

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – PASSION SUNDAY

29th March 2020

A short act of worship for use in people's homes while churches are closed.

A free resource funded by **twelvebaskets**.

For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

### Prayer

Breathe in the Love of God our Father;

Breathe out and give to God your fears.

Breathe in our hope in Christ;

Breathe out and give to God your anxieties.

Breathe in the strength of the Holy Spirit:

Breathe out and give to God all that you cannot control.

Today with people around the world, we gather to worship, knowing God is with us always.

Amen<sup>1</sup>

**Hymn** – Praise my soul the King of Heaven - <https://youtu.be/KkWyBc0bSsl>

OR <https://www.smallchurchmusic.com/MP3/MP3-PraiseMySoul-Organ-128-CAM.mp3>

Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;

To His feet thy tribute bring.

Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,

Who like thee His praise should sing

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for His grace and favour

To his people in distress.

Praise Him still the same for ever,

Slow to chide, and swift to bless

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Glorious in His faithfulness.

Father-like He tends and spares us;

Well our feeble frame He knows.

In His hands He gently bears us,

Rescues us from all our foes.

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Widely as His mercy flows.

Angels in the height adore Him

Ye behold Him face to face;

Sun and moon, bow down before Him,

Dwellers all in time and space.

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise with us the God of grace.

## Prayer

Gentle, yet mighty;

Lowly, yet almighty;

Refugee, yet King.

In your power, strengthen us.

In your gentleness, guide us.

In your lowliness take away our selfish pride.

In your grace, forgive us.

In your majesty lift us up so that others might see you in your full glory. Amen <sup>2</sup>

## Say the Lord's Prayer

Reading – Ezekiel 37: 1-14 - <https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/suchet/nivuk/Ezek.37>

**Play to 2:48 only.**

**37** <sup>1</sup>The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup>He led me to and fro among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. <sup>3</sup>He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know."

<sup>4</sup>Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! <sup>5</sup>This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. <sup>6</sup>I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'"

<sup>7</sup>So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. <sup>8</sup>I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

<sup>9</sup>Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" <sup>10</sup>So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.

<sup>11</sup>Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' <sup>12</sup>Therefore prophecy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup>Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. <sup>14</sup>I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'"

## Reflection

The reading from Ezekiel is one of the set readings for today. My first thought was that given the current situation around the world, I should keep well clear of this reading. But then I read what Christine Odell had written for us in this week's Vine.

...“the Valley of Dry Bones” is not a good place to visit. It is a place whose dryness sucks the hope from us. It is a place of despair. It is a place we may encounter on our spiritual journey through life, but one we would rather avoid... God entrusts Ezekiel with a prophecy that is a promise...they shall live. The Word of God spoken through his prophet will make it happen.

The Bible speaks to our imaginations as it describes what happens as Ezekiel prophesies... Ezekiel is told to proclaim God's Word again, by calling to the wind. There is a very close link in the Old Testament between the words wind, breath, spirit, word and Yahweh, the name for God. Ezekiel prophesies that this is the Word of God for his people, too. They may feel cut off from their life in the dry spiritual desert of Exile, but God will breathe his spirit into them, give them new life and bring them home...”

The very fact that you are reading this is a reminder that we are all in what can feel like a spiritual desert. This is not how we do church. This is not what we do on Sunday. This is not a good place for us. Yet even here God is with us.

Lent has always been a time of reflection, of preparing for a new way, a post resurrection way. The Jesus way is full of hope and calls us, as God called Ezekiel to play our part in seeking and building God's kingdom.

I truly believe that in the midst of all that is going on, when so much of what we thought was important is currently not available, we are being called to look again, to seek God's way for this coming age and to ask what my new role in all of this is.

So may you all know the hand of the Lord upon you in these troubled times, may the love of Jesus fill you with hope and words of grace, and may the spirit of the Lord be upon you and lead you ever closer. Amen <sup>3</sup>

**Song** – My hands in yours - <https://youtu.be/NKeyvH9hAkc>

When all around's falling down, and life lacks clarity  
I will look to You, my Friend, and hold Your hand.  
When the road ahead's unclear and chaos seems to swirl  
I will run the race, My Friend, my hand in Yours

### CHORUS

*I'll follow justice alone, seeking your holiness  
Through grace my life's been changed, my hand in Yours x2*

When one neighbour has no food, another fills his plate,  
I will look to you, my Friend, what would You do?  
When so many have so much, and others struggle by,  
I will give myself to You, my hands are Yours. <sup>4</sup>

## CHORUS

### **Intercessions**

Gracious God, I come to you with all my troubles and burdens...  
I call to mind all that has been on my heart this week...  
My friends, family and neighbours...  
Those who have served me, supported and helped me...  
Those who I might never meet yet are there in the caring professions if needed...  
I pray for those who are struggling with their new situation...  
I pray for myself as I look for a new rhythm, a new purpose, a new daily routine.

Grant me dear Lord your strength in these troubled times.  
For I offer you these prayers alongside all who pray them with me today, in the name of  
Jesus, friend, Saviour and guide. Amen.<sup>5</sup>

### **Blessing**

God of the wilderness places, journey with us I pray.  
Inspire and uplift each one of us, to see your kingdom come, your will be done, in this  
place and throughout your world. Amen.<sup>6</sup>

1 Prayers by Wayne Grewcock

2 Prayers by Matthew Forsyth

3 Reflection by Wayne Grewcock and Christine Odell

4 Song by Matt Beckingham

5 Intercessions by Wayne Grewcock

6 Blessing by Tim Baker