewhere, has your view changed?*
- *Have you wondered what is the motivation behind the kindness and thoughtfulness of people? As Christians, should we be telling people that OUR actions are because of our love for God and our desire to do his will?*

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

I was looking for a different hymn and stumbled across this one by accident.

1. We're pilgrims on the journey of the narrow road,
And those who've gone before us line the way.
Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary,
Their lives a stirring testament, to god's sustaining grace.
2. Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
Let us run the race not only for the prize,
But as those who've gone before us. Let us leave to those behind us,
The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives.
3. O may all who come behind us find us faithful,
May the fire of our devotion light their way.
May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe,
And the lives we live inspire them to obey.
O may all who come behind us find us faithful.
4. After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone,
And our children sift through all we've left behind,
May the clues that they discover, and the memories they uncover,
Become the light that leads them, to the road we each must find.
5. O may all who come behind us find us faithful,
May the fire of our devotion light their way.
May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe,
And the lives we live inspire them to obey.
O may all who come behind us find us faithful.

Epistle Romans 7: 15-25

I have often thought, and said how useful it would be to have a handbook for parenthood, there are two flaws in my theory, firstly I only ever tend to refer to a handbook after things have gone wrong and for most of the time I assume that I know better, so such a book would almost certainly sit on the shelf unread. Secondly, to cover all eventualities such a handbook would have thousands of volumes and would never be read anyway. I have decided that one fairly simple rule applies to most cases and that is "don't expect your children to do what you think is right, the chances are that none of us did when we were little, human beings are pretty unpredictable, is a fairly of predictable way.

I love this passage from St Paul's letter to Romans, it does my heart good to see the great evangelist agonising about doing good when he is constantly tempted to do wrong. I hope that most you feel the same way that I do, otherwise that might make me the exception to the rule. Like St Paul, I think that I have a fairly good understanding of what I ought to be doing, but there are times, all too frequently when the little voice inside is saying "go on, who's going to know" and if we're not careful we can end up torturing ourselves as Paul ends up doing here.

But that is the wonder of the Gospel message, you see, I think that the important thing here is that Paul recognises that he is not flawless, he is susceptible to sin and therefore in need of God's forgiveness and that is why the cross is forever important to the follower of Christ, whatever our understanding of what happened when Christ died on the cross, the inescapable truth is that through the self-giving of Christ, we have salvation, our sins are forgiven!

Consider:

- *Reflect for a few moments on the last few days, are there things that you have said or done, that you wish today could be struck out of the record of your life's story?*
- *Are you truly sorry and want to be forgiven?*
- *Offer them to God and ask for his forgiveness and feel for yourself the grace of God washing over you.*

Take a time to sit quietly and pray:

I thank you Lord for the gift of your Son: for His life, His sufferings and death and for His Resurrection and Ascension, for the witness, salvation and hope He gives.

I thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit to those who have come to you, and especially for the gift of that Spirit in your Church.

I rejoice in the work and witness of your Church and pray that it may continue to strive to fulfil your work and proclaim your Love.

I pray for the needs of the world, thinking especially at this time of those affected by the Coronavirus, but remembering too all who suffer including those whose plight seemingly goes unnoticed. Be with all those suffering in any way. Especially be with.....(people known to me)

Be with those whose lives impact others: leaders in government, or the workplace, health care workers, teachers, emergency workers and all those on whom people depend. Grant them the wisdom and the strength to know and to follow your way.

Lord, I commend all men, women and children to your unfailing love through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer:

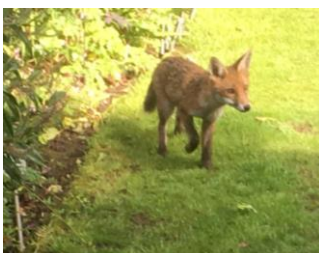
Hymn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxA0TFe3-Uo>

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| <p>1. Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee
O Lamb of God, I come! I come</p> <p>2. Just as I am, and waiting not
to rid my soul of one dark blot
to thee whose blood can cleanse each spot
O Lamb of God, I come, I come</p> | <p>3. Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt
Fighting and fears within without
O Lamb of God, I come, I come</p> <p>4. Just as I am, Thou wilt receive
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve
Because Thy promise I believe
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.</p> |
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Gospel

Matthew 11: 16-19, 25-30



It's a little while since I included a picture in my service. My brother and sister in law have been plagued by a group of five fox cub, who appear the think it is great fun to start playing in the middle of the night and wake up people who would much prefer to be sound asleep. Bear in mind that my brother and sister in law live about a mile and half from the centre of the city of Bradford. They believe that the foxes have arrived simply because of the reduction in traffic caused by lockdown. There has been much conversation recently about what positive attributes we might carry forward from this period of lock down and for me, I think that it has been space to really get to grips with

tasks that for the last few years I have not been able to deal with.

Jesus says "come to me all who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest" when we reflect on the reading we have just considered from the letter of Paul to the Romans it sounds as though faith is burdening Paul, as though the load is too much to bear.

Consider:

- *What is the load that you are carrying at the moment? What are your anxieties and concerns? Think about all the aspects of your life, home, family, church, work, your neighbourhood, write them down if you feel that it would help.*
- *Offer your concerns up to the God who says "find rest in me"*
- *Sit in silence and allow the Spirit of the living God wash over you*

Hymn:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62wk5KvI7-w>

1. I cannot tell how he whom angels worship
should stoop to love the peoples of the earth,
or why as shepherd he should seek the
wanderers
with his mysterious promise of new birth.
But this I know, that he was born of Mary,
when Bethlehem's manger was his only home,
and that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
and so the saviour, saviour of the world, is
come.
2. I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,
nor how his heart upon the cross was broken,
the crown of pain to three and thirty years.
But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted,
and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,
and lifts the burden from the heavy laden,
for still the saviour, saviour of the world, is
here
3. I cannot tell how he will win the nations,
how he will claim his earthly heritage,
how satisfy the needs and aspirations
of east and west, of sinner and of sage.
But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,
and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,
and some glad day his sun shall shine in
splendour
when he the saviour, saviour of the world, is
known.
4. I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
when, at his bidding, every storm is stilled,
or who can say how great the jubilation
when all our hearts with love for him are
filled.
But this I know, the skies will sound his
praises,
ten thousand, thousand human voices sing,
and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will
answer:
'At last the saviour, saviour of the world, is
king!

A prayer of blessing

May the blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and remain with each of us sharing His worship today and always.