

# St John's Church, Kingston Park

## Sunday Worship, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2021

(If you are worshipping with others, words for all to say together are in **bold type**.)

Welcome to worship with St John's Church, as we meet with our heavenly Father in our homes and in the church building. Our message today comes from Rob Germany, and we shall be thinking about living out our purpose in life.

### Gathering prayer

God is here, **his Spirit draws us near.**

God invites, **we respond through Jesus Christ.**

God welcomes home, **he embraces every one.**

God is with us, **in his presence we can rest.**

God reveals truth, **in his word we place our trust.**

God lights our way, **we will bring our thanks and praise.** (Sam Hargreaves)

We bring our praise to our Saviour, Jesus, in our first song.

### Song: You're the Word of God the Father (Across the Lands)

(This can be found on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVpkR4gYTlg> )

You're the Word of God the Father,  
From before the world began;  
Every star and every planet  
Has been fashioned by Your hand.  
All creation holds together  
By the power of Your voice:  
Let the skies declare Your glory,  
Let the land and seas rejoice!

*You're the Author of creation,  
You're the Lord of every man;  
And Your cry of love rings out  
Across the lands.*

(Keith Getty, Stuart Townend)

Yet You left the gaze of angels,  
Came to seek and save the lost,  
And exchanged the joy of heaven  
For the anguish of a cross.  
With a prayer You fed the hungry,  
With a word You stilled the sea.  
Yet how silently You suffered  
That the guilty may go free.

With a shout You rose victorious,  
Wresting victory from the grave,  
And ascended into heaven  
Leading captives in Your wake.  
Now You stand before the Father  
Interceding for Your own.  
From each tribe and tongue and nation  
You are leading sinners home.

### Praise

You made the stars in all their countless billions,  
and set each planet circling in its place,  
**And yet, you know each hair upon our heads.**

You hold the whole vast universe together; it can exist only by your will,  
**And yet, you care about each person here.**

You can hear the song of every bird, the harmony of every orchestra  
**And yet, you hear each whisper of a prayer.**

You are worshipped by heavenly beings,  
legions of angels exalt your Name,  
**And yet you want to hear our words of praise.**

Lord, we praise you for the love that reaches out to us,  
That calls to us before we think of You;  
The love that wants us all to be your children  
The love that led our Saviour to the cross.  
**We thank you, and we praise you,  
And we ask you now  
To help us all to love you more. Amen.**

## **Bible Readings**

### **1 Samuel 17:32-49 (NIV)**

<sup>32</sup> David said to Saul, 'Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.'

<sup>33</sup> Saul replied, 'You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.'

<sup>34</sup> But David said to Saul, 'Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, <sup>35</sup> I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. <sup>36</sup> Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. <sup>37</sup> The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.'

Saul said to David, 'Go, and the LORD be with you.'

<sup>38</sup> Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armour on him and a bronze helmet on his head. <sup>39</sup> David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them.

'I cannot go in these,' he said to Saul, 'because I am not used to them.' So he took them off. <sup>40</sup> Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield-bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. <sup>42</sup> He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. <sup>43</sup> He said to David, 'Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?' And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. <sup>44</sup> 'Come here,' he said, 'and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!'

<sup>45</sup> David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup> This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup> All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands.'

<sup>48</sup> As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly towards the battle line to meet him. <sup>49</sup> Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.

## **Mark 4: 35-41 (NIV)**

<sup>35</sup> That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, 'Let us go over to the other side.' <sup>36</sup> Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. <sup>37</sup> A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. <sup>38</sup> Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?'

<sup>39</sup> He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

<sup>40</sup> He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?'

<sup>41</sup> They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'

## **2 Corinthians 6:3-10 (NIV)**

<sup>3</sup> We put no stumbling-block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. <sup>4</sup> Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; <sup>5</sup> in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; <sup>6</sup> in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; <sup>7</sup> in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; <sup>8</sup> through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; <sup>9</sup> known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; <sup>10</sup> sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

## **Message (Rob Germany)**

If you are of a certain age then I am sure you will remember this little song: "Only a boy called David, only a rippling brook, only a boy called David..." and how many stones did he take? ... The story of David and Goliath is well known, to those within and without the church. It is the classic tale of a young man starting out in life and embracing his destiny. And from this momentous beginning he would go on, after much adversity, and many mistakes, to become Israel's most famous and greatest king.

And right from the start David establishes a new pattern of behaviour. He does not act as the world would have expected. He is offered the weapons and armour of Saul so that he can go out and meet Goliath as two fully armoured knights in single combat. But David discards this expected way of acting because he was not used to it. He was not comfortable with it. It was not him. Dressed like this he could not be true to himself.

It reminds me of the film "Chariots of Fire" when the British Olympic Authorities realised that to make Eric Liddell run on a Sunday would have been pointless: because in doing so it would have disconnected him from the source of his power, his faith. As Eric Liddell could not have been true to himself running in those circumstances, he could not have won.

So young David goes to meet Goliath in his own way with five little stones and trusting in his faith and own abilities... and the rest is history, as they say.

Have you ever had a numinous experience? By that I mean one of those occasions in life when something "sends a shiver down your spine", or you feel "the hairs standing up on the back of your neck". You are suddenly confronted with a sense of being in the presence of something so much greater than yourself: you feel small and insignificant and afraid in a slightly pleasant way. I remember when I moved to the country from the city seven years ago. I had forgotten how beautiful moonlight was. You cannot see it in the city because of all the street lighting. But walking one night in a beech wood with the luminescent silvery moonlight filtering down around me I was suddenly overwhelmed with a sense of ageless beauty. Now I understood why so many artists and composers had tried to capture the essence of moonlight in art and why in ancient times people had worshiped the moon as a goddess.

Our gospel reading is one of those numinous moments. Jesus, like David before him, was another young man setting out to embrace his destiny. He had been tempted by Satan in the wilderness, shrieked at by demons, criticized by the religious leaders of the day and now the natural elements rise up to destroy him. But in his own way he overcomes the crisis and the disciples are terrified by this experience. The poetic overtones of the story were not lost on his followers. The sea was an unknown and dangerous place full of monsters and giant creatures. It was an uncontrollable power to be feared. And yet, Jesus was lord over this mysterious realm as well. “Who was this man?”, was the obvious question the disciples asked, “that even the wind and waves obey him”. Jesus is continuing to set out his credentials as the anointed one, heir of David and son of God.

Both David and Jesus were spirit anointed and each had a destiny to fulfil. Both had their own way of doing things that the world did not expect. Both began from humble beginnings; one a shepherd boy and the other born in a stable. David achieved greatness despite his very human weaknesses. Jesus would conquer the world not through might but by self sacrifice.

I have always loved the poem called “The hound of heaven” by Francis Thompson. The writer describes how he spent his life running away from the thing that in his heart he actually desired and needed. I am sure these opening lines will be familiar to many:

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;  
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.  
Up vistaed hopes I sped;  
And shot, precipitated,  
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,  
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.  
But with unhurrying chase,  
And unperturbèd pace,  
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
They beat—and a Voice beat  
More instant than the Feet—  
'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.'

Wonderful poetry. These lines always remind me of Saint Paul whom I think in his heart was always destined to be a Christian. But unable to face this radical change in his life and faith, he fled from it and tried to convince himself that he wasn't by persecuting the Christian faith. ...Until he met Christ, face to face.

At long last he could be true to himself and embrace his own destiny as Christianity's greatest evangelist and teacher. Our NT reading today is an amazing testimony of his method of achieving this great goal. He did not just talk the talk, he walked the walk. And by his lifestyle, unending endurance and willingness to suffer all for those whom he loved he commended the faith to them.

As Christians, all of us have a destiny to fulfil in life. All of us have a cross to take up and all of us have a purpose to accomplish on a daily basis. Our bible readings today have given us three great examples to follow of individuals who would only achieve their greatness when they became true to themselves and did things their way and not necessarily as the world expected. David destroyed Goliath with five little stones. If he had approached Goliath in the armour of Saul he would have been destroyed. Jesus conquered the hearts of the world with the weapons of peace not war. If he had raised an army he would now be forgotten as just another Jewish insurrectionist. Paul became the great evangelist through the path of devoted suffering and service. If he'd founded a school of Philosophy he would now only be known to a few classical scholars.

If you want to achieve great things for Christ then here is our clue. Be yourself. Find your own inner strengths and abilities even if it often means going against how the world thinks. Be true to yourself and follow your calling from God. You are not called to be Jesus Christ and to save the world, but you are called to be on his team. Amen.

## Prayers

God our Father, your son Jesus spoke about life in all its fulness. We thank you that you know us completely, that you know what is best for each one of us, that you want each of us to be uniquely ourselves, with all the potential that you have given us. We thank you that you want our good, and that you have a purpose for each one of us. Thank you that you want us on your team.

So today, Father, we pray for those who may be struggling on the road, or unsure of the way.

We pray for those who are seeking a path in life. We ask that you will guide them, and we pray that they will find the opportunities and advice that they need.

We pray for young people who will be leaving school in the next few weeks, and those graduating from colleges and universities,

For those who have yet to find a job, and those whose work no longer exists because of the pandemic,

For all those looking to retrain,

For all who are considering Christian service of any kind,

For all who are seeking your will for their future

--and Lord, may we always be among those who seek your will for our lives.

We pray for those in situations where it's a struggle simply to live, because of war, hunger, poverty or disease. We think of parts of Ethiopia, where war has led to shortage of food and disrupted health services, and humanitarian workers and church leaders have been killed. We pray for South Sudan, for Congo, and Yemen, where conflict has again led to hunger. We think of India, Somalia, and many other countries, where there is a healthcare crisis because of COVID, and people are dying for lack of oxygen and necessary equipment. Lord, bring relief to those in need, and may those who might resolve these situations have the willingness and the wisdom to do so, as well as the resources.

We pray for those who are unwell, or in distress, especially those known to us. We pray for those receiving medical treatment or recovering from surgery at this time, and for all those who are worried about their loved ones and friends. We remember those whom we're concerned about today, and lift their names before you now, O Lord.

Father, surround them with your love, bring healing to minds and bodies, give comfort to those who are in distress, and assurance, courage and faith to those who fear what the future may hold.

We entrust all these people to your loving care, and commit our prayers to you, our heavenly Father, in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

We draw all our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**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.**

## **Song: Take my life.**

'Take my life' is Matt Osgood's re-working of the well-known hymn, 'Take my life and let it be'. You may want to listen on Youtube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2VnpsAPxiE>. or you may prefer simply to use the words as a prayer of commitment.

Take my life and let it be  
dedicated to your praise,  
Lord I freely give to you  
every moment of my days.

*I'm all yours,  
I'm all yours, my Lord  
all I am, every part.  
I'm all yours,  
I'm all yours, my Lord*

Take my hands to show your love  
for the broken and the lost  
guide my feet to follow Christ  
in the shadow of the cross.

*take my life,  
take my heart.*

Take my voice and let me sing,  
always only for my King.  
Take my lips and may they always  
bring you praise

Take the things that I possess  
I surrender all I own.  
Lord, I give my every thought  
to be ruled by Christ alone.

(Matt Osgood)

## **Closing prayers.**

Now to him who is able 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 God who is wisdom guide us in his ways,  
May the God who is all powerful give us strength for the days ahead,  
May the God who is love fill our hearts to overflowing,  
Today, tomorrow, and for ever. **Amen.**

*Service sheet prepared by Julie Horton. Message by Rob Germany.*

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