

Sunday 7th August
Morning Worship
Eighth Sunday After Trinity
Led by Sue Nelms, LLM
<https://zoom.us/j/82311473640>



Gathering and Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all
and also with you.

Opening Prayer

Living God,
for those who share what they have with others,
we give you thanks and praise:

for those who teach us what they know,
we give you thanks and praise:

for those who are generous with what they have,
we give you thanks and praise:

for those who care for us when we need help,
we give you thanks and praise:

for those who bring us to faith in you,
we give you thanks and praise. Amen.

Hymn – Be thou my vision

I Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

- 2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee Lord;
be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.
- 3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.
- 4 Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 5 High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

Irish, c 8th century

translated by Mary Byrne (1880-1931) versified by, Eleanor Hull (1860-1935)
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Meditation

Psalm 33

- 20 Our soul waits for the Lord;
he is our help and shield.
- 21 Our heart is glad in him,
because we trust in his holy name.

Asking for God's Forgiveness

Extravagant God you offer us so much.
We hold before you those times
when we treat your gifts selfishly or lightly,
and we ask for your forgiveness.

When we do not value the riches of your gospel,
and take what you provide for granted:
forgive us and help us.

When we cling tightly to what we have
and do not share it with others:
forgive us and help us.

When we are anxious and afraid,
and do not trust you to meet our needs:
forgive us and help us.

**Faithful God, forgive us,
help us to value all you give,
to share freely with others,
and to live in joyful risk for your kingdom. Amen.**

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Readings by Clare Crang

Genesis 15:1-6

15 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.'² But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'³ And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.'⁴ But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.'⁵ He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.'⁶ And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Luke 12:32-40

³² 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

³⁵ 'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶ be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks.

³⁷ Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸ If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

³⁹ 'But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into.

⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'

Reflection by Rev Charles Fraser

For many of us there is a sense of rising unease. Political shenanigans, leadership contests, soaring fuel costs and a general sense that everything is getting so much more expensive. The highest inflation rate in 40 years has pushed many into poverty already and had family members stand in food bank queues to get food. There are people on the radio and television talking about mortgage interest rates rising to around 7%. Need I go on? We can add much more to this partial "fear list." I haven't even begun to list international fear factors like terrorism, the threats posed by Russia, China and North Korea. Plus, the devastating effects of climate change already becoming to prescient.

How then, can Jesus tell us, "Do not be afraid any longer little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the Kingdom." Some might ask, "What planet is he on?" What's more, he advises us to, "Sell your belongings and give alms." But for so many of us it is the security our

belongings and our savings, such as they are, that helps alleviate at least some of our fears.

Jesus is reminding us that our earthly possessions cannot protect us from what we fear. Rather, we have God who is "pleased" to give us what is imperishable and can't be taken from us, life in the community Jesus calls "the Kingdom." And ruling in that new order is our gracious God who cares for us even amid real threats and dangers. This does not mean we will live a trouble-free life, but God will never leave us on our own. The question for us is: where, or on what, do we place our confidence for the uncertain future? Is it in our possessions, or by living under the loving gaze of God, whom Jesus tells us is "pleased" with us. Many of us will have known people whose faith has sustained and even given some degree of calm as they face loss – even impending death? Their possessions did not provide that calm when their needs were dire.

Jesus is reassuring his disciples who, because they are his followers, will face questions, opposition and even death. Who is strong enough for that? It will not be their determination and courage alone that will see them through, but the one he calls "Father," who is already pleased with them. God does not take a judgmental seat like an umpire presiding high above a tennis match, who observes and judges the players from above. Instead, the God Jesus reveals to us is concerned about even the hairs of our head. This God is giving us a treasure that will not wear out or fail us in our need. So, Jesus advises not to put our confidence in human resources, in what we own, or can buy, as important as they are to daily life.

Jesus proposes the parable of the late return of the master of the household. The master expects the servants to be ready for him whenever he comes. But what an unusual master! When he arrives and finds them prepared, he puts on an apron to serve them. Is this a reminder for us to be vigilant and persistent in our service to others? When we are, we can be assured that the Lord is in our very midst, indeed, joining us in our service.

When can we expect the Lord to come to serve us, his disciples? Certainly, in our churches where Jesus feeds us his very life in his word and the bread and wine. But, according to the parable, he will also show up at times we do not expect him to enable us to serve him in the poor, among our coworkers and at our family dinner table, where his Spirit provides wisdom and sustains our desire to be his alert and faithful witnesses.

The servants who wait their master's return from the wedding are consistent in their waiting. They expect his return and are congratulated when he arrives. They did not know when he would come, but that did not diminish their vigilance, or expectation. The unusual feature of the master serving them may be a figure of Jesus' own death for us. It also directs us to the meal he serves us at our Eucharistic table. It is a meal for the present, but also for the coming days when we servants must return to our work responsibility as Jesus' vigilant laborers in the world. We want to be diligent in our work in the Kingdom here on earth. Jesus encourages us to sell and give our possessions to the poor. It is his Spirit that empowers us to trust in his being with us as we focus on our work for the Kingdom now and until he returns.

Let's join the Master's servants in their surprise. Who among them could have anticipated what they experienced; mere servants being treated with honour and dignity and served at the table by their master? What does that suggest to us servants in the Kingdom? Well, those servants didn't do anything extraordinary or praiseworthy. They just stayed faithful to their assigned tasks. The surprise came by way of an unexpected gift, the master served them.

Day by day we do what is expected of us: we serve the Lord in ways he has shown us by his life and death. Are we prepared to be surprised when he shows up? Do we sense his presence, for example, when a simple service project we work on evokes unexpected results we would never have anticipated? Or, when we have done our best to

raise our children and have felt inadequate to the task. Yet, they do something, or choose a way of life, that swells us with pride. How did that happen? The parable tells us: the Master surprises ordinary servants just doing the best they can. Surprise is another name for grace.

Affirmation of Faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession led by Rick Nelms

Lord of creation, who breathed on nothing and created everything ...
thank you. For your promises; for freewill; for freedom to meet in
your name ... thank you. *Silence*

Lord, meet us in the silence **and hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, we pray for all Christians. We pray for healing
during the final stages of the Lambeth Conference. We pray for all in

the Lordsbridge team and especially for those bearing the brunt of interregnum. *Silence*

Lord, meet us in the silence **and hear our prayer.**

Lord of the world, we pray against conflict, famine, criminality, poverty and disease. We pray for your wisdom for the leaders of the world.

Lord help those who chose a new prime minister to choose wisely.

Silence

Lord, meet us in the silence **and hear our prayer.**

Lord of nature, we pray against the acceleration of extinction and the increasingly extreme climate. We pray for your protection for the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world. *Silence*

Lord, meet us in the silence **and hear our prayer.**

Lord, meet us in the silence **and hear our prayer.**

Lord of all humanity, we pray for our own communities. We pray that through your Holy Spirit, our compassion, our love, our grace, our prayers, our actions and our words will spread your Gospel Good News. *Silence*

Lord, meet us in the silence **and hear our prayer.**

Lord, meet us in the silence **and hear our prayer.**

Lord of all people, we pray for everyone who is sick in body, mind or spirit. We pray for all those people trapped in poverty, in loveless relationships or by prejudice. We pray for people who are dying and those who are grieving. *Silence*

Lord, meet us in the silence **and hear our prayer.**

Lord, meet us in the silence **and hear our prayer.**

Lord of all, our help and shield, by your Holy Spirit you have made us one with your saints in heaven and on earth. Grant that in our earthly pilgrimage we may ever be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer, and know ourselves surrounded by their witness to your power and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

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Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God,
we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern
both our hearts and bodies
in the ways of your laws
and the works of your commandments;
that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,
we may be preserved in body and soul;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

Hymn – Great is thy faithfulness

I 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.

Chorus

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!

- 2 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.

Chorus

- 3 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!

Chorus

Thomas O Chisholm (1866-1960)

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Notices

Conclusion

Eternal God, our beginning and our end,
accompany us in this day's journey.

Dawn on our darkness, open our eyes to praise you for your creation
and to see the work you set before us today.

Take us and use us to bring to others the new life you give
in Jesus Christ our Lord.;

and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
In the name of Christ. Amen.