



Preparation for Worship:

Morning by Morning

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-69MaO1vdQ>

Daily, daily I surrender
Grace for today is all that I need
Surprised by a mercy that's new every morning
Awaken my soul to sing
Oh awaken my soul to sing

I will trust where You lead
I will trust when I can't see
Morning by morning
Great is Your faithfulness to me

I will trust with all my heart
You are good, You always are

Morning by morning
Great is Your faithfulness to me

Breath by breath overtaken by wonder
One step at a time when I'm overwhelmed
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Awaken my soul to sing
Awaken my soul to sing

All fear be reminded
My future is secure
My Father has spoken
And He keeps His every word

Daniel John Bashta / Joseph Patrick Martin Barrett / Benjamin Phillips Smith / Mack Donald Brock Iii

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Hymn: StF 58 What a Faithful God have I

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuljQ3ueaxk&t=53s>

Lord, I come before your throne of grace;
I find rest in your presence and fullness of joy.
In worship and wonder I behold your face,
singing what a faithful God have I.

*What a faithful God have I,
what a faithful God.
What a faithful God have I,
faithful in every way.*

Lord of mercy, you have heard my cry;
through the storm you're the beacon,

my song in the night.
In the shelter of your wings, hear my heart's reply,
singing what a faithful God have I.
What a faithful God have I

Lord all sovereign, granting peace from heaven,
let me comfort those who suffer
with the comfort you have given.
I will tell of your great love for as long as I live,
singing what a faithful God have I.
What a faithful God have I

CCLI Song # 605095 Dawn Critchley | Robert Critchley © 1989 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

Prayer

God of creation, we thank you for the gift of this world in which we live and breathe. We praise you, not just because you have brought it into being but because you sustain and renew it day by day. Morning by morning new mercies we see. You are indeed a faithful God.

God of salvation, we thank you for the gift of Jesus and everything he has brought to us. We praise you for his teaching; his example and for the obedience that led him to the cross for our sakes and for the forgiveness of our sins. We thank you for the promise of eternal life as part of your family and for the journey of discipleship as we follow Jesus. Morning by morning new mercies we see. You are indeed a faithful God.

God of transformation, we thank you for the gift of re-creation and the change that is going on within us. Your Spirit breathes new life into us and turns us into new creations. We praise you that sin and death are defeated and chains are being broken as the Spirit makes us more and more like Jesus. Morning by morning new mercies we see. You are indeed a faithful God.

God of all things – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – we bring you our praises in full appreciation of who you are and who we are. You are perfect and we are human. Sinfulness still afflicts us and so we bring our confession to you, trusting in your forgiveness but also in your ability to set us on your paths once again. Renew us we pray that our lives may be lived out for your glory. Amen.

Reading: Job 38:1-7, 34-41

Hymn STF48 : Indescribable

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lIVfkY5q54>

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea
Creations revealing Your majesty
From the colours of fall to the fragrance of spring
Every creature unique in the song that it sings
All exclaiming
Indescribable, uncontainable
You placed the stars in the sky
And You know them by name
You are amazing, God
All powerful, untameable
Awestruck, we fall to our knees

As we humbly proclaim
You are amazing, God

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go?
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light?
Yet, conceals it to bring us the coolness of night
None can fathom
Indescribable, uncontainable

Laura Mixon Story Indescribable lyrics © Laura Stories, Worshiptogether.com Songs, Sixsteps Music

Message:

This week is part three of a whistlestop tour of Job in our lectionary readings. Two weeks ago, we saw the beginning of Job's story. God allows Satan to 'test' Job and his righteousness. As a result, Job's life is turned upside down and not in a good way. His ten children all perish and all of his livestock is snatched by raiders. As if that wasn't enough, he is also afflicted with a terrible skin condition. Now, I want to say very clearly that I do not see this as a literal story. The way that God is pictured allowing Satan to destroy everything and everyone around Job does not accord with either my theology of God nor my experience of God. Rather, I believe, the story is set up to allow the discussion that comes next. It's a 'what if' story that reflects on suffering and how that suffering might have come about. What if somebody was in this situation. What could have caused it? Specifically, can we trace our suffering back to sin we may have committed or the sins of those close to us?

That's what comes next in the speeches between Job and his friends which have not formed part of our lectionary readings. Instead, last week and this, we have focused on the interchanges between Job and God.

Last week we heard Job's agony that God seemed nowhere to be found and his desire to have an answer from God.

Then Job answered: 'Today also my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy despite my groaning. O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his dwelling! I would lay my case before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

This week we hear God's response to Job and Job finds that the tables have been turned. Job had said that he wanted to lay his case before God but now it is suddenly Job himself who is under the spotlight. 'I will question you, and you shall declare to me', says God.

We all love a good putdown don't we. There's a supposed exchange between Winston Churchill and Lady Astor that is often brought up when famous putdowns are mentioned. I say 'supposed' because the words allegedly used are first seen in a magazine story that predates them by some years. Lady Astor tells Churchill she is so appalled by him that, if he were her husband, she would poison his drink. To which Churchill replies that, if she were his wife, he would gladly drink it.

That may be a pretty good putdown but surely putdowns don't come much greater than what God says to Job. *Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know!*

'Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that a flood of waters may cover you?

Who has put wisdom in the inward parts, or given understanding to the mind?

And so, God goes on and on. Tell me, Job, the answer to all these questions. Is it you who can do all these things or is it me? Ouch! or, to quote a modern expression, 'Job, you've just been burned'.

Likewise, this week we have seen history being made in the world of Tetris. For those of who need educating or reminding, Tetris is a video game that dates from the 1980s but which has remained popular ever since. This week, for the first ever time, somebody reached the end of the levels set in the game thereby forcing it to loop back to the beginning - the first time in nearly forty years of people trying. Humanly speaking it was a massive achievement but will anyone remember or celebrate it in a hundred or more years' time?

Our human achievements pale into insignificance compared to all that God has done and can do. So is God simply saying, 'Shut up, Job. You don't know what you're talking about and that's an end to it'? No, I don't think so. Let's take a step back and look at the detail of what God says to Job.

What God says to Job falls into two sections. There is the macro and the micro; the big picture and the fine detail.

First of all, we see in our reading the big picture. God has created a wonderful world of precision and diversity and given us wisdom and understanding to understand it. Every glorious element is in its allotted space and everything works together under God's direction.

Then there is the fine detail. God is all over the big picture but he also reveals himself to be there, providing for us in the small and personal things of day-to-day life.

Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions ... Who provides for the raven its prey?

God is pictured as being intimately and directly involved with his creation.

Back in July, when I recorded this service, we were reflecting upon Abraham being asked, seemingly, to sacrifice his son, Isaac. I commented then that Abraham never doubted God's promises to him, that God had promised him many descendants through Isaac and that, even though he may not have understood why he was being asked to set out to the place of sacrifice, he knew that it would not end in the death of Isaac.

You may feel like Job right now. You may feel that God is very distant and you don't like it. There may be things in your life that you wish would go away and you don't understand why God is allowing them to be there. I can't speak for God but what I can say is that these verses point to a God who really is there with us, both in the big picture and in the fine detail; when we can see it and when we can't. He is a God who loves us and provides for us and whose nature and promises will not change. I pray that you may have the strength to go on trusting in that reality even if you're not feeling it right now, until that time when you will see more clearly once again.

Hymn: StF 636 O Love that will not let me go (George Matheson)

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biHQVoAUTtU>

O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in thee.
I give thee back the life I owe,
that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.

O Light that follows all my way,
I yield my flick'ring torch to thee.
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee.
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and feel the promise is not vain,
that morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee.
I lay in dust, life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red,
life that shall endless be.

Prayers

Job sought after God in sorrow and affliction and with a sense of not being heard or answered.

- Pray for all those who are sorrowful or grieving today that they may know God's comfort.
- Pray for all those who are ill and suffering today that they may know God's peace and healing power.
- Pray for all those who feel distanced from God today that they may know the presence of God with them.

God revealed himself as ...

- The creator of the world in all its splendour. Pray for the world that God made and its protection.
- The giver of wisdom and understanding. Pray wisdom and understanding upon our leaders and all those who need it.
- Provider of food for the animal kingdom. Pray for those who go hungry today that they may find provision.

God revealed himself personally to Job

- Pray for those who do not know God in a personal way that they may see their need of him.
- Pray to God for your own personal needs and the needs of your church.
- Bring to God those concerns for the world that are on your heart.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name; your kingdom come; your 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 into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Hymn: StF 51 Great is thy faithfulness **Watch on YouTube** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4ox4es1jo8>

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
as Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

*Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided:
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Thomas Chisholm

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest;
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness! ...

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow:
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness! ...