



Staying Connected 9
Worship and
Pastoral Resources
Week Beginning
Sunday 17th May 2020

Opening Words – Psalm 66:8-12; 16-20

Praise our God, all peoples,

let the sound of his praise be heard;

⁹ he has preserved our lives

and kept our feet from slipping.

¹⁰ For you, God, tested us;

you refined us like silver.

¹¹ You brought us into prison

and laid burdens on our backs.

¹² You let people ride over our heads;

we went through fire and water,

but you brought us to a place of abundance.

¹⁶ Come and hear, all you who fear God;

let me tell you what he has done for me.

¹⁷ I cried out to him with my mouth;

his praise was on my tongue.

¹⁸ If I had cherished sin in my heart,

the Lord would not have listened;

¹⁹ but God has surely listened

and has heard my prayer.

²⁰ Praise be to God,

who has not rejected my prayer

or withheld his love from me!

New International Version (NIV)

STF 58 Lord I Come Before Your Throne

<https://youtu.be/iuljQ3ueaxk>

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.....

Robert Critchley & Dawn Critchley
Words and Music ©1989 Thankyou Music

Prayer of Praise, Dedication & Confession

Heavenly Father, as the Psalmist and hymn-writer remind us, you continue to show yourself to be a faithful God.

You work with us for good in all things

We praise your name

You call us to work with you for good in all things

We answer your call

Lord Jesus, you left your glory and came to save our troubled world.

We praise your name

You call us to carry your cross with courage, and to share in your victory over sin and death.

We answer your call

Life-giving Spirit, you patiently guide us – even though we can be stubborn.

We praise your name

You call us to share the grief of this world – to be channels of your grace and love.

We answer your call

But Lord we acknowledge before you that too often we don't live to glorify you – nor respond to your call. In quietness we confess our unfaithfulness to you, and ask that you will empty us of all that is un-Christlike, and fill us again with your Holy Spirit.....

We hear God's gracious words to all who are genuinely repentant – 'I forgive all your sins.'

Thanks be to God!

STF 440 Amazing Grace

<https://youtu.be/tU6GWeBY3qw>

Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound That saved a

wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found

Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear, And Grace
my fears relieved. How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have
already come. 'Tis Grace hath brought me safe thus
far And Grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me. His Word my hope
secures. He will my shield and portion be As long as
life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years Bright
shining as the sun, We've no less days to sing God's
praise Than when we'd first begun.

Songwriters: Willie Nelson

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Gospel Reading: John 14:15-21

If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶And I will ask
the Father, and he will give you another advocate to
help you and be with you forever- ¹⁷the Spirit of truth.
The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees
him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives
with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as
orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Before long, the world
will not see me anymore, but you will see me.
Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will
realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I
am in you. ²¹Whoever has my commands and keeps
them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me
will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them
and show myself to them."

Reflection

Following the Prime Minister's speech last Sunday, the
comedian Matt Lucas (in addition to many others) has
shared his understanding of what Mr Johnson said:

"So we are saying 'Don't go to work – go to
work....don't take public transport....go to work. Don't
go to work. Stay indoors, but if you can work from
home, go to work. Don't go to work, Go outside –
don't go outside...and then we will...er...or
won't...er....something or other!

The Government have a very tough job of getting the
country through this dreadful pandemic, and
regardless of party politics, we can all agree that they
have an unenviable task.

I think we can also agree however, that the PM's
announcement on Sunday has led to a lot of
confusion, concern, and anxiety.

These are feelings not unlike those felt by the disciples
when they were trying to take in what Jesus has been
saying in John 14. You can almost hear their
conversation:

'Why would Jesus give us another advocate?'
'Why is He saying He won't leave us as orphans... that
the world won't see Him anymore, but that we will see
Him....that we will live because He lives?
'and what does He mean about being in His Father,
that we are in Him, and He is in us?'

It's all too much to comprehend – too much
uncertainty – too little clarity.

Does this sound familiar?

Well the questions are understandable. But what
Jesus is doing is saying to them in effect, *'you may not*
understand now, but you will. What I want you to do is
trust me and not be afraid.'

During recent weeks and months the world has been
living through uncertainty, fear, sadness and anxiety.
But we have also seen some incredible acts of
selflessness, achievement and even joy. God has been
making Himself known to us in new, as well as familiar
ways.

As the lockdown is gradually lifted, and as we see
some possibilities on the horizon, we continue to have
questions and uncertainty – in the Church – and in our
communities. But we remember that we are not
alone. God has given us His Spirit as He promised
those disciples. He teaches us to love Him – obey His
commands. And He urges us to trust and not be
afraid.

Thursday 21st May marks the day Jesus completed His
work on Earth, and returned to heaven – the day we
call 'Ascension Day.' After He had blessed the
disciples, he withdrew from them and was carried up
into heaven. Their response was to worship him, and
return to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were
continually in the temple blessing God.

We will still have questions – we may still have
confusion – but we also have the assurance and
promise of God. What a faithful God have !!

So like the disciples, let's praise and worship Him
anyway!

Prayers of Intercession

Dear Lord, you never promised the journey would be problem-free. Indeed you warned us that we would face opposition and temptation. You taught us that if we were to follow in your footsteps, that we would encounter some of what you encountered....that we should expect nothing less than the Master.

But when we live through difficult times Lord, it's hard. Even you cried out to your Father – more than once.

Thank you that you have not left us alone – that we have the Advocate as you promised. Thank you that because of your death and resurrection we have access to you and The Father – and that you intercede for us in groans which words cannot express.

(In quietness I invite you to talk with God).

Pray about.....

- Yourself - including your relationship with God
- your home situation
- your family
- your church – and the circuit
- those you know who are asking 'faith questions'
- Those who are sick, anxious or fearful for any reason
- Those who have died and who are grieving
- Those charged with the responsibility of giving direction.

Thank God that He has given us an Advocate, that we have the assurance of His promises, and that He hears our prayer.

A prayer from the Connexional prayer handbook:

*Gracious God, whose loving kindness has no limits, teach us afresh the way of Christ.
Where we have felt discouraged, renew us through signs of hope;
where we have been tempted to give up, grant us strength and faith to face the day;
where we have grown anxious about the future, give us courage to plant the seeds of tomorrow in acts of radical love today.
Renew us by your Spirit and set us free to serve you so that the whole of creation may rejoice in your name. Amen.*

Richard Andrew, Darlington District Chair

The Lord's Prayer

STF 548 Blessed Assurance

<https://youtu.be/tb1QhxOtq3w>

Blessed assurance Jesus is mine
O what a foretaste of glory divine
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of his spirit washed in his blood

This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day long X2

Perfect submission, perfect delight
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love

This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day long X2

Songwriters: FANNY CROSBY, PHOEBE KNAPP
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Blessing

May the love of The Lord rest upon your soul.
May His love dwell in you throughout every day.
May His countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you.
May His Spirit be upon you now and forevermore.

Amen

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