

At Home Service for 10th October 2021

(Prepared by Rene Chambers)

Welcome to this week's At Home Service. Let us come together with all the saints to worship and remember our Lord God Almighty creator of heaven and earth, and who is above all and in all.

Let us sing: 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 will 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

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

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

Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness

Let us Pray: We worship you eternal God, creator of the universe, source of all being, and sustainer of all life. We stand amazed in your presence, whose glory and power are great beyond our imagination. Your blazing light of your purity and holiness, reveals to us how tarnished and imperfect our lives are: yet Father God in Christ Jesus you have revealed your unbounded love and care. We are dazzled by your glory, we marvel at your constant love, and praise and worship you today. We pray heavenly Father that we would meet with you, wherever we are, as we glorify your Holy and Blessed name. Amen (The Power of Prayer, Mathilda Small-Byam)

Let us say the Lord's Prayer

Let us sing:

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,
we will wait upon the Lord,
we will wait upon the Lord. (X2)

Our God, you reign forever.
Our hope, our Strong Deliverer.

You are the everlasting God,
the everlasting God.
You do not faint,
you won't grow weary.

You're the defender of the weak,
you comfort those in need.
You lift us up on wings like eagles.

Reflection: A couple of weeks ago my son took part in a 120 mile walk in Snowdonia with a group of vets to raise awareness of the Mental Health crisis in the veterinary profession. It is a particular problem in that profession but we know that is not the only sector to be affected. There are many among us suffering. During the last couple of weeks we have heard of terrible tragedies perpetrated by those whom we trust to protect us, chaotic scenes at petrol pumps and other anxiety producing situations. All this coming hot on the heels of the prolonged period of the pandemic with it's fear, restrictions and isolation. It's hardly surprising that many are anxious and feeling overwhelmed. Mental health issues are not new, they have existed as long as humans have and most of us at some time will go through "a dark night of the soul." We live, after all in a world where suffering is common place and tragedy abounds yet we have a vision of things being perfect and are disappointed, frustrated and sometimes broken when they're not. However, a dark night of the soul can sometimes be the catalyst that launches us into transformation. Sometimes the pain can lead to the discovery of a deeper meaning or vision in life.

What is important is that we don't go through it alone. Many people, unfortunately are reluctant to acknowledge they are struggling, possibly in part due to the very British stiff upper lip mentality which thankfully seems to be changing now, yet there is little difference between a physical illness or pain and a mental or emotional illness. Both need a doctor, both need help and we shouldn't be afraid of asking for help. One thing that Covid has taught us is that we all need each other, too much isolation is not healthy. I have certainly missed our meeting together. Church is, or should be, a great place for connecting together, for giving support to one another. It is such a special community of caring people. Our pastoral workers have done a wonderful job of keeping in touch with people over Covid but if there are any who have felt forgotten, please let us know.

Let's be real, let's not **talk** about the love, acceptance and power of Christ without **demonstrating** it. Let's be open with each other, admit our struggles and be there for each other.

In view of this I thought it would be good to share some powerful scriptures that might encourage us to take heart. Over the ages believers have found strength and comfort from scripture in times of crisis.

*Ps 139: O Lord, you have searched me and **you know me**. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O Lord. You hem me in- behind and before; **you have laid your hand upon me**.*

He knows us intimately, he knows what we are going through and whether we are aware of it or not, he is with us and for us.

Is:53 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.....Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows.....he was

crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Jesus walked on earth and suffered as we do. We can get overwhelmed and feel that things are too much for us to handle but we need to remember that he suffered too and whatever we are going through it's never too much for HIM to handle.

Jer 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future....."

No matter how our anxiety may make us feel, this verse helps settle our anxiousness while acknowledging there are times when we will struggle through some serious challenges and trouble.

Other helpful scriptures include Ps18:19, Is 40:31, John 16:33, Is 43:2, 2 Tim 1:7 and many others. You may like to look them up.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, giver of life and health, comfort and relieve those challenged by the circumstances they are in, and who are suffering mentally and emotionally. Give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs, that they may be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Let us sing a song which speaks of the Lord's compassion and justice. Either sing it or say it as a prayer of intercession.

Beauty for brokenness hope for despair
Lord, in your suffering this is our prayer
Bread for the children justice, joy, peace
Sunrise to sunset your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak

Chorus:

Friend of the weak give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love from a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars havens from fear
Cities for sanctuary freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields scorched earth to green
Christ for the bitterness his cross for the pain

Chorus

Rest for the ravaged earth oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness carelessness, greed
Make us content with the things that we need

Chorus

Lighten our darkness breathe on this flame
Until your justice burns brightly again
Until the nations learn of your ways
Seek your salvation and bring you their praise

Chorus

Blessing:

“The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace.”

Numbers 6:24-26