

Worship at Home for the 5th March 2023 with Revd Francis M'Itiiri

Opening Prayers:

Let us draw close into God's presence and pray together.

Gracious God, your love has called us into this online platform, and here we have come, gathering in your name. Open now our hearts, minds, and eyes. Awaken our spirits and inspire us during our worship to you, in the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

STF 367: When I was lost, you came

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIZMfIK9PP8>

When I was lost you came and rescued me;
reached down into the pit and lifted me.

Oh Lord, such love.

I was as far from you as I could be.

You know all the things I've ever done,
but Jesus' blood has cancelled every one.

Oh Lord, such grace
to qualify me as your own.

*There is a new song in my mouth,
there is a deep cry in my heart,
a hymn of praise to Almighty God – Halleluia!
And now I stand firm on this Rock,
my life is hidden now with Christ in God,
The old has gone and the new has come – Halleluia!
Your love has lifted me.*

Now I have come into your family,
for the Son of God has died for me.

Oh Lord, such peace.

I am as loved by you as I could be.

In the full assurance of your love,
now with every confidence we come.

Oh Lord, such joy
to know that you delight in us.

Refrain.

Readings-Genesis 12:1-4a.

Reflection thoughts of the day.

I am just wondering, if you were preaching from this passage, what title would you give to the message of today? ‘

Revd Ian Forsyth brought out some striking thoughts during Ash Wednesday, he asked us a simple question that was not necessarily requiring quick responses. ‘

Have you ever pondered what God would do without you?

Or can God do something without you? And what can you do without God?

Thanks to Ian now I have something to build today's message. In Genesis, we see God decides to pick on one family from other families of the earth, not even a nation, for a special purpose. Genesis 1-11 elicits one of the main reasons as to why God did this. The human race had turned into a rebellious, violent, and corrupt humanity (Adam, Cain and Abel, Noah and the flood, the tower of Babel).

How can we feel the sense of urgency in God to deal with this root of rebellion with a unique solution familiar to us today-obedience and trust on His promises. God's call of Abraham to leave his home and follow Him anchored on a promise, "I will bless you". God's reassurance to Abraham was to look up and trust him. In the New Testament Gospel of John 3, we see another fascinating example of obedience in the middle of religious confusion. Nicodemus, a top Jewish religious leader comes to seek wisdom about God's kingdom. He struggled a bit to resonate to be born again meant visa vice his Jewish thoughts. The striking thing on this discourse was the very question Nicodemus asked Jesus.

"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked.

"Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" John 3:4

Something seemed to complicate Nicodemus' thinking. What exactly had his statement meant?

I wonder how you would react if it were you with Jesus that night, if he looked at you and told you exactly as he told Nicodemus.

This story of Abram is a typology of our journeying in this life. We live in environments that seem so disruptive and quite often you might prefer requesting God to 'airlift' you out of that environment. The call of Abram brings out clearly three lessons to us today.

Firstly, God resolves to try something new with one family, from other families of the human race then, for a long-term journey of making them flourish in course of executing a divine mandate. However, from a human perspective, God's mission seems doomed to fail before it even took-off. God makes a powerful prophetic declaration into a barren family situation that is 'roughed up' with all form of conflict and human limitations. Also, God was bound to create a new hope and a new possibility through Abram and Sarai. The possibility begins with the command.

“Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen 12 V1-4).

Secondly, God choose a humble obedience person, demonstrating, he is not a respecter of person, he can choose whoever he decides and places his anointing to deal with rebellion of the humanity on the earth. Encountering Abram and Sarai, God saw the potential in them. But, again, I wonder what might have been going in the mind of Abram and Sarai. how can this be, why 'us' at this age. Abram and Sarai remembered God's command to their obedience, tied with a promise. Their lives were about to change for good against all human limitations into something else huge. You see age should never be a barrier to God's purpose. Those that God has placed to provide pastoral oversight, have higher duty to enable and guide God's people in discovering his impressive presence in their lives. God calls into enabling ministry and a ministry that rubbishes those who's potential only God discovers. Although, again at some point, there are those who struggle to find their place in God's purpose. With prayers, encouragement, guidance, and teaching God's word, it might surprise many the kind of product likely to come out of the arms of the great porter! So, if God can get one, two, three more, the likes of Abram and Sarais in our present day, it is unfathomable what God can do.

Thirdly, we also learn, God's chosen people never exist in isolation. They are called to a wider mission than just self-preservation. Abraham and fatherhood of faith embodies blessing to other nations like Israel and the gentile world. Lastly, Jesus invites all of us as individuals into this plan of salvation, to be a blessing to the world. May our merciful God open our spiritual eyes of understanding to respond to his gracious invitation just as Abram and Sarai, and those who brought the gospel to us did.

Take some few minutes to reflect on what God is calling you for. Do you think yourself of God's project or a project of some people? Weigh both pros and cons. I am sure you choose to follow the example of Abram, the example of Jesus. And this can bring a whole enormous difference to our world of today. Where do we need to take our step of our faith next"?

We make Prayers of confessions together

Loving God, we come into your holy presence, knowing that there have been times this week when we have fallen short of your glory, we have failed to live up to your calling. We have said and done things we regret; we have stayed silent when we could have spoken up.

In our stillness, we are sorrowful and repent our sins, thank you, for your grace, already reaching out to us for the week ahead. Bless us now, as we worship you, **Amen.**

We say together the Lord's Prayer

STF 628: Faithful one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PjSO5IhI0M>

Faithful one, so unchanging,
Ageless one, you are my rock of peace.
Lord of all I depend on you,
I call out to you, again and again
I call out to you, again and again.

You are my rock in times of trouble

You lift me up when I fall down
All through the storm your love is the anchor,
my hope is in you alone.
Repeat.

Blessing

We now go out merciful saviour, led by the power of your Holy Spirit, with an open-heart and mind to face the week ahead, with love and kindness to serve our siblings, our neighbours who are within the margin of this world. And now, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now, and for ever. **Amen.**