

# Tavistock Methodist Circuit – At Home Service for Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022

*Prepared by Kelvin Shillabeer*

**“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”**

(Ephesians 1:2)

Wherever you are today, whatever is happening around you, and whatever else the day may bring, I pray that you will know God’s love and blessing as we turn to Him in praise and prayer.

## *Hymn of Adoration*

### **1 When morning gilds the sky,**

our hearts awaking cry:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
in all our work and prayer  
we ask his loving care:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

**2** To God, the Word on high,  
the hosts of angels cry:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
Let mortals too upraise  
their voices in hymns of praise:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

**3** Let earth's wide circle round  
in joyful notes resound:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
Let air and sea and sky  
from depth to height reply:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

**4** Be this, when day is past,  
of all our thoughts the last:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
The night becomes as day  
when from the heart we say:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

**5** Then let us join to sing  
to Christ, our loving King:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!  
Be this the eternal song  
through all the ages long:  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

*Traditional German hymn,  
Tr. E. Caswall, StF 368*

## *Prayer*

Heavenly Father,

In this time set aside for You, we want to offer You our thanks and praise.

Be honoured Lord, for all You have created and filled with Your bountiful life.

So great are You Lord, we cannot hope to bring You anything You need, yet You call us to give.

We are not worthy to stand in Your righteous presence, yet You call us to come.

We have all sinned and fallen short of your glorious standard, yet You call us to receive Your mercy.

Forgive us, Lord, and by your grace allow us to feel the peace of Your forgiveness today.

As we worship You now, would You meet with us and minister to us by your Holy Spirit.

We ask this in Jesus’ name, and for His sake.

Amen.

## *The Lord's Prayer*

### **Bible Reading: Ephesians 3:14-21**

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

### *Reflection*

What an incredible passage of Scripture this is! St. Paul's prayer for the early Christian community at Ephesus marks the mid-point of his letter to them, and is the moment he moves from discussing what Christ has done for us to what we are to do for Christ in response. Making this connection inspires us, just as it did his first readers, to step boldly forward as a church to serve and glorify God. The heart of this prayer is that Christians will be empowered and united in this work.

Paul's reminder to us that 'every family in heaven and on earth takes its name' from our Father God is vital to our grasping our identity in Him. Family names, handed down through generations, often communicate something deep-rooted about who we are or where we are from.

Exploring this with local worshippers recently, I've learned that Palmers were named for their participation in the Crusades, bringing palm branches back from the Middle East, while Tuckers were named for their role in preparing sheep's wool in preparation for conversion into garments. We Shillabeers, as it turns out, have Devon roots going back hundreds of years – so perhaps we are not the most adventurous types! – but our name does speak of where we are from.

The culture into which Paul was writing would have known the significance of a family name. To take on a name – as a son usually would from his father – would also make the recipient a representative of the giver. To deal with a son coming in his father's name would be to deal in effect with the father himself, so to state that every family takes their name from God the Father is not just saying that He created us, but that we are now to represent Him, being made in His image, and blessed with His love. And as *every family* may claim this, it's a message for the whole world!

This amazing blessing is so big that there's no exhausting it, no escaping it.

God's grace has such *breadth* that it covers our whole human experience, wherever we are and whatever we are doing. There isn't an aspect of our lives God doesn't know or can't work in.

The *length* of God's fellowship with us continues so far as to go beyond our earthly lifetime, so that we never outgrow it or outlive it. He is the God of eternal life, calling us to join Him.

The *height* of God's blessing reaches up to the very highest points in our lives, where we feel moments of transcendent joy and fulfilment. In these moments, God is with us on the mountain-top.

Yet the *depth* of His love for us is so great, that however low we feel, however deep in despair or difficulty, He is surrounding us still. The supply of His mercy and peace is endless.

Being 'filled with the fulness of God' is to begin to understand this for ourselves. We aren't built to understand it fully, but rather to be filled with awe at what God has done, and continues to do, in our lives. We're called to respond to this knowledge in worship and service as a faithful church community, and in the following passages Paul goes on to explain how wise use of spiritual gifts provides a firm foundation for this mission.

We may feel limited by our time, physical capabilities or resources, but we all are able to join in this work of bringing glory to God. Being made in His image and taking His name, we are all called to a life of praise and prayer, and to allow God to bring blessing to others through us, in ways beyond our imagining.

#### *Prayer*

Gracious God, whose goodness and mercy extend far beyond our understanding or imagination, we ask that by your grace You would help us to know you better each day, growing closer to You, and being inspired to seek your will in our lives, so that others would catch a glimpse of who You are, and that You would be glorified. Amen.

#### *Hymn of dedication*

**1 What shall I do, my God to love,**

My loving God to praise!  
The length, and breadth, and height to prove  
And depth of sovereign grace?

**2** Thy sovereign grace to all extends,  
Immense and unconfined;  
From age to age it never ends,  
It reaches all mankind.

**3** Throughout the world its breadth is known,  
Wide as infinity,  
So wide it never passed by one;  
Or it had passed by me.

**4** My trespass was grown up to Heaven;  
But far above the skies,  
In Christ abundantly forgiven,  
I see Thy mercies rise!

**5** The depth of all-redeeming love,  
What angel-tongue can tell?  
O may I to the utmost prove  
The gift unspeakable!

**6** Come quickly, then, my Lord, and take  
Possession of Thine own;  
My longing heart vouchsafe to make  
Thine everlasting throne.

*Charles Wesley, StF 436*

*Prayers for others*

Loving God,

Thank You that You are a God who listens and who cares. You call us to bring our prayers, and we know that You are faithful. We come trusting in Your ability to do more than we can ask or imagine.

We continue to hear of the desperate situation in Ukraine, where violence and suffering is widespread. Lord at this time we may struggle to see how peace may be restored, yet in You we have hope, and so we do pray for peace in Ukraine. Bless the efforts of those who are working to bring an end to the aggression, and to those bringing all kinds of aid to those who are displaced, wounded and bereaved.

Here in the UK there are many struggling with the increasing cost of living, unable to pay for food and energy. We pray for help and relief for those who cannot make ends meet. Inspire your church to act in support of all around who need assistance and give wisdom to those in Government and public services.

We pause to pray for those people we know personally that need to feel the depth of your love at this time, in illness, grief and anxiety. We lift these people to You.

Help us to keep turning to You, trusting in your grace, and seeking your will in our own lives. In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen.

*Hymn of Commissioning*

**1 Lord, your church on earth is seeking**

Your renewal from above:  
teach us all the art of speaking  
with the accents of your love.  
We will heed your great commission  
sending us to every place-  
'Go, baptise, fulfil my mission;  
serve with love and share my grace!'

**2** You release us from our bondage,  
lift the burdens caused by sin;  
give new hope, new strength and courage,  
grant release from fears within.  
Light for darkness, joy for sorrow,  
love for hatred, peace for strife-  
these and countless blessings follow  
as the Spirit gives new life.

**3** In the streets of every city  
where the bruised and lonely live,  
we will show the saviour's pity  
and his longing to forgive.  
In all lands and with all races  
we will serve, and seek to bring  
all the world to render praises  
Christ, to you, redeemer king.

*Hugh Sherlock, StF 410*

*Blessing*

We will conclude with Paul's blessing for the Ephesian church as our prayer for one another.

"Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen."