

twelvebaskets



LENT 2C

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Lent 2 - Year C
13th March 2022



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

20 STF – Be still, for the presence of the Lord OR

117 STF – Sing praise to God who reigns above

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

88 STF – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! OR

341 STF – All for Jesus – all for Jesus

Readings: Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17 – 4:1; Luke 13:31-35

Reflections on the readings

Hymn:

397 STF – The Spirit lives to set us free, walk, walk in the light OR

660 STF – Called by Christ to be disciples

What am I being called to?

Hymn:

486 STF – Who would true valour see, let him come hither OR

611 STF – Brother, sister, let me serve you

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

440 STF – Amazing grace – how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! OR

487 STF – You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace

Blessing

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Call to worship

Here we are Lord, gathered in your name to worship you.

Here we are Lord, gathered on this Lord's Day to encounter you.

Here we are Lord, bringing all our needs, desires and pain – we bring ourselves just as we are.

Come amongst us, by your Spirit, O Lord our God.

Amen.¹

Hymn:

20 STF – Be still, for the presence of the Lord OR

117 STF – Sing praise to God who reigns above

Opening Prayers

[A prayerful reading of Psalm 27 in two voices: one person to read the scripture - in italics – and one to read the prayers]

Psalm 27

*The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?*

*The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?*

*When evildoers assail me
to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes—
they shall stumble and fall.*

*Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me,
yet I will be confident.*

Loving God, we thank you that you are the stronghold in our lives. We thank you that though we may feel surrounded by challenges that threaten to overwhelm us, with you as our light we might continually discover that our confidence and hope can be found in you.

*One thing I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the LORD,
and to inquire in his temple.*

*For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.*

Gracious God,

¹ Call to Worship written by Tim Baker

We give you thanks for the opportunity to come to worship you freely, to have a sanctuary set aside for worship, a house of prayer where we come together to enable us to draw close to you, meditating on your word and bringing the cries of our hearts.

We thank you that when we face trouble you promise never to leave us but provide us with the security of your never-ending presence and peace which will hold us in the storms of life.

*Now my head is lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.*

*Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,
be gracious to me and answer me!*

*“Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!”
Your face, LORD, do I seek.*

*Do not hide your face from me.
Do not turn your servant away in anger,
you who have been my help.
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,
O God of my salvation!*

*If my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will take me up.*

God of Glory, we praise you with songs. We cannot help ourselves from singing of your goodness. Hear us as we come before you, we don't hold any of ourselves back from you but come as we are, and know that you do not hide from us but show us yourself in Jesus.

*Teach me your way, O LORD,
and lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.*

*Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries,
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and they are breathing out violence.*

*I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.*

*Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!*

Loving God, we thank you that you are ready to show us the way, the way to you, the way of loving others, the way of serving you in the communities in which we serve. We say sorry for our impatience but come to wait before you. Reveal yourself and your ways for us, and open our hearts and minds so we are ready to receive from you.

In the name of Christ, Amen.²

² Opening prayers written by Christine Dutton

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

The Psalms are amazing, why? They are written in a poetic and personal way which tell us something deeper about God.

In our Psalm reading we see the imagery of a fortress. A fortress is a building designed to be defended, which means it was very hard for enemies to get inside. Fortification kept the people inside safe. There is little difference between a fortress and a castle. Fortresses normally have thick stone walls, thicker but less tall than in castles so artillery cannot break them. There were very small windows, without glass, so that soldiers inside could fire out through them. As time passed, the weapons they used changed, from bow and arrow, crossbow, gun or cannon. Soldiers outside had great difficulty firing into such small windows. The people defending the fortress were also able to drop things like rocks and boiling oil on the heads of those below.

So a fortress is something that helps protect its occupants. Back to the psalmist who even says- The LORD is the stronghold of my life.

What is encouraging is that we might well face difficulties and hard moments but if we trust in the Lord then we will be protected and safe.

So let us say a prayer together as we trust in God who is our fortress:
God be our fortress. Protect us from difficult moments and keep us safe from harm.
Amen.³

Hymn:

88 STF – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation! OR

341 STF – All for Jesus – all for Jesus

Readings: Psalm 27; Philippians 3:17 – 4:1; Luke 13:31-35

Reflections on the reading

Today marks the second Sunday of Lent, the next marker on our journey to Easter where we will celebrate Christ's death and resurrection. Have you decided to mark Lent this year? Maybe you have given something up, taken something on or chosen, consciously or not, to not mark it in a particular way. If you have decided to mark Lent in a particular way I wonder how it's going and how you are feeling? Are you managing to keep up with the commitment you have made? Do you feel you are doing well or maybe struggling a bit?

³ All Age Talk written by Matthew Forsyth

Turn to the person next to you, or if you are reading this on your own stop and think for a moment, share (or think) about the way you have chosen to mark Lent this year, how it's going and how you are feeling about that.

Give the congregation 3 or 4 minutes to share together.

I hope you have had a rich time of conversation and/or reflection. When we think about we are doing with an aspect our discipleship it is often easy to see what we are not doing, to identify the "failures", to say where we've missed an opportunity to pray or share our faith. Whilst Lent is a time for self-reflection and penitence as we prepare for Easter, we have to be careful that we don't find ourselves in a place where we only see the negatives, the have nots, the "failures". Our life with God has many more have dones, blessings and celebrations than have not's and missed opportunities.

The readings I have chosen to focus on today help us to see afresh the goodness of God and a positive framework in which we live our Christian life. They challenge us to stand firm in the goodness of God, both in God and in ourselves as followers of Christ.

Psalms 27 is headed a 'Song of Confidence in God'. It contains a number of truths of who God is and how we are called to respond to that. In the opening verses the psalmist declares who God is, our light and salvation, contrasts that with our enemies and speaks of the reality that because of who God is, as the stronghold of our lives, we do not need to be afraid. In verses four to six the psalmist speaks of their response to God's goodness, that they want to dwell with God and in God, to behold God's beauty as their primary purpose in life. In reading the psalm we are invited as part of our response to God's goodness to seek after God and dwell with God more than anything else. Maybe part of our Lenten self-reflection is to ask do we seek God's goodness each day?

Verses seven to ten are a prayer, the psalmist crying out for God's help in their own situation. I find the way that the psalmist recognises God's goodness yet, in asking for God's help is honest is praying 'do not turn away from me, do not cast me off' really helpful. It shows us that we can both know and praise God's goodness whilst still being honest about our human feelings and fear. We can know God is good and will always answer and at the same time say to God 'do not turn away from me, do not cast me off', God can hold the declarations of our head with the vulnerabilities of our heart.

Following on from their prayer the psalmist asks God to 'teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path'. In this part of the psalm the psalmist recognises that whilst God will help, whilst God will answer they too need to do something, they too need to be open to be changed as part of God's answer to their prayer. The outcome of their declaring who God is, of crying out for God's help, of knowing they have a part to play is to return to declaring God's goodness, not just God's goodness but God's action and committing to wait on God.

As I read this psalm and as I look at what the psalmist says I'm struck by two common themes. Firstly that God in God's goodness is always available to us, always present to us, God is our light and salvation. Secondly that there are many ways in which we can draw closer and stronger with God through which we can understand how God is at work in our lives and how we can learn from God to live more fully the life God desires for us.

These two themes also resonate in the passage from Philippians. Sandy Williams, in her Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary, reminds us that the letter to the

Philippians is written in a context where Paul was opposing a commonly held belief that Christians from a pagan background should conform to Jewish Law and that God's goodness is only available through living to the law.

In the current passage and preceding verses Paul presents an alternative measure of how to live which is rooted in God's goodness and supremely in the death and resurrection of Jesus. In verses 12 to 16 Paul invites us to 'press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus (3:14)'. In the verses we've heard Paul goes onto contrast those who live as enemies of Christ whose end is destruction with those who live lives for Christ whose citizenship is in heaven. This contrast and these verses are a reminder that as we think about the goodness of God in our lives that the complete goodness of God is available to everyone through Christ and as long as we are walking with Jesus we will know that goodness, become children of God and citizens of heaven.

In light of all Paul has said he calls the church in Philippi and us as readers of the letter to 'stand firm in the Lord in this way (4:1)'. The way that Paul is referring to is life lived standing firm with Jesus in which we will both know the goodness of God and continually draw closer to God not through having our failures or have not moments revealed but by discovering more and more of God's love for us and being shaped by that.

As you journey through lent, whether you have committed to giving something up, taking something on or not I invite you to reflect on where you are acknowledging the goodness of God and where you are inviting God to take you deeper into his goodness and love. As you reflect on God's goodness also reflect on how you are responding to God's love in Christ. Are you standing firm on Christ above everything else?⁴

Hymn:

397 STF – The Spirit lives to set us free, walk, walk in the light OR

660 STF – Called by Christ to be disciples

What are you being called to?

There are many different ways you could respond to today's invitation to stand firm in Christ, you could sit with God and simply acknowledge his goodness, you could keep a journal of where you have seen God's goodness at work through answered prayer, protection from "enemies", you could walk in the beauty of God's creation with another disciple and share together. How we reflect, how we acknowledge God's goodness in our lives isn't important, what is important is that we do. As we take time to acknowledge God's goodness, to let God shape up, to remember the work of Jesus we stand firm in Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith, the one whose love knows no limits

As you continue to journey through Lent I hope these readings have shown you that reflecting on our journey with God in this season of penitence and preparation is not about a list of where we have fallen short or got it wrong but an opportunity to celebrate the goodness of God and to let God's goodness show us how we might know more of God through God's shaping of us which will in turn enable us to stand even more firmly with Christ.

⁴ Reflection written by David Goodall

May God Bless you as your journey with God this Lent. Amen.⁵

Hymn:

486 STF – Who would true valour see, let him come hither OR

611 STF – Brother, sister, let me serve you

Prayers of intercession

For our intercessions, we will hold three short periods of quiet, in which each of us is invited to bring our own prayers to God.

Firstly, we pray for those close to home, calling to mind the name or the face of somebody in our own family, amongst our church congregation or a close friend. In the quiet, we hold them and their situation up to God.

[Silence]

Living God, you know our hearts and our hurts. We commit them to you now, and invite you to come close to those we have prayed for, bringing them your healing, your comfort, your hope.

Secondly, we pray for situations further afield – taking a moment to pray for something we have heard in the news that troubles us, or for someone we have never met but whose story has affected us. In the quiet, we hold these people and situations up to God.

[Silence]

Living God, you know the pains of your world. It can feel like a dark world when we switch on the news, or read our newspapers. In the darkness, bring your light. In the conflict, bring your peace. In the brokenness, bring your healing.

Finally, we spend a moment praying for the church: perhaps this church congregation, the wider Christian church, or all people of faith. In the quiet, we pray for all who are gathering in worship today.

[Silence]

Living God, help us – your people – to be your hands and feet in the world. May we find ways to be an answer to prayer, to bring transformation in our own lives, communities and our world.

We pray these, and all our prayers, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We will now take up the offering.

⁵ Reflection written by David Goodall

Blessing the offering

Lord, accept these gifts and put them to the use of building your Kingdom, here in this community and around the world.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

440 STF – Amazing grace – how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! OR

487 STF – You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace

Blessing

Go out in peace, and see the world made anew.

Go out to meet with a community, a family, a society crying out for some love, looking to encounter the living God.

Go out to discover God's spirit is at work throughout our world, and be transformed by your encounter with that same Spirit.

Go, by the grace of God.

Amen.⁷

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker