



Call to worship

Psalm 111:3,4

*Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
And his righteousness endures forever.
He has caused his wonders to be remembered;
The Lord is gracious and compassionate.*

StF357 Jesus the name high over all

[Watch on Youtube](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3Jpx0Rnmno>

Jesus the name high over all,
In hell, or earth, or sky!
Angels revere, and nations fall,
And devils fear and fly.

Jesus the name to sinners dear,
the name to sinners given!
It scatters all their guilty fear,
it turns their hell to heaven.

Jesus the prisoner's fetters breaks,
And bruises Satan's head;
Power into strengthless souls it speaks,
And life into the dead.

O that the world might taste and see
The riches of his grace!
The arms of love that compass me
Would all embrace.

His only righteousness I show,
His saving grace proclaim;
'tis all by business here below
To cry: Behold the Lamb!

Happy if with my latest breath
I might but grasp his name;
Preach him to all, and cry in death:
'Behold, Behold the lamb!'

Charles Wesley (1707 - 1788)

Let us pray together

We praise you Father, Son and Spirit
For your constant love and care for us.

For your generous and giving nature that never demands our gratitude, for your forgiveness when we forget to acknowledge your presence and power and fail to give thanks for all you have done in our lives,

We praise you Lord.

Forgive us our weaknesses and faults and help us to remember to be more like Jesus in our compassion for others and our worship of you.

(a few moments of silence)

The Lord hears our prayers; in his grace he forgives and renews us, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today's Reading:

2 Kings 5 1-5 & 9-15, 2 Timothy 2 8 -15,
Luke 17.11-19

Time to Reflect

There are two themes I think running through the readings appointed for today.

Firstly, one of gratitude and thankfulness acknowledging people doing good things and secondly God using what appear to be difficult situations with little hope for good.

In our Old Testament reading from 2 Kings, we see a person who has status, Naaman, the commander of the Army of the King of Aram who is rather put out with what he was expected to do particularly as it was a young girl suggesting it. Sadly, this a reaction and situation we see and it is contrary the beliefs and standards we all seek to follow and to live by.

As individuals though we can relate to this, particularly when people suggest something we don't agree with or sadly we think it is beneath our position or status.

And yet when we think about and reflect on it, we know deep down in our more serious moments we can learn from it and indeed benefit from it in many instances and allow others to do the same, which is what eventually happened to Naaman.

The Story of Elisha's healing of Naaman is set in the context of tension, sometimes outright war, between Naaman's country Aram and Israel. Like most stories there are several issues, the hostility between the two countries, the leprosy itself and Naaman's pride, which prevents him accepting the healing ritual.

God's grace however functions in the story to overcome all their problems, it also opens up the possibility that foreigners not born Israelites might opt to affiliate themselves to Israel's God who is recognised at the end of the passage as the only true God.

In our reading from the epistle, we see Paul at this last stage of his life having to confront a sense of failure at several levels. He must realize by now that his long-term plan to share the Gospel in parts of Europe will not be realized and alongside this, his work in Asia Minor (Turkey) is in danger of coming to nothing through false teaching and personal betrayal. His own situation must have seemed a stark contrast to the power of God that was promised.

But central to Paul's Gospel is the pattern of Jesus's death and resurrection. For those looking for the Messiah to come, Jesus's death must have seemed God forsaken and his resurrection simply inexplicable and if this pattern of public failure and hidden victory marked Jesus's life surely it will mark the life of his followers.

Paul anticipated neither easy triumph nor terminal failure and neither should we, realising instead that suffering and self-forgetting now will ultimately lead to fullness of life and patient endurance, reflecting God's own nature, which will be rewarded as we reign with him.

There are no short cuts in this we cannot play games with our maker but having said that when the going gets tough what matters most is not that we have grasped him but he has grasped us and that he is faithful. To continue strongly in this pattern of grace we need to rely not on our words but on his word, no matter what our circumstances.

Our Gospel reading is a story full of vivid naturalistic detail. The border between Samaria and Galilee would have been the natural route to Jerusalem avoiding Samaria itself. Those suffering

infectious skin diseases (not necessarily leprosy as we understand it) had to live on the outskirts of the village and were used to keeping their distance.

As Jesus rested in the village he would easily have been found and the Lepers obedience in going to the priest showed real faith. The reason for going was for the priest to certify that they had been healed and the Priest would, among other things, anoint the healed person with oil to signal God's blessing & gladness.

Faith & thanksgiving belong together but only the Samaritan demonstrates both faith and thanks but as a characteristic of Luke's Gospel, it is the outsider who receives the full blessing. His faith saves him but the word means much more than mere physical healing, it makes clear the nature of God's favour.

It is not a right granted by virtue of who you are or where you are born, but it is a gift freely given, faith is incomplete without gratitude. When we give thanks, we put ourselves in a place of grace by recognising that all we have is God's gift. It is a gift available to all and we should be constantly thanking God for it and sharing it with others.

In recent years we have seen many instances of people gifting their support to others in many different ways and sharing their gifts in so many different ways. In a lot of cases differences have been put aside as people come together to support one another in cases of need. Strangers have become friends as they work together on a project to help others.

As many people struggle on a daily basis to provide for their families and others are fearful to go out alone for fear of how they will be viewed, it is important we all play our part in enabling everyone to live in harmony with each other, celebrating and accepting different ways of living, knowing we are loved and supported by a God who loves us unconditionally, as we strive to serve him day by day.

As the words of our closing hymn says: No
condemnation now I dread
Jesus and all in him is mine
Alive in him, my living head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ, my own

Amen

A time of prayer

Let us bring to the Lord our prayers for the church, the world and ourselves. Let us pray.

Almighty God, we lift to you the church worldwide, asking your blessing on all Christians, ministers and pastors. Inspire our worship, fill us with your Spirit as we seek to do your will for Jesus' sake.

Loving God, we pray for comfort and strength for all people who find themselves on the margins, for refugees and those displaced by war or forced to flee persecution or abuse; for the poorest who seem to be locked into a life of poverty; for those who are ill, those who are grieving, the frail, and the very young and the very old. Give them hope and courage and touch their lives with your healing presence.

Caring God, we bring ourselves to you, for you know our concerns and share in our human happiness. Help us to never forget how much you love us and to constantly thank you for all that you give us, this beautiful world, our families and friends, and the most precious gift of all, your Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

StF345 And can it be that I Should gain

Watch on Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQeIGbKqiw8>

And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all: the immortal dies !
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.
'tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
Let angel minds enquire no more.

He left his father' throne above
So free, so infinite his grace
Emptied himself of all but love,
And bled for Adams helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray
I woke the dungeon flamed with light,
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose went forth, and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold, I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Charles Wesley (1707 - 1788)

A prayer of blessing

The Spirit of truth lead us into all truth,

Give us grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and to proclaim the word and works of God.

And the blessing of God

Spirit Son and Father

Remain with you and the ones you love, always.
Amen.

Original Materials by Reverend Claire Hargreaves

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