

Worship @ Home, 23rd October 2022 with Revd Francis M'Itiiri

Opening Prayer

Loving God, during these perilous times, I come to you when tired and frustrated by so many things. ***May I find rest and comfort in you.***
When things are not going as we expect, guide, and teach me the paths that I should take. ***May your will be done here.***
Lord, give me peace that the world yearns for. ***For your kingdom is righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit. Amen***

Hymn: STF: 459; God captain of Israel's host. *Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nt4CpbbkXMg>*

Captain of Israel's host, and Guide, of all who seek the land above,
Beneath Thy shadow we abide, the cloud of Thy protecting love.
Our strength, Thy grace, our rule, Thy Word.
Our end, the glory of the Lord.

By Thine unerring Spirit led, we shall not in the desert stray
we shall not full direction need, nor miss our providential way.
As far from danger as from fear,
While Love, almighty Love, is near.

We've no abiding city here, but seek a city out of sight.
Thither our steady course we steer, aspiring to the plains of light.
Jerusalem the saints' abode,
whose founder is the living God.

Old Testament: Joel 2: 23-32

Time to reflect:

Though little is known about Joel, there are five key insights for us to learn about his character through his ministry and message.

1. Joel was a prophet of the ancient Israel, the second of the twelve minor prophets and according to the book itself the author of the Book of Joel.
2. Joel identifies himself as the son of Pethuel, a name mentioned nowhere else in the Old Testament other than in (Joel 1:1).
3. Joel's name in Hebrew means "Yahweh is God,"

4. He was called by God to minister to the southern kingdom of Judah, around 835 B.C.

5. It is also believed that Joel might have been a priest (but not in the line of a Levite), with profound knowledge in pastoral work and agricultural life (Joel 1:7,10-12,2:19).

From that background, Joel' was indeed to be God's mouthpiece to the people of Judah. The people of Israel needed God's intervention so desperately as they were under the threat of starvation. The land has been invaded by the hordes of locusts that had destroyed the farming sector. Prophet Joel comes and declares to the people.

*"Fear not, you beasts of the field,
for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit;
the fig tree and vine give their full yield". (2:22)*

We dare not underestimate the fact that food insufficiency is a real problem for many parts of the world today, and especially when these are escalated further by the war in Ukraine, horn of Africa and other parts. A report about food situation in the world (world vision 2022 reports), up to 811 million people globally — about 10% of the world's population, regularly go to bed hungry.

Joel was raised by God in such an historical period in Israel to wake God's people into prayer, fasting and repentance. The theme of repentance is so central to our present times and one of the most quoted Scriptures in the bible during perilous times is found in 2 Chronicles. It majors on the call for dynamic prayers that bring about cultural change of heart. In this passage, we learn that God provides direction to a nation on how to get out of danger as in the few verses that follow below.

"When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chr 7:13–14.)

Brothers and sisters of the Northampton Circuit it is time to intercede for our nations, our world, and our inflated economy. The message of Joel inspired by God's Spirit, is that the United Kingdom and the world will be blessed again! We are inspired to be the tellers of the good news of the story of God's love.

Verse 23 *"Be glad, O children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God,*

for he has given the early rain for your vindication; he has poured down for your abundant rain, the early and the latter rain, as before.

Joel makes it truly clear that the Promise of abundance is on the way coming. We do require such a courage to inspire each other and remind ourselves that challenging times do not last forever!

Read the verses below.

"I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, and my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am amid Israel, and that I am the Lord your God and there is none else. (2:25-27)

Indeed, Yahweh is God, a God of hope sending his rain, to every nation, every farm, healing and restoring back all that has been destroyed. And we pray that God has his ways of restoring those who have been affected by hunger, diseases, violence, and war. Optimistically, we look forward to a new world order in God's Kingdom with revived economy, agricultural, with plenty of grains available for everyone and affordable essential commodities. After God heals nations and land contaminated by hate, bombs, guns, and bloodshed.

Let us focus our prayers where they are required most this morning. Let us pray like never before. **Amen.**

Take time to sit quietly for a time of prayer

God creator of all, we pray for those experiencing a reign of confusion. For a while they are having brilliant moments of happiness and in others an extreme deep sense of guilt. **Grant us Peace.**

Lord, we pray for your help during times of grief and pray that the wounds of loss will heal. We do remember with small and big smiles and love those taken from us by death. **Grant us peace.**

Lord, when I am uncertain about what I should do, show me your ways. I can no longer pretend I can help myself. Help me recognise and accept your divine help when I see it today. Lord in your mercy

I am open now to receive your help of your peace, Amen.

Lord's Prayer.... Our Father

Hymn: STF 495; Dear Lord and Father of:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YAXiN0egN-I>

Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways.
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind; in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard, beside the Syrian sea
the gracious calling of the Lord, let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee! O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee, the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness, till all our strivings cease.
Take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives
confess, the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire, thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire; speak through the earthquake, wind,
and fire, O still small voice of calm!

A prayer of blessing

May Yahweh our God, protect, save, and hold you by the power of his
Holy Spirit

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you
faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only
wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion, and power, both
now and forever. **Amen.**