

Sunday 16 August 2020

By Rev. Sandra Mathers

Hymn:

I do not know what lies ahead,
the way I cannot see;
Yet one stands near to be my guide,
He'll show the way to me.

Chorus:

*I know who holds the future
And He'll guide me with His hand
With God things don't just happen,
everything by Him is planned
so as I face tomorrow,
with its problems large and small
I'll trust the God of miracles,
Give to Him my all.*

I do not know how many days
Of life are mine to spend;
But one who knows and cares for me
Will keep me to the end:
Chorus: I know who holds ...

I do not know the course ahead,
What joys and griefs are there
But one is near who fully knows,
I'll trust His loving care:
Chorus: I know who holds ...

Prayer of Approach to God:

Loving God, we bring you our thanksgiving for all your love, grace and mercy.. Forgive us for all that separates us from you and others. We thank you for your promise that whatever happens in our lives you are with us – the God of all faithfulness. Amen

Scripture Reading:

Psalm 18:1-3; John 14:23-27

Reflection:

The Psalmist is thinking on his relationship with God during the time when he was a fugitive. He remembers the danger to his life but also God's deliverance and describes God as a rock, a fortress, deliverer, a shield and a stronghold.

Do we think on God as OUR rock, our fortress? Have we proved Him as our Deliverer – or not? When David was being hunted can you imagine the stress he was under? God didn't send the troops home. What He did was deliver David from his enemies. He proved His faithfulness IN David's problems. I pray that you too know God's power and enabling with you as you look to Him in faith and love.

Prayer for Ourselves & Others:

We pray Lord for all who are going through a time of difficulty, of stress and strain, and ask that they may know your loving, caring presence with them as David did. Help them to look to you their Rock, their Fortress and their Deliverer.

The Lord's Prayer:

Close with the Lord's Prayer

Sunday 23 August 2020

Rev. Monica Macdonald

HYMN: CH4 550

As the deer pants for the water
So my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship you.

Chorus:

*You alone are my strength, my shield
To you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship you.*

I want you more than gold or silver;
Only you can satisfy.

You alone are the real joy-giver,
And the apple of my eye.

You alone are my.....

You're my friend and you are my brother,
Even though you are a King.
I love you more than any other,
So much more than anything.

You alone are my.....

Prayer of Approach to God:

Almighty and most wonderful God....
God of history and the God of the present...
We thank you that you know us each by name,
and that your love encompasses us all.
Grant us your living presence today
as we join our hearts in worship
with Christians across the globe.
In Jesus Name we pray. Amen

Bible Reading:

Isaiah 6: 1 – 8

Reflection:

The Lord calls Isaiah. Immediately we see his eager confession: "I am a man of unclean lips" 6 vs 5, and then we find his unconditional willingness to obedience when God commanded him - "I'll go Lord, send me" he says. It is simply amazing to see how Isaiah is aware of the Spirit of God right in the middle of the nation's grief over the death of their king. This relates so well to personal experience of loss when we seldom have the strength to put one foot in front of another. Leaning on God, experiencing His presence is often just not in the picture in a time of crisis. Isaiah found peace in the presence of God. Are we able to find peace in the middle of unspeakable grief and turmoil? How do we use our faith, for surely it is our faith that sustains us at times like this? Our example comes from God's servant Isaiah – his unwavering faith in God sustained him and gave him courage to follow God's call on his life.

Prayer for others:

Gracious and loving God, we pray that you will reach out to our broken and bleeding world and bind up its wounds... that you will reach out to the many thousands who are hurting at this time and bring them the comfort of your living presence.

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing:

God we worship is our strength and our song
He is our hope and our joy...
May his blessing remain on you – today and always. Amen

Sunday 30 August 2020

Rev. Debbie van Welie

HYMN: CH4 187

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in Heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of our mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind

If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord..

Prayer of Approach to God:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the beauty of the biblical truth: that it is because of Your unshakeable love for us, that we can come to You and are received and welcomed by You, even though we let Your will be drowned out by ours, in so many ways, and so turn away from You, so often. Amen

Readings: Isaiah 65:2; Romans 10:21

Reflection:

Reading the words, *'I spread out my hands, to a rebellious people...'* we can sense God's suffering that comes with reaching His hands out to us. He simply cannot stop doing it. Isn't that strange...the order we see here?

Instead of insisting that we first to spread our hands to Him, *so that* He can take them and so lead us, He first spreads His hands to us, despite the reality that, over and over again, He finds closed hands that, at times can even be fists...and so God continues to suffer. It illustrates the biblical truth that God *first* loved us. It is because of God's unwavering love that His suffering is ongoing. Yet, He remains who He is: our Lord God, who does not let go what His hand began, who doesn't give up on us, but instead, is and remains the Lord who makes new beginnings. This God is the God whom we see on the cross, in His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose love is sweeter than honey and stronger than a lion (Judges 14:18) and, as shown in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, is stronger than death.

Prayer of Intercession:

Heavenly Father, we pray for Your world, for those who suffer in so many ways. That they may feel Your presence, through the hands of Your helpers, who try to soothe pain, try to heal, do what they can to make things better. Help them to help, Lord, that they, through the strength of Your Love, may bring hope where that is so needed. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing:

The peace of God, which is beyond all understanding, guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Amen

Sunday 6 September 2020

By Rev. Debbie van Welie

Hymn: CH4 251

I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save
I who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Chorus:

Here I am, Lord

Is it I, Lord?

I have heard You calling in the night

I will go, Lord

If You lead me

I will hold Your people in my heart

I, the Lord of snow and rain
I have borne my people's pain
I have wept for love of them
They turn away
I will break their hearts of stone
Give them hearts for love alone
I will speak my words to them
Whom shall I send?

Chorus: Here I am, Lord

Prayer of Approach to God:

Gracious God, we thank You for Your unshakable love and Your desire to let it shine through us, in our thoughts, words and deeds. Help us to let Your love shape what we think, say and do. Amen

Scripture Readings:

Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 49:1
& Galatians 1:15

Reflection:

The Galatians receive a letter from Paul. Would they not be excited...expecting to hear all about how Paul changed from being a persecutor of followers of Jesus Christ, into an apostle..? A complete transformation! But that is not what Paul writes about. He does not give details of how or when that happened. Instead, He is speaking about the One who called him; the One who, in His own mysterious way, made the change happen within Paul. Paul speaks about God, who had set him apart before he was born, as He did with Jeremiah and Isaiah. We are not called to understand how God does what He does; how He creates, recreates, renews... We are called to believe *that* He is who He is, *'I am who I am'* (Exodus 3:14), who does what He does His ways, ways that are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:9).

Prayer of Intercession:

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are who You are, in Your mysterious ways. We pray for all Your children who suffer, in so many different ways, that Your comfort and peace may be felt by them, giving them hope in their darkness. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing:

Find your strength in the Lord, in His mighty power. And the blessing of God Almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you. Amen