



**Chet Valley Churches**  
**Last Sunday Praise**  
**26 July 2020**



# Welcome

Welcome to Last Sunday Praise. In this file you will find links to the songs we have chosen for our worship. Click on the links to take you to each song.

While we are now able to meet in church for worship, we are not allowed to sing – so for the time being Last Sunday Praise will remain in this format.

## Introduction

Our theme for this service is ‘Grace, Mercy and Peace’. It’s a phrase we often use but rarely stop to unpack in detail. So let’s take some time to praise and worship God, starting with some worship songs that may be familiar to you.

*♪♪ All the songs link to YouTube. Just click with your mouse on the link, which will take you to a song with on-screen words. You may have to skip a few YouTube adverts.*

### ♪♪ Lord I come to you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ga6Qtxzd6vk>

### ♪♪ I stand amazed in the presence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J88mTp9SdNI>

### ♪♪ I stand in awe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BLNNykAicQ>

## **Pause for thought, and prayer...**

The attributes of God are far too vast for us to ‘understand’, even while we come to worship and praise him. His greatness and power would be terrifying if it were not for his grace and mercy. And yet, his grace and mercy are only possible because of his power.

The prayer for today (the Collect) gives us a moment to pause. Each Sunday there is a longer and shorter Collect that relates to the theme of the day. Here we’re using the longer one, which talks about God’s power as well as his mercy.

*Perhaps you might read the prayer aloud, line by line, stopping to think about each line as you do so.*

## **The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day**

Lord of all power and might,  
the author and giver of all good things:  
graft in our hearts the love of your name,  
increase in us true religion,  
nourish us with all goodness,  
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**♪♪ Amazing grace – my chains are gone**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbe7OruLk8I>

## ♪♪ Meekness and majesty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tKIhQpacs8>

## ♪♪ There is a hope

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_yv5yGZnBc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_yv5yGZnBc)

## Pause for thought, and prayer...

As we recognise the power of the love of Christ in our lives, we worship him. Let us reach out to those around us within our own communities and from far away, to share the strength of that love. Let us have the courage to show and tell people that we have a great and mighty God who offers the peace that so many are seeking, and the mercy that sets us free.

*Perhaps you might like to ponder the following prayer that is attributed to St Catherine of Siena.*

## A prayer for this time

Merciful Lord,

it does not surprise me that you forget completely the sins of those who repent.

I am not surprised that you remain faithful to those who hate and revile you.

The mercy which pours forth from you fills the whole world.

It was by your mercy that we were created, and by your mercy that you redeemed us by sending your Son.

Your mercy is the light in which sinners find you and good people come back to you.

Your justice is constantly tempered with mercy, so you refuse to punish us as we deserve.

## ♪♪ **Great is thy faithfulness**

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

## ♪♪ **My hope is built on nothing less**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvLxZEU02uI>

## **Talk**

*David Owen has written this reflection.*

When was the last time you wrote a letter? Perhaps it was only earlier today or it may have been several weeks ago, or even "What's a letter?" – well maybe not quite as brazen as that!

But letters are fascinating things. In sorting out my mother's effects I've come across numerous letters. Some of them are of historic importance – well to us as a family anyway – while others are very much of a personal nature. There are those where only a fragment exists and one is left puzzling as to what the purpose of the letter might have been. One of the greatest frustrations I have experienced whilst looking at or reading these letters has come when there is no indication to whom the letter has been written, or when, or from whom! Clearly the letter-writer knew; hopefully the recipient knew!

I've often mentioned that I corresponded by letter with my mother most weeks for over 40 years. And amongst her papers are a significant number of those letters. Looking back at them they cover a whole range of situations. My first letter on arriving in College, my letter telling her and my father of Nina's and my engagement, the last letter I wrote to her before she died (it arrived the morning after!)

In each of those letters there are a couple of constants. The opening and the ending.

How we address the recipient of a letter (or email – if the recipient of an email is addressed at all) was once determined by convention and by the familiarity between the writer and recipient. Maybe it still is.

Certain phrases trip off the tongue, and one such for me was the biblical expression "grace, mercy and peace..." I knew it as an opening phrase of Paul's letters but it took me a little by surprise to discover that he only uses it twice! And then to the same person. To Timothy. Both letters written to Timothy have this phrase. In 1 Timothy 1.2 it says "To Timothy, my loyal child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." And in 2 Timothy 1.2 we read "To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord."

In all his other letters, even those called his pastoral letters, Paul misses out "mercy".

What then of these three words?

**GRACE:** Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, begins John Newton's hymn. Grace an undeserved free gift. It is shown by God to the people of Israel. In the New Testament it is used to express the free nature of what Christ has done for all humanity in taking upon himself those aspects of our life which separate us from each other and from God – our sins. The divine love and initiative shows God offering reconciliation to a wayward world, which in its own strength could do nothing to achieve that reconciliation.

**MERCY:**

The quality of mercy is not strained.  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:  
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The thronèd monarch better than his crown.  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above this sceptred sway.  
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings;  
It is an attribute to God Himself;

And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this:  
That in the course of justice none of us  
Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea,  
Which, if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant  
there."

That's possibly the most well-known speech in drama about Mercy. It is spoken by Portia in Act 4, scene 1 of Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice'.

The concept of mercy being twice blessed is that it is two ways. The giver and recipient both benefit from its largesse.

**PEACE:** The Hebrew 'Shalom'. The Greek word used most often can also refer to reconciliation or safety. Security and harmony come together in this word.

So why use these as the opening of a letter to a young Christian? I'm sure it is to highlight that this young leader of the Christian church is held in the love of his mentor, Paul, but also in the gracious, merciful and secure arms of God.

We too can greet each other in similar ways, sharing the security of God's love and recognising that we can trust in the One who has 'saved a wretch like me!'

## ♪♪ **You give rest to the weary**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SGJlZvl8PJM>

## **Time for prayer...**

Let's take time to pray for:

- The leaders and decision-makers of our nation as we seek a safe, viable way out of social and economic lockdown
- Other countries of the world facing the same dilemma
- The leaders and decision-makers of the church seeking a way forward that embraces all that we have learned during the closure of the buildings
- People we know who are ill, either with the coronavirus or other ailments that haven't hit the news bulletins
- Justice for people who are repressed by others
- Our own contribution to the wellbeing of our world

*Listen to this song recorded by Norwich Central Baptist Church and just think quietly about the words*

## ♪♪ **Here is love vast as the ocean**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8YOPj5TnUM>

*You might want to pray aloud the prayer that Jesus taught his first disciples. Use whatever version or language you wish!*

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as it is 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.

♪♪ **How deep the Father's love for us**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjDh4yuil9w>

♪♪ **Men of faith rise up and sing**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUei3JMg2uA>

♪♪ **And can it be...**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tu2uA6U4Fwg>

## **A blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.  
Amen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiWZXLsdE9w>