

God's Problem



CALL TO WORSHIP : Bless us as we meet together, dear Lord we pray. Bless the singing of your praise, the reading of your Word, the sharing of our fellowship, the prayers that will be heard. Bless us as we meet together, dear Lord we pray. Amen

WE HAVE A GOSPEL TO PROCLAIM StF 418 Watch on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ozcqFS3qlo

We have a gospel to proclaim,
Good news for all throughout the earth;
The gospel of a Saviour's name:
We sing his glory, tell his worth.

Tell of his birth at Bethlehem,
Not in a royal house or hall
But in a stable dark and dim:
The Word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of his death at Calvary,
Hated by those he came to save;
In lonely suffering on the cross
For all he loved, his life he gave.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn:
Empty the tomb, for he was free;
He broke the power of death and hell
That we might share his victory.

Tell of his reign at God's right hand
By all creation glorified;
He sends his Spirit on his church
To live for him, the Lamb who died.

Now we rejoice to name him King:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth;
This gospel-message we proclaim:
We sing his glory, tell his worth.

PRAISE AND ADORATION (*John Birch – Faith and worship*)

Creator of all, Sustainer of all, Saviour of all, Your glory and majesty are beyond our understanding, Your power too awesome to behold. And yet your love enfolds us as a gentle breeze. Saviour of all, Sustainer of all, Creator of all, We bless your holy name

Help us, with simple words, to explain the warmth within our hearts that we experienced in that first encounter with your love and grace - the Spirit's flame, still burning bright within - that others, in their own journeys of discovery might reach out and touch the hand that's always there, and be embraced by love.

PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

Lord God, you have shown us such love, and stretched out your arms to draw us into your embrace. Yet we so often fail to show that love within our lives, or recognise its source. Forgive our short-sightedness, for the times we've failed to see your love in the generosity of friend or stranger, the shoulder to cry on, willing ear to listen, a word of encouragement, holding our hand that extra mile. Forgive us for failing to notice how much you care for us.

I THE LORD AND SEA AND SKY StF 663 Watch on YouTube : youtube.com/watch?v=2zr9SMm1gII&pp=0gcJcfwAo7VqN5tD

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard My people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin My hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them – whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?

I have heard You calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if You lead me;

I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne My people's pain.

I have wept for love of them; they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My Word to them – whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them; My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide,
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give My life to them – whom shall I send?

GOSPEL READING : - Matthew 9:35-38 The Harvest Is Plentiful, the Laborers Few

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

ADDRESS - GOD'S PROBLEM

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when I ask the question, "What is God's biggest problem?" Now many people will immediately think, "*Me - I'm God's biggest problem.*" And that is probably a good sign. But, beyond this personal perspective, it does not take long for the flood to begin. One look at the newspaper or television fills the mind with all kinds of problems which might claim the title, "*God's biggest problem.*"

Perhaps it's the hunger and poverty that devastates large portions of the world's populations and guarantees the suffering of millions of innocent children. Could that be God's biggest problem? Or maybe it is domestic violence, or physical suffering and illness. Perhaps these are close to the top of the list of God's biggest problem.

The list of troubles in this world you and I would like to see God do something about grows so long, so fast, it can be overwhelming.

Mind you speaking of troubles, perhaps you have had days like the man who came home after a very rugged day at work and didn't want to hear about any problems. "I've had a very bad day today," he said to his wife, "So if you have any bad news tonight, please keep it to yourself."

"Okay," she answered, "No bad news. Now for the good news. Remember our four children? Well three of them did not break an arm today!"

Fortunately, God never says to us, "please don't bother me with your problems." On the contrary, Jesus issued this standing invitation, "Come to me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." It was not limited to the first 100 weary persons of a certain group of favourite people - it was, "*Come to me **all of you** who have heavy burdens to bear.*"

No... God's biggest problem is not that there are too many problems.

There is a direct clue to God's biggest problem in our Gospel reading.

Here then, is God's biggest problem:

God has a harvest of lost and hurting children in our world but does not have enough workers to bring the harvest in!

And this problem is not a new thing at all. Almost eight hundred years before Jesus' ministry, the prophet Isaiah had an amazing experience of the presence of God. He is so overwhelmed by the experience that he feels completely undone.

"*I am a sinful man,*" he says, "*And I live in the midst of sinful people.*" Then an angel comes to Isaiah with a live coal from the altar of God - he is forgiven of his sin and made whole in the presence of God. Then comes a startling question from the Lord God:

"*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"*"

Who will take the good news of God's forgiving and healing love to a broken world?

When Christ was on this earth, his voice could reach so few. He was never outside of Palestine (unless you believe the WI anthem of Jerusalem) and there was a world which was waiting. The crowds he had compassion on were a tiny part of the world that lay beyond. He still wants people to hear the good news that God loves and cares for them and wants them to experience his love and the love of a caring fellowship... But they will never hear unless others tell them.

It is the continuing dream of Christ that every follower of his should become a reaper on the harvest. There is at least one someone whom each of us could -- and must -- bring safely to the love of God.

Now - I want to assume that you will desire to help with God's biggest problem. Here

are a few principles for effective harvesting:

[1] You must see the harvest

As obvious as it may sound, you can't be a harvester if you don't see a harvest. Jesus

had to tell his followers to LOOK at the harvest.

Let me ask... Is the harvest clear to you? Is there anyone you know who really needs the love of God and the comfort of a caring fellowship? People who want to be harvesters must train their eyes to see with the eyes of Jesus Christ.

[2] You must care about the harvest

When Jesus saw the crowds, the scripture says, "...he had compassion on them..." He saw the helplessness and hopelessness of people, and his heart was moved to care for them. There is a great deal of difference between the way Jesus saw the crowds and the way the religious elite (the Pharisees and the ruling priestly class) saw them. They saw chaff where Jesus saw wheat. They saw social rejects where Jesus saw lost and searching hearts. They saw the unacceptable and untouchable while Jesus saw God's lost children.

They said, "Who cares?"

Jesus said, "God cares!"

To help with God's biggest problem, we must have the eyes and the ears and

the heart of Jesus for those who need him most.

This can make a real difference. Try it this week - as you observe the people around you - at work, at Tesco', or as you walk around town, make a special effort to look at others with the eyes of Christ.

[3] You must go into the harvest

It is one thing to *see* the harvest. And it *is* important to see it. It is another thing to *care* about the harvest. And it *is* important to *care* about the harvest. It is something else entirely to *go into* the harvest. Seeing and caring can be done from a distance - but entering the harvest is to make a commitment to join with Christ in solving God's biggest problem. Harvesting cannot be done from a distance. God set the model for harvesting in the incarnation of Christ. As God came in the flesh through Jesus Christ to stand next to us and bear us up - so also, we are called to enter the harvest and bear others up to the love of God.

Jesus left the splendour of heaven for the dreariness of the world. He came to where the harvest was and carefully and lovingly reaped the harvest. Then he said to his closest followers, and that is you and me as well as his disciples "*As the Father has sent me, so send I you!*" [John 20:21]

May God give us all, eyes to see the harvest, a heart to care for the harvest, and a willingness to go into the harvest!

Amen

WOULD I HAVE ANSWERED WHEN YOU CALLED StF 674

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

Would I have answered when you called,
Come, follow, follow me!""?
Would I at once have left behind
both work and family?
Or would the old, familiar round
have held me By its claim
and kept the spark within my heart
From bursting into flame?

Would I have followed where you led
through ancient Galilee,
On roads unknown, by ways untried,
beyond security?
Or would I soon have hurried back
where home and comfort drew,
Where truth you taught would not disturb
The ordered world I knew?

Would I have matched my step with yours
when crowds cried, ""Crucify!""
When on a rocky hill I saw
a cross against the sky?
Or would I too have slipped away
and left you there alone,
A dying king with crown of thorns
upon a terrible throne?

O Christ, I cannot search my heart
through all its tangled ways,
Nor can I with a certain mind
my steadfastness appraise.
I only pray that when you call,
""Come, follow, follow me!""
You'll give me strength beyond
my own to follow faithfully.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSIONS - *(Please pray in your own way)*

We pray for the Church and for a new revival

We pray for our country; for our government and all leaders who make the vital decisions.

We pray for the World and the turmoil it is in at present. We pray especially for Palestine/Israel and Ukraine/Russia. May they come to their senses and move away from war.

We pray for our family and friends.

We pray for ourselves.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers Amen

HEAR THE CALL OF THE KINGDOM StF 407

Watch on YouTube : [youtube.com/watch?v=eG6DwlqZaUg&list=RDeG6DwlqZaUg&start_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eG6DwlqZaUg&list=RDeG6DwlqZaUg&start_radio=1)

Hear the call of the kingdom, lift your eyes to the King,
Let His song rise within you as a fragrant offering,
Of how God, rich in mercy, came in Christ to redeem
All who trust in His unfailing grace.

Hear the call of the Kingdom to be children of light,
With the mercy of heaven, the humility of Christ.
Walking justly before Him, loving all that is right
That the life of Christ may shine through Him.

***King of Heaven, we will answer the call,
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,***

***Filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim
Salvation in Jesus' name.***

Hear the call of the Kingdom to reach out to the lost,
With the Father's compassion in the wonder of the
cross,
Bringing peace and forgiveness, and a hope yet to come;
Let the nations put their trust in Him.

***King of Heaven, we will answer the call,
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,
Filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim
Salvation in Jesus' name***

BLESSING

May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**