

**Welcome dear friends to our Worship at home service with Revd Francis M'Itiiri, 23rd July 2023.**

**Draw into God's presence in prayer.**

**StF 448 - Lord, in the strength of grace**

Lord, in the strength of grace, with a glad heart and true, Myself, my residue of days, I consecrate to Thee.

Thy ransomed servant, Restore to Thee Thy own. And, from this moment, live or die To serve my God alone.

**Ministry of the Word: Life and Times:**  
**Old Testament; Genesis 28: 10-19a**  
**New Testament: Matthew 13:36-40;36-43**

**StF 500 Happy the Man Who Finds the Grace**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9g2SyzZpL0w&pp=ygVDTG9yZCwqaW4gdGhllH N0cmVuZ3R0IG9mIGdyYWNIICB3aXR0IGR0Z2xhZCBoZWZlYdCBhbmQgdHJ1ZSB TdEYgNDQ4Og%3D%3D>

HAPPY are they who find the grace,  
The blessing of God's chosen race,  
The wisdom coming from above, the faith that sweetly works by love.  
Happy beyond description he Who knows,  
The Saviour died for me,  
The gift unspeakable obtain, And heavenly understanding gain.

Wisdom divine! Who tells the price,  
Of wisdom's costly merchandise?  
Wisdom to silver we prefer, and gold is dross compared to her.  
Her hands are filled with length of days,  
True riches, and immortal praise,  
Riches of Christ, on all bestowed, and honour that descends from God.

To purest joys she all invites, Chaste, holy, spiritual delights. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her flowery paths are life and peace. Happy are they who wisdom gain, thrice happy who that guest retain; they own, and shall for ever own, Wisdom, and Christ, and heaven are one.

**Sermon - Jacob's Dream at Bethel**

Beersheba in the land of Canaan where Jacob's father Isaac had settled. It is the same place God had appeared to Abraham after leaving Haran. Is this a coincidence?

It is a clear indication revealing to us that humanity has always been on the 'move'. To those on the move this autumn, from college to their first job, Universities, or apprenticeship careers, changing jobs or employers, transferring, or seeking re-appointment, and those waiting for their visa renewal from the home office, you are in our thoughts and prayers.

Tracing the story of Jacob from Genesis Chapter 27:43: we find his mother Rebekah had leaked information to him that there was a conspiracy to have him eliminated by his elder brother Esau. Jacob was aided by his mother to lie and fraudulently rob his elder brother of his birthright. It may be that Esau was not planning anything evil, as what we read is all that either Rebekah heard or fabricated to taint badly the image of her elder son.

Rebekah shows no sign of remorse just like patriarchal Sarai. Instead, she schemed on how to provide an 'asylum' to his son in Paddan Aram. Safeguarding one son but endangering the life of the other son. What kind of mother does such a thing? dividing the spoil of her own house?

The Bible is a great reference helping shed light on double-standard attitudes and rots that we encounter daily in the society that we live in. I wonder. how one can justify such a messy work of darkness? Whatever the reasons for Jacob's flight from Haran to Beersheba, were all pre-meditated and carefully planned. Why are you on the move in your life? What areas of your life require a move, change, refreshing, divine encounter?

I pray our Lord to open your eyes of understanding to find your right footing in whatever you have put your two hands into. Peace of God be with you.

In Matthews reading - I want to look at this passage from an African traditional religious perspective. In the context of the Church,

God calls and places his shepherds and prophet to be always on guard. To watch and to pray, to walk in the spirit, and to see with spiritual eyes. If God's people fall asleep, they will wake up one day and discover the church is no longer a church. Like the Swahili saying, *ukilala utapa mwana siyio wako tena- (if you fall asleep, you might find the baby has been stolen)*

In this context Jesus put before his disciples another parable: *'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So, when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.* It is hard to tell what the weeds and true plants are if you are not a farmer or a gardener.

**In Matthew 13:27-29;** *The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from? "An enemy did this," he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up? 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'*

The moral of this parable of the weeds and the wheat is the church and believers are called upon to wake up from their slumber and guard God's church from the spiritual attacks of Satan. And some battles can only be fought by prayers and fasting, reading God's word, living in obedience to God's will and living in consecration. God is never involved in dirty battles.

### **Prayers of intercession:**

To those on the move, to those who have not yet decided, or started a new journey into a new career, or relationship, and to those drawing close to the end of their life journey, Lord, in your Mercy, **Hear our prayers.**

To those caught up by an abrupt change, letters of appointment into a new area, or letters of transfer, letters of admission into schools, colleges and universities, letters to conclude a contract. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayers.**

Those awaiting home office decisions for their visas to the UK and other countries, to those who face change, we pray for countries at war and for a new journey of peace and reconstruction, for nations affected by harsh economic conditions, for the less fortunate, we pray for God's reassuring peace and presence during these strange times. **Amen.**

### **StF 95 We Praise you O God; acclaim you as Lord.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJ7qUWJmWRs&pp=ygUyV2UgcHJhaXNlIHlvdS wgTyBHb2Q7IGFjY2xhaW0geW91IGFzIExvcvcmQgKFN0RiA5NSk%3D>

We praise you, O God; acclaim you as Lord. All of creation resounds to the voice of the heavenly host united in song.

**Praising your majesty, praising your glory,  
Alleluia, alleluia,  
Holy is God, holy and strong,  
Alleluia, alleluia  
Holy immortal one.**

Apostles and prophets, the martyrs for Christ. Sing of your goodness while bathed in the beams of your infinite love, your splendour and light. Lord Jesus Christ, your death brings us life. Come with your judgement and grant us a place in the kingdom of God, at one with our saints. Lord, grant us salvation, protect us from harm. Free us from evil and bless us with mercy as daily in your trust and we hope.

### **Prayer**

Begin or end our time in prayer when we are stressed or grateful, and when we wake up or before we fall asleep. *Liturgical text from TE Deum, Adapted by Peter Jones).*

**The Grace:** May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit always remain with us all. **Amen.**