

9th July, 2023

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe,

light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.



The Good Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song: Christ our hope in life and death

What is our hope in life and death?

Christ alone, Christ alone

What is our only confidence?

That our souls to Him belong

Who holds our days within His hand?

What comes, apart from His command?

And what will keep us 'til the end?

The love of Christ, in which we stand

O sing hallelujah!

Our hope springs eternal

O sing hallelujah!

Now and ever we confess

Christ our hope in life and death

O sing hallelujah!

O sing hallelujah!

O sing hallelujah!

Our hope springs eternal

What truth can calm the troubled soul?

God is good, our God is good

Where is His grace and goodness known?

In our great Redeemer's blood

Who holds our faith when fears arise?

Who stands above the stormy trial?

Who sends the waves that bring us nigh

Unto the shore, the rock of Christ?

Unto the grave, what shall we sing?

"Christ, He lives; Christ, He lives!"

And what reward will heaven bring?

Everlasting life with Him

There we will rise to meet the Lord

Then sin and death will be destroyed

And we will feast in endless joy

When Christ is ours forevermore

O sing hallelujah!

Our hope springs eternal.

The Sermon by Roy Lewis.

The King's offer. Isaiah 55:6-13, Matthew 7:7-12.

Isaiah urges us to "Seek the Lord...call on Him while He is near.....forsake evil ways.....Turn to the Lord".

Matthew engages in a similar way calling us to "Ask of God; to seek Him, and to knock at His door" - then discover His generous response.

We are encouraged to ask of God and receive from Him; to discover the joy of receiving good things from Him for those who ask Him.

Ask and receive! So often we have done this, and God has wonderfully responded to us then we return to Him with our thanks for hearing us and answering our prayers. Hallelujah!

BUT – and this is a serious question: have you always received from God what you asked Him for? Are there times when it appears God has not heard you, or if He has, then He has not granted your request, although here it suggests He would?

Have you, like me prayed for family, friends, fellow parishioners who have become seriously ill – BUT, it seems God has not answered our prayers?

How I have struggled with these words of Jesus, when I've really believed He, the loving Lord WOULD hear me and give what I asked for; did He really let me down?

This is a serious question, to which there must be an answer.

I think that over the years I have missed something here; Matthew in the Beatitudes repeatedly uses the word, Blessed. You will find many suggestions as to the meaning of this word in the Bible. Over 50 years ago I spent a year at Bible School, and I recall our Principal telling us it means "Oh the happiness of!" Today people talk about their "Happy Place!" Maybe Jesus is saying here that if we live the life He calls us to live – however hard it may be, we will find that continuing Happy Place of being Blessed by Him.

In this discourse which Jesus spoke while He sat outdoors, he uses another word, even more frequently than Blessed. It is Father, or more

accurately Your Father. He actually uses this 15 times while blessed is used only nine times in the Sermon on the Mount.

He is talking about the disciples discovering that not only was God the Father of Jesus, but also of those who were His followers.

As I have been preparing to write this summary I realised that Matthew 7 is not a shopping list of the things we want; it is a process by which we come to know God more fully and discover the reality that God is the Father of all who believe in Him and in His Son, Jesus Christ.

We ask of Him - our Father; we seek Him, and we knock on His door. A process of Faith in which we are not merely asking for things, but we are coming to know God for ourselves: "MY Father!"

Jesus then talked about human parenting, and knowing how to give good gifts to our children; not simply giving them what they ask for, but giving them good things – the best.

So much more with God.

We come to Him; we ask of Him; we continue and knock at His door, knowing He is our Father; He loves us. He will give to us what He knows we need and what will be in our best interest.

It is not asking God for what we would like Him to give to us, but coming to know Him, trust Him and realise that He, as our heavenly Father will give to us what He knows we need, and will be for our good.

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.

Collect: Fifth Sunday after Trinity: Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed.19th July at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 26th July at 11am in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise TBA.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays.
- COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.