

Worship @ Home, 20th November 2022 with Revd Francis M’Itiiri

Call to worship; Psalm 46:1-7

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in times of trouble.

Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth gives way, and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging, ***there is a river, whose streams make glad the city of God. Amen***

STF: 495. Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqOnjmr9Ah0>

Dear Lord and Father of humankind, forgive our foolish ways;
re clothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives thy service finds,
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.

Prayers of Confession

Almighty and most merciful God, we have strayed from your ways like sheep without a shepherd. We have ignored doing things that you expect us to do. We have done the very opposite.

Merciful Saviour, forgive us poor sinners,
that we may live a godly, righteous sober life, to the praise of your holy
name.



Time to Reflect: Introducing the message.

Welcome to the reflection of the week drawn from Jeremiah 23:1-6. I thought you might like to know something about the root meaning for the name Jeremiah, ‘*may Jehovah exalt you*’, or *the appointed one of Yahweh.*’

The name is long but has brought huge inspiration to many people of different cultures. Many have called him “the weeping prophet” because of the nature of his message and the grief he expressed for his people. Consider below some of the verses that describe prophet Jeremiah’s disposition.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart. I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” (1:5)

•Alas, my mother, that you gave birth to me, a man with whom the whole land strives and contends! I have neither lent nor borrowed, yet everyone curses me. (15:10)

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (17:9)

Cursed be the day I was born! May the day my mother bore me not be blessed! (20:15).

It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that Jeremiah was a weak Prophet and lacking in courage due to his nature. His message revealed that he was one of the bravest men in Judah. During this week, we are invited to a theological task of rethinking, reimagining the metaphor of ‘shepherd’ with an aim of updating and expanding its application to a broader scope of functions.

In John’s gospel (10:10), Jesus is referred to as the good shepherd. And in Jeremiah 23, the shepherd in this instance are the leaders in various spheres, while the sheep are the people of Israel and vice versa.

In those old days, predators, such as hyenas, leopards and lions were responsible for removing the sheep from the protection of the shepherd, and eventually harming them.

And as such, scattering the sheep is not something that shepherds can do.

For a shepherd to scatter the sheep would be considered a dangerous act, just like a police officer committing a burglary or a judge taking a bribe which can be considered in religious thoughts as an act of sheer treachery and betrayal of the shepherd's calling.

'Therefore, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the Lord' (Jere 23:2-3)

The kings of Judah were expected to provide care to the people. None of the last kings of Judah since the times of Josiah had any spiritual concern for God's people. God promises a time of regathering his faithful ones into a prosperous, justice, and righteousness new era of history, where there is a new life;

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "When I will raise up for David a righteous branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour. (Jere 23:5-6)

Today, we are challenged by God to seek the welfare of those we have been called to shepherd. It has been seen in every generation; God always raising a "people centred" good leaders across the global family to restore and bring healing to those in trouble. The task has never been an easy one. We do realise we cannot do this alone, we have to turn to God for help and collaborate and work together to provide a healthy, safer flourishing environment for the people of Yahweh.

Take a time to sit quietly in prayer

We bring prayers to those people of God, separated, or removed far from families, have no jobs, or source of income; for the homeless, and those offering an extraordinary welcome and hospitality during these difficult and strange times, we pray for communities who are seeking to rebuild their lives in foreign countries.

Guide and protect the refugees and direct all rulers, governments, and leaders of every sphere, help them to do justice, and be fair in the sharing of resources in our country. Gracious God, we pray for the sick, the lonely and the hurting and those who provide care to the vulnerable members of our society, that they will draw strength from your son Jesus Christ who laid his life on the cross for us. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer *Our father, who art thou in heaven.*

I will sing the wondrous story

Keswick Convention music

I will sing the wondrous story. Of the Christ who died for me.
How He left the realms of glory; for the cross of Calvary.

*Yes, I will sing the wondrous story. Of the Christ who died for me,
Sing it with the saints in glory, Gathered by the crystal sea.*

I was lost, but Jesus found me, found the sheep that went astray,
raised me up and gently led me, back into the narrow way.

He will keep me 'til the river. Rolls its waters at my feet.
Then at last He'll bring me over. Saved by grace and victory.

A prayer of blessing:

We thank you God for all the joy you bring to us through this digital platform.

May we now walk from here in our separate directions guided by your Holy Spirit.

The Grace:

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, remain with us, now and for ever. **Amen.**