

Sunday Service with St. John's

03 07 2022

Good morning and welcome to our worship service today, the 3rd Sunday after Trinity.

Sing to the Lord a new song: **sing to the Lord, all the earth.**

Sing to the Lord and bless his name: **tell out his salvation from day to day.**

Declare his glory among the nations: **and his wonders among all peoples.**

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. **Amen**

Great is the darkness

Great is the darkness that covers the earth,
Oppression, injustice and pain.
Nations are slipping in hopeless despair,
Though many have come in Your name.
Watching while sanity dies,
Touched by the madness and lies.

*Come, Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus,
Pour out Your spirit we pray.
Come, Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus,
Pour out Your spirit on us today.*

May now Your church rise with power and love,
This glorious gospel proclaim.
In every nation salvation will come
To those who believe in Your name.
Help us bring light to this world
That we might speed Your return.

Great celebrations on that final day
When out of the heavens You come.
Darkness will vanish, all sorrow will end,
And rulers will bow at Your throne.
Our great commission complete,
Then face to face we shall meet.

A time of prayer

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: **slow to anger and of great kindness.**
He has not dealt with us according to our sins: **nor rewarded us according to our wickedness.**

For as the heavens are high above the earth: **so great is his mercy on those who fear him.**

Come, Holy Spirit of God: **and search our hearts with the light of Christ.**

Silence is kept for reflection

**Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgment; bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May almighty God, who sent his Son into the world to save sinners, bring us his pardon and peace, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Collect for The Third Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

2 Kings 5:1-14

Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. "By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy."

As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!"

When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house.

Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy.

Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage. Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'!"

So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

"When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God has come near.'

"Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me."

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

One shall tell another

One shall tell another,
And he shall tell his friend,
Husbands, wives and children
Shall come following on.
From house to house in families
Shall more be gathered in,
And lights will shine in every street,
So warm and welcoming.

*Come on in and taste the new wine,
The wine of the kingdom,
The wine of the kingdom of God.
Here is healing and forgiveness,
The wine of the kingdom,
The wine of the kingdom of God.*

Compassion of the Father
Is ready now to flow,
Through acts of love and mercy
We must let it show.
He turns now from His anger
To show a smiling face,

And longs that men should stand beneath
The fountain of His grace.

He longs to do much more than
Our faith has yet allowed,
To thrill us and surprise us
With His sovereign power.
Where darkness has been darkest
The brightest light will shine,
His invitation comes to us,
It's yours and it is mine.

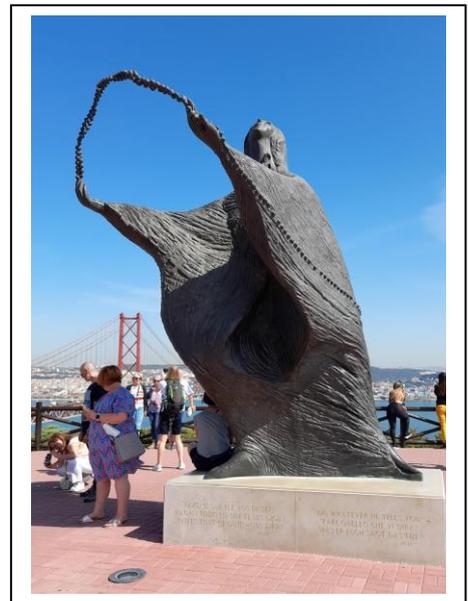
Talk

Do you have a favourite Bible verse or perhaps several favourite verses? One that would definitely make my top 10 is 'Do whatever he tells you' (John 2:5). I'm sure you remember the wedding in Cana in Galilee. It was at the beginning of Jesus ministry and he was there, with his disciples and also his mother. They'd run out of wine, so Mary went to Jesus, but he simply said: 'My time has not yet come'. Mary wasn't going to be put off so easily, so she said to the servants: 'Do whatever he tells you'. The jars were filled with water and the water changed to wine.

Earlier this year, Noel and I were on a cruise that called into Lisbon. We visited the statue of Christ the Redeemer south of the city and I was fascinated to see this interesting statue on the site. You might just be able to make out the wording on the plinth: 'Do whatever he tells you'. The statue is of Mary holding what I assume is a string of wine drops.

Today's reading from 2 Kings tells the story of Naaman, a commander of the army of the king of Aram, one of the enemies of Israel. Naaman was at the top of his profession and well thought of, but he had leprosy. Now known as Hansen's disease, leprosy is an infection that is caused by a slow-growing bacteria called *Mycobacterium leprae*. It can affect the nerves, skin, eyes and lining of the nose. With early diagnosis and treatment, the disease can be cured and sufferers can continue to work and lead an active life during and after treatment. Leprosy was once feared as a highly contagious and devastating disease, but now we know that it doesn't spread easily and treatment is effective. However, if left untreated, the nerve damage can result in crippling of the hands and feet, paralysis and blindness. No wonder this disease was feared by the ancient world.

At the time of Naaman, and also of Jesus, sufferers had to isolate and the disease was often incorrectly diagnosed. Any dubious skin rash would be treated in a similar way. We can only imagine what life must have been like for Naaman and his family and how they must have feared for the future. But God had other plans. Our Bible reading tells us that 'bands from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife'. We're not told the young girl's name



or her age, but this unknown girl is a big player in our story. Her circumstances weren't ideal – imagine being taken away from your home and having to work as a slave in the house of one of your county's enemies. It would have been so easy for that little girl to have become embittered and to lose her faith and compassion. But she didn't. She remembered that Elisha, the prophet in her own country could work miracles and she cared enough about her master and mistress to speak out.

Naaman went to his boss, the king of Aram to ask for permission to travel to Israel. The king sent him off, with a huge payment to the king of Israel and a letter that said: 'With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy'. You can't help but feel sorry for the king of Israel, faced with such an impossible request, but nothing is impossible for God. Elisha the prophet knew about the situation and sent a message for Naaman to come to him. 'So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house'. Can you imagine the scene? I'm sure that Naaman expected Elisha to be impressed by all of this wealth and power, so he wasn't best pleased when a messenger came to him, not the great man himself, just a humble servant. What was worse, Naaman was told that he should 'Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed'. Furious, Naaman stormed away, but one of his servants persuaded him to try. After all, there was nothing to lose by doing 'whatever he tells you'. Naaman 'went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy'.

Our 2nd reading describes how Jesus appointed and sent out a group of 72 of his followers, 'two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go'. They had specific instructions that they were not to 'take a purse or bag or sandals' nor were they to 'greet anyone on the road'. They were to rely on the hospitality of those they went to. Their mission was to 'heal the sick who are there' and to tell them 'The kingdom of God is near you'. They were sent out with a warning: 'Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.' They were not to expect that everyone would want to listen to them, they could expect to be rejected, but when they were, they were simply to 'go out into its streets and say "Even the dust of your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. Yet be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near you."' St. Luke tells us that the 72 returned 'with joy'.

There are some interesting characters in our Bible readings today. I find it encouraging that the stories are not just about important people. We heard about an amazing prophet, an important military commander and two kings whose countries were frequently at war with each other. But the people who jump out at me in this story are Naaman's servant who had the courage to help his master to do what Elisha was saying and a little, nameless slave who cared enough to speak out. Then in the passage from St. Luke's Gospel, the emphasis is not on Jesus' ministry, nor even on the 12 disciples, but on 72 nameless 'others' who weren't part of his 'inner circle' but were still sent out 'two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was to go'. Jesus was just as excited as they were when they returned to tell him how they'd got on.

It's easy to think that we're not important, or that we don't have the right training, or that we haven't had much experience, or that we're only young or that we've only been following Jesus ourselves for a short time. It's easy to allow circumstances to

overwhelm us, to make us inward looking and to forget the needs of others. We each have something to say, however old or young we are in age or in faith. We can all learn from each other. If you were in church last week, you will have seen the lovely flags that the children made, but did you notice how little Daniel took his flag over to show to Dad Andy? Daniel knew that Dad would be interested and wouldn't send him away. Andy needed to play the drums for our final song, so he picked Daniel up and put him on his lap. Standing next to them, I could see how excited Daniel was in being able to share in what Andy was doing. It reminded me of how God loves and accepts us, of how God wants us to share with Him the things that we have been doing, of how much God loves to involve us in what He is doing in the world. It doesn't matter if we've been following Jesus all of our lives or if we've only just started, or even if we're still thinking about it. We can still share with others what we have learnt about the love of God and we don't necessarily have to use words. We might feel that the things that God is asking us to do, or the things that we do automatically out of love for others are small or insignificant, perhaps at times downright foolish, but they are not small or insignificant or foolish to God. They can be a powerful witness to others. It doesn't matter who you are, 'Do whatever he tells you'.

Peace is flowing like a river

Peace is flowing like a river,
Flowing out through you and me,
Spreading out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

*Let it flow through me,
Let it flow through me,
Let the mighty peace of God
Flow out through me.
Let it flow through me,
Let it flow through me,
Let the mighty peace of God
Flow out through me.*

Love is flowing ... (etc)
Joy is flowing ... (etc)
Faith is flowing ... (etc)
Hope is flowing ... (etc)

Prayers

Our Father in heaven, we are so glad that You are our Father and that Jesus in His teaching on prayer told us to address you as Father. Father, we give You thanks and praise. And so, we come to You in prayer knowing and trusting that You have a perfect father's love and care for us. And not only for us at St John's but for all in our community and city, nation and world for You want all to come unto You and be saved. As Naaman came from a different nation, culture and religion to Elisha and was healed and came to trust in You, so we pray that people from every nation, culture and religion will heed your call to come to You for healing and a relationship with You, their Father. As the servant girl told Naaman's wife of a prophet in Israel who healed, may we tell people of a loving God who heals. As Elisha followed You and as the seventy-two followed You, we pray that we will follow You and bring your love, light and healing to

people in our community and city from every nation, culture and religion. Father the harvest is plentiful. Let us respond to Your call to work in the harvest fields. Guide us in our labours.

In a moment of quiet we name before You those in St John's but also all those known to us of every nation, culture and religion those of all faiths and none who need Your healing, love, light and care and to know You as Father. We pray that like the servant girl, Elisha and the seventy-two we will bring Your light and Your living word to these people. We pray particularly for those who have come to our city for refugee that we will proclaim but also demonstrate to them Your love and peace and Your practical provision.

Revive us now, we pray. Fill us afresh with the breath of Your life-giving Spirit and let us revive our community and city through Your Holy Spirit. And please lead us to those seeking peace that we may bring Your peace to them. In the name of Jesus Christ. 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.

We want to see Jesus lifted high

We want to see Jesus lifted high,
A banner that flies across this land,
Then all men might see the truth and know
He is the way to heaven.

(Repeat)

*We want to see we want to see,
We want to see Jesus lifted high.
(Repeat)*

Step by step we're moving forward,
Little by little taking ground,
Every prayer, a powerful weapon,
Strongholds come tumbling
Down, and down, and down, and down.

*We gonna see we want to see,
We gonna see Jesus lifted high.
(Repeat)*

Closing prayer and Blessing

Now to him who is able to keep us from falling and to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, by the power which is at work among us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages. Amen.

May the love of the Lord Jesus draw us to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen us in his service,
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our hearts;
and may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be
among us and remain with us and with those we love this day and always. Amen.

Service prepared by Nina Lloyd-Hirst

Prayers prepared by John Dawson

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