

# Sunday Worship – 2 August 2020

Whole service: <https://youtu.be/7DWHOM6aizc>

Loving Father, we still our souls now to remember that You are here with us, You are here in us, You are here for us. Lord Jesus, we worship You. Holy Spirit, we welcome You.

## Psalm 26

(NIV)

*A Psalm of David*

Vindicate me, Lord,  
for I have led a blameless life;  
I have trusted in the Lord  
and have not faltered.  
Test me, Lord, and try me,  
examine my heart and my mind;  
for I have always been mindful  
of your unfailing love  
and have lived in reliance  
on your faithfulness.

I do not sit with the deceitful,  
nor do I associate with hypocrites.  
I abhor the assembly of evildoers  
and refuse to sit with the wicked.

I wash my hands in innocence,  
and go about your altar, Lord,  
proclaiming aloud your praise  
and telling of all your wonderful deeds.

Lord, I love the house where you live,  
the place where your glory dwells.  
Do not take away my soul along with sinners,  
my life with those who are bloodthirsty,  
in whose hands are wicked schemes,  
whose right hands are full of bribes.

I lead a blameless life;  
deliver me and be merciful to me.

My feet stand on level ground;  
in the great congregation  
I will praise the Lord.

## A Prayer of Praise and a Prayer of Confession

(500)

Lord, we have come to praise  
and to thank you.  
We have come to praise you for who you are,  
and to thank you for what you have done.  
We have come to praise you for your love,  
and to thank you that you hold us in your care.  
We have come to praise you  
that you are great and powerful,  
and to thank you that  
there is nothing you do not know  
and there is nothing you do not understand.  
We have come to praise you  
for being greater than we can ever imagine,  
and to thank you that you  
are more loving than we could ever hope.  
We have come to praise you  
for wanting us to know you,  
and to thank you that  
you looked for us when we were lost.

We have come to praise you  
for being so wonderful,  
and to thank you  
for living in our hearts and lives.  
We have come to praise you for Jesus,  
and to thank you that  
he makes your love real for us  
and changes who we are and what we will be.  
We have come to say that we are sorry  
for the things we say  
and the things we do  
that make it harder for others to know you  
and to trust you with the whole of their lives.  
Forgive us and help us to be like Jesus.  
In his name we pray. Amen.

## Hymn: Singing the Faith 83

<https://youtu.be/6-W74SzQZe0>

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
to his feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
who like thee his praise should sing?  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise him for his grace and favour  
to his people in distress;  
praise him, still the same for ever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us;  
well our feeble frame he knows;  
in his hands he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels in the height, adore him;  
ye behold him face to face;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

Henry Francis Lyte (1793–1847)  
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## Reading:

### Job 1

(MSG)

#### A Man Devoted to God

Job was a man who lived in Uz. He was honest inside and out, a man of his word, who was totally devoted to God and hated evil with a passion. He had seven sons and three daughters. He was also very wealthy—seven thousand head of sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred teams of oxen, five hundred donkeys, and a huge staff of servants—the most influential man in all the East!

His sons used to take turns hosting parties in their homes, always inviting their three sisters to join them in their merrymaking. When the parties were over, Job would get up early in the morning and sacrifice a burnt offering for each of his children, thinking, “Maybe one of them sinned by defying God inwardly.” Job made a habit of this sacrificial atonement, just in case they’d sinned.

#### The First Test: Family and Fortune

One day when the angels came to report to God, Satan, who was the Designated Accuser, came along with them. God singled out Satan and said, “What have you been up to?”

Satan answered God, “Going here and there, checking things out on earth.”

God said to Satan, “Have you noticed my friend Job? There’s no one quite like him—honest and true to his word, totally devoted to God and hating evil.”

Satan retorted, “So do you think Job does all that out of the sheer goodness of his heart? Why, no one ever had it so good! You pamper him like a pet, make sure nothing bad ever happens to him or his family or his possessions, bless everything he does—he can’t lose!

“But what do you think would happen if you reached down and took away everything that is his? He’d curse you right to your face, that’s what.”

God replied, “We’ll see. Go ahead—do what you want with all that is his. Just don’t hurt him.” Then Satan left the presence of God.

Sometime later, while Job’s children were having one of their parties at the home of the oldest son, a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were ploughing and the donkeys grazing in the field next to us when Sabeans attacked. They stole the animals and killed the field hands. I’m the only one to get out alive and tell you what happened.”

While he was still talking, another messenger arrived and said, "Bolts of lightning struck the sheep and the shepherds and fried them—burned them to a crisp. I'm the only one to get out alive and tell you what happened."

While he was still talking, another messenger arrived and said, "Chaldeans coming from three directions raided the camels and massacred the camel drivers. I'm the only one to get out alive and tell you what happened."

While he was still talking, another messenger arrived and said, "Your children were having a party at the home of the oldest brother when a tornado swept in off the desert and struck the house. It collapsed on the young people and they died. I'm the only one to get out alive and tell you what happened."

Job got to his feet, ripped his robe, shaved his head, then fell to the ground and worshiped:

Naked I came from my mother's womb,  
naked I'll return to the womb of the earth.  
God gives, God takes.  
God's name be ever blessed.

Not once through all this did Job sin; not once did he blame God.

## Song

<https://youtu.be/YPmxI8XRTkI>

There's no word You've spoken  
that hasn't brought hope.  
No promise You've made  
that you haven't fulfilled;  
faithful Jesus,  
an offering of praise I bring to you.  
  
Such grace that no man  
could ever repay.  
Patience that outlives  
the doubts in my head;  
faithful Jesus,  
an offering of praise I bring to you.

Surrounded by gifts of love,  
You express in life the depths of Your love.

*Jesus, I will put my hope in You,  
no idols compare to who You are,  
all you've given.  
I live to honour and worship You,  
to be like a window  
to who You are, all You've given to me.*

You're faithful to the end,  
You're faithful to the end.

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## Reflection

When I say 'God is faithful', what does that mean to you?

For me, I think it means that when God makes a promise, he doesn't back out of it. Some of us may have been promised something by God in the past – I know I have – and even when it seems like it won't come true, we can hold on to the fact that God is faithful and will come through on the promise.

We hear that Job was a righteous man, described as a man who was blameless and upright, a man who feared God and turned away from evil. God was so certain about Job's righteousness that he allowed Satan to put Job to the test. Job lost everything – his possessions, his livestock, his servants, even his own family.

And yet, despite being put through all this, Job remains steadfast – chapter 1 verses 20-21: "And Job arose, and tore his robe and shaved his head. And fell on the ground and worshipped. And he

said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'" (ESV)

And on it goes. Throughout Job's story, after losing everything, even his own health is attacked - yet still he remains steadfast in the Lord. He cries out to God, who seems both close and far away at the same time. And at the end of the book, God replies.

This is a slightly paraphrased version of what God said to Job:

"I will ask you some questions then I want you to answer me:  
Where were you when I laid the Earth's foundation?  
Who measured it? What was it built on?  
Who created the ocean? Who caused it to be born?  
I put clouds over it as if they were its clothes.  
I wrapped it in thick darkness.  
I set limits for it and said, "You can come this far but you can't come any farther.  
Here is where your proud waves have to stop."

Job, have you ever commanded the morning to come?  
Have you ever shown the sun where to rise?  
Have you travelled to the springs at the bottom of the ocean?  
Have you walked in its deepest parts? Have the gates of death been shown to you?  
Have you seen the gates of darkness? Do you understand how big the Earth is?  
Where does lightning come from? Where do the winds live?  
Who tells the rain where it should fall? Who makes paths for the thunderstorms?

Does the rain have a father? Who is the father of the drops of dew?  
Does the ice have a mother? Who is the mother of the frost from the heavens?  
Can you give orders to the clouds? Can you make them pour rain down on you?  
Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, 'Here we are'?

Who put wisdom in people's hearts? Who gave understanding to their minds?  
Who is wise enough to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens?  
Do you hunt for food for mother lions? Do you satisfy the hunger of their cubs?  
Who provides food for ravens when their babies cry out?"

And he asked Job many other questions. Then the Lord said, "I am the Mighty One. Will the man who argues with me correct me? Let him who brings charges against me answer me!"

Job replied, "I am not worthy. How can I reply to you? I am putting my hand over my mouth. I will stop talking. I know that you can do anything. No one can keep you from doing what you plan to do.

God was faithful to Job. He never left Job, even if it may have seemed like it at the time. Job knew about God's faithfulness; even in the pit of his anguish he was able to say, from Chapter 19 verses 25 and 26, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God." (ESV)

You might think that the book of Job quite a depressing one, yet when you look closer into it, I think it is actually encouraging. Scholars are divided on whether the book of Job is a true account of a man who had all these events happen to him, or whether it is completely allegorical writing, stories passed on from generation to generation with a sound message at its core. It may be a mixture of the two. But to be honest, it doesn't really matter - it shows us that no matter what life can throw at us, God is faithful to us and will keep us close to him. It also shows us why we should remain faithful to God.

Looking at Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, particularly the bit where he writes: "A thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'" (ESV) We don't know what Paul's thorn was, and, like the historical accuracy of Job, it doesn't really matter. Aside from his thorn, Paul went through many trials himself - he writes about the number of times he was imprisoned and shipwrecked, left hungry, and subjected to torturous punishment.

Although this experiences of Paul and what Job went through might be far removed from our own experiences, the faithful response from God is the same to us when he says: "My grace is sufficient for you."

When we look at some of the hymns and songs that have been written throughout the generations, it might be surprising to see how many have been written in times of turmoil. One famous one is the hymn 'When peace like a river', potentially better known from its refrain: 'It is well with my soul.' The writer of this hymn, Horatio Spafford, experienced some great tragedy in his life, first his young son died from scarlet fever. A few years later, his wife and four daughters were on a ship crossing the Atlantic when it collided with another ship and sank within a matter of minutes, and only his wife survived. On his crossing of the Atlantic after hearing the news, and passing the place where his daughters died, the first draft of this hymn was written.

Another example, and given below, is the song 'Blessed be your name'. Matt and Beth Redman wrote this song in part shortly after the events of 9-11, but also after Beth had a number of miscarriages. On a more personal level, a few years ago in my home church, we had a service where the congregation were asked to pick songs and hymns which had special meanings from their time in the past years. A lady in the church who lost one of her twin boys to a cot death around thirty years earlier chose it as her song. You'll see that that some of the words are word-for-word taken from our reading from Job earlier – the Lord gives, the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

One of the key parts that all these songs have in common is that they come up with the ending that God's grace is sufficient, that he is all-powerful, that he is faithful.

### **A prayer**

The chorus of the song Everlasting God (StF 46) has these words:

*Yesterday, today, and forever  
You are the same – You never change.  
Yesterday, today, and forever,  
You are faithful, and we will trust in you.*

We thank you, Lord, that you don't change, that you are faithful. We are thankful that your grace is sufficient, and always there for us, so whatever we may face, whatever life may throw our way, we can trust in your promises. Amen.

### **Something to think about:**

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples, and us, that He is with us to the end of the age. Is God being faithful, or is this an empty promise?

### **Hymn: Singing the Faith 41**

<https://youtu.be/8okACq1TowQ>

Blessèd be your name  
in the land that is plentiful,  
where your streams of abundance flow,  
blessèd be your name.  
And blessèd be your name  
when I'm found in the desert place,  
though I walk through the wilderness,  
blessèd be your name.  
Every blessing you pour out  
I'll turn back to praise.  
And when the darkness closes in, Lord,  
still I will say:

*Blessèd be the name of the Lord,  
blessèd be your name.  
Blessèd be the name of the Lord,  
blessèd be your glorious name.*

Blessèd be your name  
when the sun's shining down on me,  
when the world's 'all as it should be,'  
blessèd be your name.  
And blessèd be your name  
on the road marked with suffering,  
though there's pain in the offering,  
blessèd be your name.

Every blessing you pour out ...

*Blessèd be the name of the Lord ...*

You give and take away,  
you give and take away.  
My heart will choose to say,  
'Lord, blessed be your name.'

*Blessèd be the name of the Lord ...*

Matt and Beth Redman  
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## **Prayers of Intercession & Petition**

(500)

*Our prayers for the needs of those around us and for the wider world. Please use what is written here as a guide to your own prayers.*

We pray for those who set out into life with high hopes; for those who have studied hard and worked with determination

and for those who have shown real commitment and faithfulness to the task given to them; for those who are now filled with deep despair and a sense of disillusionment as their hopes are dashed and their dreams have come to nothing in the harsh reality of life in a fallen world.

May the faithful God and living Christ give them new hope.

The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for those who are overwhelmed by grief and for those who are filled with regret for what they did or failed to do; for those afraid to think about tomorrow and for those who, today, still carry a burden of guilt; for those who cannot let go of the past and so never enter the new life that is for them; for those for whom the struggle of living each day takes its toll and for those who long to be free.

May the faithful God and living Christ give them courage.

The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for those who always feel alone or lonely and for those who are isolated even in the midst of a crowd; for those who are excluded by their colour, their ability, their gender or their singleness; for those who are locked up in their sense of failure and for those whose lack of confidence is a barrier to progress and a wall blocking friendships and the discovery of their purpose in life.

May the faithful God and living Christ hold them in his grace.

The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for those whose lives are dependent on others and for those who fight to care for themselves; for those in the twilight years of their journey, who are dreading the thought of losing their home; for those who are needing greater support than they ever imagined and for those who provide the care they need; for those who take advantage of the goodwill of others and for those who reject every offer of help.

May the faithful God and living Christ give them openness to his care.

The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for any we know to be in need of Christ's living presence; for those who are ill or in hospital whether suffering from the Coronavirus or from other illnesses; for those who are afraid or alone; for those who are dying and those who care for them; for those facing rejection, brokenness and disappointment; for those whose faith is living and growing and for those finding the path of faith hard in our self-centred society.

May the faithful God and living Christ hold them still.

The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for ourselves. Let us bring our own hurts and hopes, our fears and our concerns, our defeats and our victories to God. Let us bring our family and friends, our fellow church members and ourselves to the foot of the cross.

We pray for all we must face in the coming days of this week, and our need of God's faithful presence and his life-transforming grace.

May the faithful God and living Christ give us his blessing.

The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

In the name of Christ,  
whose steadfast faithfulness changes everything. Amen

### **The Lord's Prayer**

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.

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power and the glory are Yours,  
now and forever.

Amen.

### **Hymn: Singing the Faith 51**

<https://youtu.be/WvtaGtTeMpI>

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 for ever wilt be:

*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:

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!

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866–1960)  
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## **Blessing**

(500)

In the midst of a world of pain, we will live for Christ.  
For the sake of our neighbour's hurts, we will live for Christ.  
With those who are lost, empty, sad or breaking, we will live for Christ.  
At all times and with all people, we will live for Christ,  
because Christ is risen and he lives in us. Amen.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ, amen.**

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