



Sunday 19th July 2020

Notes from our Sunday Morning
Pre-recorded Worship

Song

Sing And Shout

Verse 1

Your cross Your cross it draws me to Your heart
It makes my spirit sing it makes my spirit sing
Your grace Your grace oh I hear it call my name
I'm waking up to sing
I'm waking up to sing

Interlude

Oh oh oh oh

Chorus

We will sing and shout
Sing and shout
Open up our hearts and pour Your praises out
We will sing and shout
Sing and shout
Open up our hearts and pour Your praises out

Verse 2

Because because because Your love came down
It makes me want to sing
It makes me want to sing
Because because because You call my name
I'm waking up to sing
I'm waking up to sing

Bridge

What could be better than a grace
That washes all our shame away
What could be better than Your great love
What could be better than a grace
That leads us home and makes a way
What could be better than Your great love
(REPEAT)

Ending

What could be better than a grace
Washes all our shame away
What could be better than a grace
Shout

Jorge Mhondera | Matt Redman | Willie Weeks

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Reading: 1 Sam 15:7-24

7 Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border of Egypt. 8 He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. 9 But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves[a] and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

10 Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: 11 “I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.” Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the Lord all that night.

12 Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.”

13 When Samuel reached him, Saul said, “The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.”

14 But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?”

15 Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.”

16 “Enough!” Samuel said to Saul. “Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night.”

“Tell me,” Saul replied.

17 Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. 18 And he sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.’ 19 Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?”

20 “But I did obey the Lord,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. 21 The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.”

22 But Samuel replied:

“Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the Lord?

To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
he has rejected you as king.”

24 Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them.

Talk by Mike Norris – “Prioritise self-care”

I remember the time I was flying when I first heard the instruction in the pre-take off video to put your own oxygen mask on first before you help anyone else – and it seemed a bit selfish. Why am I telling you that? I am telling you that because we are starting our brand-new series entitled “Emotional First Aid.” We will be exploring emotional and spiritual health – something that is vital at this time following the challenges we have all faced during the pandemic. The series is based on a book called “Emotionally Healthy Spirituality” by Peter Scazzero which is great and which some of the PODs are going to be using.

Today I am thinking about the whole topic of self-care which is covered in the first chapter of the book and draws on the life of Saul. We will be looking at this idea of putting your oxygen mask on first before you help other people. Self-care is taking action to preserve or improve our own well-being and physical and mental health.

Do you know much about Saul? His story is told in the book of 1 Samuel. He was an extraordinary man “as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else.” (1 Sam 9:2). He had amazing physicality and courage and was a brave warrior. He was chosen to be the first king of Israel and anointed king when he was 30 years old, reigning over Israel for 42 years.

I have 3 questions for you this morning. Firstly, how are you doing? We are living in strange times with things not quite the same and uncertainty. The summer is looming and many people feel tired and jaded. Peter Scazzero says that many Christians are not feeling like they are flourishing. The pandemic aside, many Christians are not experiencing joy or the contentment that the bible refers to. Some feel resentful, angry, bitter or depressed, like a failure or living a double life. Some don’t feel that they are experiencing Jesus’ life which is described as life to the full.

Peter Scazzero uses Saul as an example, of this extraordinary person whose life and relationships unravelled due to poor emotional health. Saul’s emotional health led to his downfall which was a really tragic story.

Saul disobeys God 3 times and he was disqualified from the task to which he was appointed. Firstly, he offered a sacrifice to God rather than wait for Samuel as instructed (Ch 13:7-10) Samuel said God was looking for a man ‘after his own heart’ which is David. Subsequently Saul becomes very jealous of David and had jealous fits of rage, pursues him and tries to kill him.

Secondly when he defeats the Amalekites, he does not destroy everything as he is instructed to do, (Ch 15:22) Samuel is not impressed “Although, you were small in your own eyes did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel?” Thirdly, he consults the Witch of Endor (Ch. 28) and then subsequently ends up taking his own life.

Peter Scazzero says that poor spiritual and emotional health ruins your life, your family life, career, sense of well being. So he takes this very seriously.

What do you need right now? Scazzero asks, in light of this widespread poor emotional health which he says is actually a problem of discipleship...what do we need to overcome it? How can we ensure that our discipleship is healthier? He says Christians tend to respond in the following ways to this call for healthier discipleship:

- We need deeper teaching...that will do it..
- We need to get out on the streets and talk about Jesus and see people come to faith...
- We need more sung worship – soaking worship...
- We need to deepen our prayer life and this will do it...

- We need more encounters with the Holy Spirit and prophetic words and signs and wonders, speaking in tongues and prayer ministry.
- We need to fighting injustice is what will do it – challenging the great issues of the day: human trafficking, racism, environmental issues, the toxic effects of consumerism, staggering inequality of the distribution of wealth, food poverty and so forth –
- We need to serve the poor.

All these things are biblical and really important, but we can do all this and still have something missing.

“Contemporary spiritual formation and discipleship models address some issues ...yet a large proportion of our lives remain untouched by Jesus Christ and will do so until there is a serious engagement with what I call “emotionally healthy spirituality.”

Scazzero says many approaches in church can be unhelpful because:

- They can encourage us to run from God not run to God by focussing on doing rather than being
- They can encourage us to have a very unhealthy view of life in which we divide the spiritual from the secular and compartmentalise life in unhelpful ways
- They can encourage us to present the perfect Christian life and hide our brokenness and weakness and engender a culture of in-authenticity and lack of freedom in the church

What do we need then? Scazzero says what we actually need is a combination of emotional health and contemplative spirituality.

Where are you going to go from here then? I recommend that we come to God. One of the limitations of contemporary self-care approaches is that they encourage us to re-centre our world around ourselves and look for hope, healing, and stability from some hidden place deep within ourselves.

Scazzero says “The care you really need is not buried somewhere deep inside of you, waiting to be unlocked by some dessert or diversion. No, you need the healing, forgiving, restoring, and transforming grace of a God who loves you. Only Someone stronger than your greatest weaknesses, bigger than your worst failures, and brighter than your deepest darkness’s could address the things you fear or regret resulting in the care you crave in the deepest parts of your life.”

This is an amazing thing to reflect on and I encourage us, as step 1, to come to God.

We had a great Wednesday morning prayer meeting last week and the reason it was so good was that it was Peter Levell's 80th birthday. As Peter reflected on his decades of following God, he says he often goes back to this verse. *“The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Ex 33:14.* Through his life, he’s felt God’s presence with him and that’s made all the difference.

The bible speaks of God as loving and caring, who is for you and not against you. I want to go through a few verses on this:

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.” Psalm 32.8

“He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them... and gently lead those that are with young.” Isaiah 40:11

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you”. Isaiah 43.2

“The LORD is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” Psalm 34.17-18

“6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. 7 Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows”. Luke 7

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us so that we may be able to comfort those who with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Can I encourage us to come to God. This God who loves you, cares for you and delights in you. If you do that, you’ll be putting your oxygen masks on, you’ll have the breath of His love, His spirit, His life in you which is the starting point for all spiritual and emotional health. And so, let’s be people who take self-care seriously. Let’s put the oxygen mask on and remember this is not selfish. If we do live a generous life, we will impact others as well as feeling nurtured ourselves.

Intercessions

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are the Lord our maker, that stretched out the heavens and laid the foundation of the earth. Yet graciously, you listen to our prayers with kindness and compassion. We bring before you the needs of our world, our nation, our town and ourselves.

We pray for the world. May you pour out your mercy on the countries whose health care and economies are not able to cope with the pandemic. In a time of silence, bring before God those countries which are especially close to your heart.

We bring before God the needs of the UK. We pray for the governments of all 4 nations. Please give our elected leaders and public servants all the wisdom, courage, and energy they need to govern as you would have them, not fearing the people but doing what is right. In the silence now, do name before God any political issues which are troubling you.

We pray for Guildford. Forgive us in Guildford for the ways we may have let you down. Maybe we have worshipped materialism or greed, rather than generosity. Please grant blessing to our county and borough councillors and all parts of civic life. And transform Guildford into a place renewed by Your Spirit, and full of Your Kingdom.

We pray for ourselves. We have heard how Saul let God down by fearing the people and giving into popular opinion. We ask for forgiveness for the many times when we’ve done this too. Lord, please strengthen us in our inner being to live healthy lives worthy of the calling we’ve received, full of joy, purpose and a spring in our step. We rely on Your Spirit to fill us afresh and help us on. In Jesus name, Amen.

Songs

Be Still

Verse 1

Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here
Come bow before Him now
With reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy One is here

Verse 2

Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire
With splendor He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around

Verse 3

Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place

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King Of My Heart

Verse 1

Let the King of my heart
Be the mountain where I run
The fountain I drink from
Oh He is my song
Let the King of my heart
Be the shadow where I hide
The ransom for my life
Oh He is my song

Chorus

You are good good oh
You are good good oh
You are good good oh
You are good good oh

Verse 2

Let the King of my heart
Be the wind inside my sails
The anchor in the waves
Oh He is my song
Let the King of my heart
Be the fire inside my veins
The echo of my days
Oh He is my song

Bridge

You're never gonna let
Never gonna let me down
You're never gonna let
Never gonna let me down
You're never gonna let
Never gonna let me down
You're never gonna let
Never gonna let me down

Ending

When the night is holding on to me
God is holding on
When the night is holding on to me
God is holding on

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