

Worship@Home 11th August 2024 with Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Holy God, Creator of Life,
you call us out of our dark places,
offering us the grace of new life.
When we see nothing but hopelessness,
you surprise us with the breath of your spirit.
Call us out of our complacency and routines,
set us free from our self-imposed bonds,
and fill us with your spirit of life, compassion, and peace, In the name of
Jesus, your anointed one, we pray. **Amen.**

By Revd Nancy J (<http://ruminari.wordpress.com/>) accessed through RE:Worship: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2012/02/opening-prayer-psalm-130.html>

STF 51 – Great is thy faithfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrPt4CPIDJw>

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.

By Thomas Obediah Chisholm (1866 – 1960). Words & Music Public Domain. CCLI Song Number: 18723

Please read:

1 Kings 19: 4-8

<https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=302678934>

Time to Reflect

Elijah is on the run! Having been present at God's victory over the prophets of Ba'al, Elijah now flees into the wilderness near Beersheba after receiving a threatening message from Queen Jezebel. Elijah is entering into a place of danger so that he might hide and not be discovered by the forces of his enemy. The wilderness (also translated as 'the desert') is a place where food and water are scarce, making survival a challenge. His journey into the wilderness has parallels with other stories that we find in the Hebrew Bible, with Hagar and Moses both entering the wilderness in order to find and escape from oppressive forces. Just like in those journey's, God reaches out to offer assistance in a time of vulnerability and need.

When Elijah reaches a resting place in the desert, he exclaims: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors" (19:4). Elijah's thoughts parallel those of another Hebrew prophet who sits under a bush, wishing he might die: Jonah (Jonah 4:8). Moses, too, asks God to end his life after a conflict with the people of Israel (Numbers 11:15). It would seem that Elijah, exhausted and afraid, has now reached a state of complete despair and anguish. It is in this moment that God assists Elijah by sending an angel. The messenger of God comes to Elijah to offer him practical help in his time of need. The angel awakens Elijah and gives him bread and water before allowing the prophet to rest. Then, having rested, the angel delivers food and water to Elijah again.

This time of rest, and the two meals, enable Elijah to continue on a journey of 40 days and nights in the wilderness, a number that reflects the Hebrew sojourn in the desert for 40 years after escaping Egypt. Moreover, Elijah makes his way to Mount Horeb, the location where Moses and the Israelites received God's revelation of Torah, as another allusion to this story.

You may have noticed that the readings that we have in this particular season focus heavily on bread and God's provision for us. They seek to remind us that in times of challenge, difficulty, and extreme vulnerability, it is God who supplies our needs and supports us on our journeys.

Elijah is able to overcome his despair through the care that God offers him. We too might want to reflect on when God has helped us in difficult moments through his loving presence and the assistance that has been offered. The God who accompanies us on our journeys and does not leave us alone or abandoned.

In the Gospel reading that we have for this Sunday, John 6: 35, 41-51, Jesus refers to himself as the bread of life. It is a reminder to us that by receiving Christ into our lives we have a spiritual sustenance and the gift of eternal life that comes from God. The bread of Jesus offers us what we need on the journey of life, however difficult or overwhelming it may seem. Just like Elijah, and as Jesus himself also did, there are times when we need to find a place of sanctuary in order to rest and be nourished by God.

Perhaps this can be an encouragement to us all to find the space and time when we can rest in God's presence and receive his spiritual feeding, so that we might find renewal and be enabled on our journeys through life. For it is in our weakness that we receive the grace that we need from God, who cares for us and helps us in our struggles:

“When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears, and rescues them from all their troubles. The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”

Psalm 34: 17-18, NRSVA.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:

The needs of the world...

The Church and its calling...

Loved ones going through difficult times...

For peace, justice, and reconciliation...

In Jesus name. 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. Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

StF 238 – Lead us heavenly Father lead us

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLXTPdS_lq4

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but thee;
Yet possessing every blessing
If our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
All our weakness Thou dost know;
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe;
tempted, taunted, yet undaunted,
Through the desert thou didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending,
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
Love with every passion blending,
Pleasure that can never cloy;
Thus provided, pardoned, guided,
Nothing can our peace destroy.

By James Edmeston (1791 -1867).

Final Prayer

God For Us, we call You Father, God Alongside Us, we call You Jesus,
God Within Us, we call You Holy Spirit.

You are the Eternal Mystery that enables, enfolds, and enlivens all things,
even us and even me.

Every name falls short of Your goodness and greatness.

We can only see who You are in what is. We ask for such perfect seeing.

As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be. **Amen.**

Trinity Prayer by Richard Rohr and accessed at: <https://media.acny.uk/media/news/post/2024/05/0d789420-6b55-408d-b359-770bd600a4c3.pdf>