

7th February 2021 6 pm Healing and Refreshing: Our Heavenly Father's Love

Led by Ann Gibbons. Meditation and prayers by Lynda Howells

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Introduction

[Ann Gibbons:]

Hello, and welcome to this healing and refreshing service, Sundays at 6 at St. John's Church, Kenilworth. I'm Ann, and with Lynda we will be leading you through this time together. Our theme tonight is the Father's love, our Heavenly Father's love. And we have more songs to sing.

To begin our service this evening, we pray a prayer that the Church of England Archbishops have called us to pray for our nation at 6pm each day¹, starting from the first of February. So we pray.

Loving God. At this time of crisis, when so many are suffering, we pray for our nation and our world. Give our leaders wisdom, our Health Service strength, and our people hope. Lead us through these parched and difficult days to the fresh springs of joy and comfort that we find in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And Lord, we pray for Your guidance this evening, that we can be open to You, meet with You and learn more of Your love for us. Amen.

Song: Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven

We begin with a hymn of praise, *Praise my Soul, the King of Heaven*. And after this, Lynda will bring her meditation.

1. Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to His feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like me His praise should sing.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise the everlasting King!

2. Praise Him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress.
Praise him, still the same for ever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Glorious in His faithfulness!

1 <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/PftN%20Booklet%20single%20pages.pdf> – prayer for Sunday

3. 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!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Widely as His mercy flows!

4. Angels, help us to 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 Him! Praise Him!
Praise with us the God of grace!

Meditation: With love from your Heavenly Father

[Lynda:]

Come unto Me, all who are tired and heavy laden, and I will refresh you.²

Love. Love, what does this word mean to you? Does it made you feel happy, sad, regretful for what might have been, angry, resentful for what others seem to have and you don't? Love is not weak or mushy. To love takes strength and courage and at times positive decisions to let go of our prejudice, our ideas of what is right and wrong, and to look at others through the eyes of Jesus, and to love as He loves, with compassion the homeless, those who we are quick to judge for their lifestyle, who choose to live a different way to what we think they should, but equally loved by Father God.

Love is powerful. Sharing love can give the lost hope. So many feel unworthy, unloved, helpless, drowning with no hope, no purpose. To share God's message of love to them through our words, and in practical ways, can free them, release them to live lives very blessed by the love of God for them. What can we do? Do we love more? Care more? Express love? Share Love? Love. To love we may have to make ourselves vulnerable. "Love, true love." What does this mean? Think about it. "Love, true love." Keeping the flame alive? Same old, same old? The Bible tells us, "Love is patient, love is kind, does not envy, does not boast. It is not proud, it is not rude. It is not self-seeking. It is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices always with the truth. Love always protects always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails." Love never fails. Think about those you love. There's nothing you wouldn't do for them. You want to make everything right for them, to protect them and guide them, take away their sad times, make everything better, to be by their side when they're hurting, scared. Maybe life has hit them, taking them down a different path, a path they don't want or expect. And they are lost. Their pain is your pain.

This is how your Heavenly Father loves you, only you. He's perfect. And so is his love, no hidden agenda or ulterior motives. So if we, who are sinful, to know the depths of true love, which can be so painful for us, think about how much more powerful is our Heavenly Father's love for us. He who is perfect loves us and also feels our pain. "My children, let me into your lives, every part, to guide you, to protect you, to watch over you and to lead you along the paths which are right for you. Trust Me. Trust Me, even when you don't understand. My ways are not your ways. But trust Me. Trust Me with your lives with everything. I will not fail you or let you down." God loves and cares for you more than you can ever imagine.

God's Word for you is to receive for yourself from your loving Heavenly Father His love for you, and to know that each one of you is His beloved child. As babies open their mouths to receive food in utter and total trust, open your hearts, your minds, every part of your beings. Good Parts, bad parts are secrets hidden deep within you. Those secrets that only you know. Open them to receive

2 Matthew 11:28, no particular translation

God's love for you. God's love for you never runs out. "Be still and know that I am God. I am your Heavenly Father who loves you. I'm here with you now. Let me into your lives, every part of your mind, your body, your spirit, breathe new life into you, to bring healing and hope to every part of your being. I love you, and as any parent wants their children to flee the nest, to let go the apron strings, I want you to fly. But take me in your hearts to give you courage and hope, as we journey together. Rest in My love for you and Trust me. I will never fail you. With my love, Your Father." Amen.

Meditation Video





Song: *The power of your love*

We're going to sing again now, *Lord, I come to you, The Power of your Love.*

1. Lord, I come to You;
Let my heart be changed, renewed
Flowing from the grace
That I found in You.
Lord, I've come to know
The weaknesses I see in me
Will be stripped away
By the power of Your love.

Chorus:

Hold me close
Let Your love surround me
Bring me near
Draw me to Your side
And as I wait
I'll rise up like the eagle
And I will soar with You
Your Spirit leads me on
In the power of Your love

2. Lord, unveil my eyes
Let me see You face to face
The knowledge of Your love
As You live in me.
Lord, renew my mind
As Your will unfolds in my life
In living every day
By the power of Your love.

Chorus x 2

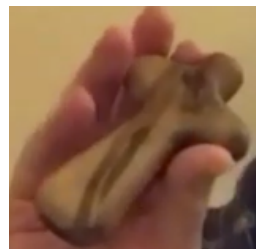
Short talk: The Rhythm of Grace

[Ann:]

As Lynda quoted in her meditation from Matthew 11, verse 28, God says, "Come to me, all who are tired and heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Our Heavenly Father's love is unconditional, non-forcing, special to us, as individuals and as a congregation. It may sometimes challenge us. But it always encompasses us. The arms of God fold around us, in all situations. His love is pure and precious, because as Heavenly Father, He is the perfect father, and in Him, His love is revealed through Jesus. And one day He will wipe all the tears from our eyes.

This month's theme brings us back to basics: the Father's love. Just a few points. God's love is not given because of what we have done for Him, but what He has done for us. We love because He first loved us. In worship, God communicates with us. He comes in by our invitation. We open our hearts, and He will come through. In worship we demonstrate and develop trust in him.

How do you see God, His love? We are not working to be saved, but working because we are saved. Again in Matthew 11, the rhythm of grace: worship first, work second. Praise God for who He is. In worship, we are saved from self-centredness. A few weeks ago during a service when Val was preaching, she showed us some holding crosses that she was making from some cherry wood. I'll just hold up one of my crosses. This isn't one that Val has made, but it shows you. She explained at the time how long it has taken to actually mould it into shape, and to taking care to get the wood smooth enough so that you could hold it in your hand, either putting your fingers around it, or holding it in the palm of your hand.



And now I'll show you another cross, which Peter, a member of our church, made. And if we look at it from this angle, it is plain. And maybe we can feel sometimes that God has turned his back on us.



But when we see it properly and turn it round, we see the careful carving, time taken again to make something new, and the heart, the blood of Jesus, His Son poured out for us on the Cross. Jesus took all our sin upon Himself that we could know the real, true love that his Father had for us. And He raised Jesus from the dead, to be at His Father's right-hand side, and also gave us the Holy Spirit, the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the three in one.



Such love. We are now going to sing about this love. *How deep the Father's love for us.*

Song: How deep the Father's love for us

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| <p>1. How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss;
The Father turns His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.</p> <p>2. Behold the man upon a cross
My sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life;
I know that it is finished.</p> | <p>3. I will not boast in anything,
No gifts, no power, no wisdom,
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer,
But this I know with all my heart:
His wounds have paid my ransom.</p> <p>Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer,
But this I know with all my heart:
His wounds have paid my ransom.</p> |
|--|---|

Intercessions

[Lynda:]

Before we pray, I just want to share something with you. In one of my Bible readings this week from Jeff Lucas, he said, "Let just remember that we share our lives with our Lord through our prayers." And I thought that was just a little gentle reminder, so precious. So now as we come to prayer, as I've said before, normally at our Healing and Refreshing services in the church, Ann and I offer to pray for you, with you. And as this cannot happen at the moment, there will be an opportunity for you in this prayer time to ask your Heavenly Father for help. Whatever you need, just tell Him one-to-one, what's on your mind.

Be still, and know that I am God.³

"I am here for you to listen to you and to be with you always."⁴

We thank You, Father, we can come to you with our worries, our fears, our thanks, in fact everything, and You listen. We pray for everyone affected by the pandemic in whatever way. Lord, into their situations and their pain, we ask your Holy Spirit to go and rest among them to bless them with the power of Your love and peace.
Lord in your mercy.
hear our prayer.

The following is a prayer from the Church of England website, *Prayer for the Nation*.

We lift to God those we hold in our hearts, praying for their health, their well-being and their sense of hope. We pray that even when loved ones cannot physically be together, they would not feel apart. We ask for God's help in our communicating, our connecting, and our caring.
Lord in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

3 Psalm 46:10

4 "With you always" – Matthew 28:20

We pray for everyone in isolation, feeling the loss and the pain of not being able to be with family and friends. Lord into their pain, we ask Your Holy Spirit to go and rest among them. Please bless them with the power of Your love.

Lord in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for our schools, the teachers, the cleaners, the carers, school caretakers, all who work in the kitchens, everyone involved who works to provide and support education for our youngsters. Keep them safe from fear of the virus we pray. Lord into their concerns, we ask Your Holy Spirit to go and rest amongst them and to minister to them. Bless them please with the power of Your love.

Lord in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for children, our teenagers, and our youngsters living through these difficult times. Also for their parents and all who have responsibility for them. Release them please, from any concerns they may be experiencing. Lord, into their worries and anxieties, we ask Your Holy Spirit to go and rest amongst them. Bless them please, with the power of Your love.

Lord in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the future relationship of our country with Europe, especially after Brexit. Father God, may Your will be done. Guide us please as to new ways of working and trading together. Lord into the unknown future we ask Your Holy Spirit to go and rest amongst those and bless them with the power of Your love.

Lord in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We bring to You Your family all over the world, especially those living in poverty and fear of persecution. Father, into their lives, we ask Your Holy Spirit to go and rest amongst them and to minister to them. Please bless them with the power of Your love.

Lord in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Father God, we thank you for those we hold in our hearts, for who we love. We pray for their well-being, and sense of hope. Lord, we pray that your Holy Spirit would go and rest amongst them, as a reminder of our love and Your love for them. Lord in

Lord in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

There will now be a moment of quiet for you to talk to your Heavenly Father, telling Him whatever is on your hearts.

Amen. We thank You for everyone who is involved in finding the vaccines to combat COVID. And we pray for a fair share and equal distribution of the vaccine to all who need it.

Lord in Your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Ann and I pray for you all watching this service, that you will be refreshed and renewed, to know how much you are loved by Father God.

Lord into any darkness, there may be in our lives, please shine Your light of love, joy, hope and peace, and fill us afresh with courage and wisdom, security of knowing our Heavenly Father's love. And we thank You, Father, that as the sun rising and setting day by day is constant, so Your loving care for each one of us is constant and never, ever changes. Amen.

Song: Before the Throne of God Above

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| <p>1. Before the throne of God above
I have a strong and perfect plea,
A great High Priest whose name is Love,
Who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
My name is written on His heart;
I know that while in heav'n He stands
No tongue can bid me thence depart,
No tongue can bid me thence depart.</p> | <p>2. When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Saviour died,
My sinful soul is counted free;
For God the Just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me,
To look on Him and pardon me.</p> |
| <p>3. Behold Him there! The risen Lamb,
My perfect, spotless righteousness;
The great unchangeable "I AM,"
The King of glory and of grace!
One with Himself I cannot die,
My soul is purchased by His blood;
My life is hid with Christ on high,
With Christ, my Saviour and my God,
With Christ, my Saviour and my God.</p> | |

Conclusion

[Ann:]

Our service is coming to an end shortly. There is a verse in Paul's letter to the Ephesians chapter 3, that says, when we come to truly know God's love for us, through faith, we can...

grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, **19** [...] that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

It goes on:

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

So thank you for being with us. It's always special to be together. We end our time tonight with a special blessing: a recording via YouTube that became very well-known during this pandemic and sung by many people from different churches. It's called the *UK blessing* and entitled, *He is for you*. We thought you would enjoy seeing this again and please remember that this is for you. Be blessed by the Father's love, and that He is for you. Amen.

Song: The Blessing

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|---|---|
| <p>1. The Lord bless you
And keep you
Make his face shine upon you
And be gracious to you
The Lord turn His face towards you
And give you peace</p> | <p><i>Repeat verse 1</i></p> <p><i>Chorus:</i>
Amen
Amen
Amen</p> |
|---|---|

Repeat chorus

Repeat verse 1

Chorus x 2

Bridge 1:

May His favour be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family
And your children
And their children
And their children

Repeat Bridge 1 three times

Bridge 2:

May His presence go before you
And behind you, and beside you
All around you
And within you
He is with you
He is with you

Bridge 3:

In the morning, in the evening
In your coming, and your going
In your weeping
And rejoicing
He is for you
He is for you

He is for you
He is for you
He is for you
He is for you

Amen
Amen
Amen

Amen
Amen
Amen

Repeat bridges 1, 2, 3

He is for you
He is for you
He is for you
He is for you

[Text on screen at end:]

**OUR BUILDINGS MAY BE CLOSED
BUT THE CHURCH IS ALIVE**

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

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