



Call to Worship *From Psalm 143*

O Lord God, make us to hear your voice this day, for we trust in you; show us the way that we should walk in, for we lift up our souls to you; teach us to do the thing that pleases you, for you are our God. Let your loving Spirit lead us into the place of righteousness, for your name's sake. **Amen.**

Michael Perry ©2023 Jubilate

Hymn - 21 - Born in song Watch on YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VLLghU0_5I

Born in song!
God's people have always been singing.
Born in song!
Hearts and voices raised.
So today we worship together;
God alone is worthy to be praised.

Praise to God!
For he is the one who has made us.
Praise to God!
We his image bear.
Heaven and earth are full of his glory;
let creation praise him everywhere.

Christ is King!
He left all the glory of heaven.
Christ is King!
Born to share in our pain;
crucified, for sinners atoning,
risen, exalted, soon to come again.

Prayer of confession

God of kindness, We look to You when we are in times of trouble and difficulty. When we feel there is no one left on our side we pray that we remember our help is in Your name.

When we fall short of the mark, when our frustrations take over, and lead us to anger, help us to reach back to You, to find Your peace, and to know that our help is in Your name.

For the thoughts we have that go against You, for the words we use against others that cause hurt and bitterness, let us take comfort in knowing Your love is greater than all of our errors, and we thank You that our help is in Your name.

In times of distress, when our fears engulf us and we feel unable to cope with the challenges that lie before us, be our strength, Be our shield, be the reminder that our help is in Your name. Lord of heaven and earth, we give thanks that through everything we face You are on our side, we are not swept away, our snares will be broken because our help is in Your name. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not in to temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Sing the song!
God's Spirit is poured out among us.
Sing the song!
He has made us anew.
Every member part of the Body;
given his power, his will to seek and do.

Tell the world!
All power to Jesus is given.
Tell the world!
He is with us always.
Spread the word, that all may receive him;
every tongue confess and sing his praise.

Then the end!
Christ Jesus shall reign in his glory.
Then the end
of all earthly days.
Yet above the song will continue;
all his people still shall sing his praise.
Brian Hoare (born 1935) © Brian Hoare/Jubilate Hymns Ltd

Reading - Exodus 1:8-2:10

Reading - Matthew 16:13-20

Hymn - 186 - Tell out my soul Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vz-FkqobgXY>

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his Name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has
done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy Name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

Timothy Dudley-Smith (born 1926) from Luke 1 vs46-55 © administered by Oxford University Press in Europe (including UK and Ireland) and Africa, and by Hope Publishing Company in all other territories (including USA)

Sermon - Short memories (Exodus 1:8)

⁸Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.

New beginnings will always be a feature of life in every sphere of our existence. In the Methodist Church we will shortly begin another Connexional year. We welcome an incoming Minister to the Ipswich Circuit just as we have said goodbye to another who has moved away to retire.

It is almost a year since the death of a woman who was widely respected by many, even those who could not necessarily subscribe to the ancient system of monarchy that she represented. Queen Elizabeth II had celebrated a Platinum Jubilee and now, when we say Queen, we mean a different person entirely.

However much we aspire to hang on to memories, especially happy ones, or to learn lessons from the past, achieving that is more easily said than done. Memory fades and people change. That does not diminish what has been, but it sets it at a distance.

In my business life I was recently involved in some discussions about how best to keep alive 'corporate memory' where important lessons from past successes and failures should not be forgotten. In the discussion, which reached no sensible conclusion about how to achieve such miracle of the triumph of hope over experience, I recalled the wise words of the German philosopher, Georg Hegel who said, 'the only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history'.

Is it as bleak as that?

The book of Exodus begins with a reminder of the names of the eleven sons of Jacob, or Israel, who joined their brother Joseph in Egypt at a time of famine. Joseph was, literally, a life saver for many people in extreme times. The twist in the tale is that the eleven brothers that Joseph was genius who had the foresight to store food in times of plenty. They had disposed of him to traders as a pain in the neck and later had to eat humble pie as well as benefitting from the rest of his stored food.

Then came a new generation of people in Egypt. Memory was short and the new regime saw not a life saver, but a population of immigrant imposters who were breeding fast and seemed to be about to take over.

So the newly crowned Pharaoh thought it a good plan to oppress the Israelites by making them slaves.

There is a cross reference to this verse in Exodus, which is to be found in Acts chapter 7. There, Stephen, about to be stoned to death for his faith, is recounting the story of the Jews and specifically apropos the new Pharaoh says, [v18] 'Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. He

dealt treacherously with our people.' Something of an understatement perhaps, but then the Sanhedrin the Jewish Council, was framing up to deal treacherously with Stephen.

But go back to Egypt. Kill the male children, was the instruction. The Egyptian midwives failed, however. Whether they deliberately let the children live out of sheer humanity, or whether the Hebrew mothers really did give birth easily and quickly is only part of the point.

A boy was born, his name was Moses, and the nature of his miraculous journey via a basket hidden in rushes by the river to the home of the Pharaoh's daughter is remarkable too. Moses was to become the man who led the beleaguered Hebrews from Egypt to safety under the guidance of God.

The reading from Exodus sets the scene for a sea change in the lives of the people of God. They were settled in Egypt but would have to move on. They were oppressed in Egypt and would have to move on. Their history written at this time would become a great tradition. From here would develop law and prophets. From here would begin a story of obedience to God and disobedience to God at different times.

If we look critically at history, we can:

- Prevent ruts
- Prevent wounds
- Prevent progress

In this as in all things, balance is important. The age of Joseph was gone, the glory days in Egypt were over and it was time to start afresh, albeit in trying circumstances and for the wrong reasons.

In the Gospel passage Peter was the disciple prepared to look for something new. When many thought that Jesus was most likely a returned character from their tradition, Peter saw a Messiah. He saw a new leader, and one greater than Moses. And what he saw was tradition about to be overturned, he saw wound dressing on a grand scale, and he saw progress like never before in the development of God's people.

What of our world now, then?

As leaders and governments change, in our circumstances, and they are different from others of course, the risk is not so much slavery and oppression, not the risk of over stability from traditions as ignorance of the lessons of the past and the risk of going back beyond all of it to new sort of slavery to godless doubt and deep darkness.

But then again, perhaps the risk is the same – forgetting the blessings, targeting those who question and challenge and vilifying those who remind...

Indeed – a new King who did not know Joseph, but for each of those the offsetting effect of towering figures of faith and service like Moses...and never forget what Jesus said to Peter:

'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'

What the new King failed to see in the Hebrews was what those who knew Joseph saw was that same great power – the presence of God at work.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God, You are a God of strength, of hope and of mercy. You never leave or abandon us.
We thank You for the faithfulness You show towards us when we have not earned it.
We thank You that you are constant, good and true. You do not leave us.
We thank You that You have always been with Your people, giving them comfort and guidance.

You were with Your people in Egypt, shining hope in the injustice of tyranny and hopelessness.
You were with Your people as they have struggled as a Kingdom, bringing deliverance and grace.

You were with Your people in the early church as they stepped out in faith, giving them courage and direction. God, we thank You that You are the same God, who walks with us in our challenging times giving us comfort, grace and hope.

God give us courage to step out in faith, to live the lives You have called us to and not the one the world tells us to. God give us the grace to recognise our need for support, and not think we are better than others, but rather to live fully embraced by Your undeserved grace.

God give us hope that no matter what we face, or the difficulties that are dealing with right now, that You are with us, holding us and that if we turn our eyes on You we will find our way in truth and goodness.

God, You are the same yesterday, today, tomorrow. You here with us. You carry us when we are weary, You give us rest, and You give us hope. We pray that You take these prayers and the silent prayers of our hearts as we hand them over to You. God, may we have faith in Your deliverance and timing. Forgive us for when we pick up that which we have already laid at your feet. You are good, and You are with us.
We thank You God.

Amen.

Hymn - 473 - Moses, I know you're the man watch on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yr7YZ203UVI>

Moses, I know you're the man,'
The Lord said.
'You're going to work out my plan,'
The Lord said.
'Lead all the Israelites out of slavery,
And I shall make them a wandering race
Called the People of God.
So every day
We're on our way,
For we're a travelling, wandering race,
We're the people of God.

'Don't get too set in your ways,'
The Lord said,
'Each step is only a phase,'
The Lord said,
'I'll go before you and I shall be a sign
To guide my travelling, wandering race,
You're the people of God.'
Chorus

'No matter what you may do,'
The Lord said,
'I shall be faithful and true,'

The Lord said,
'My love will strengthen you as you go along,
For you're my travelling, wandering race,
You're the people of God.'
Chorus

'Look at the birds in the air,'
The Lord said,
'They fly unhampered by care,'
The Lord said,
'You will move easier if you're travelling light,
For you're a wandering, vagabond race,
You're the people of God.'
Chorus

'Foxes have places to go'
The Lord said,
'But I've no home here below,'
The Lord said,
'So if you want to be with me all your days,
Keep up the moving and travelling on,
You're the people of God.'
Chorus

Estelle White (born 1925)

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Benediction

The Lord, the righteous God, make his face to shine upon you, the Lord fill you with a joy greater than all this world can give, the Lord make you to sleep in peace and to dwell in safety; and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you now and always. Amen.

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