



**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

Notes from our Sunday Morning  
Pre-recorded Worship

# Welcome

## Song

### Great Things

#### Verse 1

Come let us worship our King  
Come let us bow at His feet  
He has done great things  
See what our Savior has done  
See how His love overcomes  
He has done great things  
He has done great things

#### Chorus

O Hero of Heaven You conquered the grave  
You free every captive and break every chain  
O God You have done great things  
We dance in Your freedom awake and alive  
O Jesus our Savior Your name lifted high  
O God You have done great things

#### Verse 2

You've been faithful through every storm  
You'll be faithful forevermore  
You have done great things  
And I know You will do it again  
For Your promise is yes and amen  
You will do great things  
God You do great things

#### Bridge

Hallelujah God above it all  
Hallelujah God unshakable  
Hallelujah You have done great things  
(REPEAT)  
You've done great things

#### Ending

You have done great things  
O God You do great things

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# Reading:

Psalm 23

The Divine Shepherd

*A Psalm of David.*

1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;

3 he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff—  
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD  
my whole life long.

## Talk by Norman Patterson– “Grieve Well”

Today we continue through our Emotionally Healthy Spirituality series. Grief and loss is something we all experience at some stage in our lives. It may be the loss of a job, and with it the loss not just of income but also of dignity and status, the loss of a relationship that has fallen apart or on a totally different level it may be the loss of a loved one, the loss of our nearest and dearest. At such times most of us rely on friends and family to rally round and be with us in our time of need. What has made the present crisis so challenging is not only that many are suffering loss because of or during the pandemic but the restrictions have prevented the very people we need from physically being with us and embracing us.

For centuries Jews and Christians have found great comfort from Psalm 23 that we have listened to just now. The shepherd Psalm.....Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me.

So what does it mean to have God with us in the darkest valley? Does he, can he, really understand my pain, my loss? I can't see him, I can't reach out and touch him. He does not come alongside and put his arms around me. Oh yes, I know he loves me and in that I try to find comfort, I know that he is aware of my loss, I also know that he hears my cries and that also is a great comfort but is it therefore rather like a Zoom call with a close friend who loves and listens to me but from a distance?

The book of Exodus opens with God's beloved people in captivity in Egypt, enduring great suffering and hardship at the hand of their captors. Forced labour seven days a week.

Then God calls Moses at the burning bush and gives him a message to pass on to his suffering people: Moses this is what you are to tell them, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings.

It would have been very reassuring to these suffering people to know that God has observed what they were going through – that he is fully aware and equally reassuring to know that he has heard their cries of despair. He has observed and heard. But he then adds ‘Indeed, I know their sufferings’. ‘I know’ - this is an altogether different response and one that none of us can say to a loved one even one that we know well - we cannot say it because it is impossible to know. And it is for that reason we find it difficult to know what to say to a person who is grieving and often well-meaning yet unhelpful things are said.

This ‘know’ is an intimate word. Adam knew Eve – this is not just knowing about someone’s loss, this is not just God being informed this is a God who is intimately involved and in some real sense suffers with us. That puts a new complexion on Psalm 23 doesn’t it. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me. The God who does not only observe and hears but knows intimately my grief, my suffering, my loss, that is the God who is with me in the darkest valley.

And if we need more proof we turn to Jesus. God not just observing but entering into the pain and grief and suffering of our human experience. Jesus was very close to Mary, Martha and Lazarus, three siblings. John says that he loved them dearly. John says *that Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill and when he arrived in Bethany where they lived he had already died. He found Mary weeping. When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved and began to weep.* Jesus did not just observe grief and empathise with his friends he felt it and was moved to tears. That is the God who is with me in the darkest valley.

And of course Jesus not only identified with human suffering but in the end suffers not only with us but for us on the cross. Going back to God’s message to Moses ‘Indeed, I know their sufferings’ is the first half of a sentence which concludes ‘and I have come to deliver them’. A God who observes, listens, knows also announces that your suffering my people will end. He gives hope. And on the cross an even greater deliverance would take place which would bring us reconciliation, healing and hope. That is the God who is with me in the darkest valley.

So what does this mean in reality in the darkest valley? In speaking to people who suffered loss in one of the churches Paul said that he was writing to them ‘*so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope*’. He does not say that he was writing so that they would not grieve because they have hope. No of course we experience grief, dark valleys is an unavoidable part of our journey and in such times we do and should experience a host of emotions.

Nowhere does the Christian faith teach that we should deny or repress those raw emotions. In fact the remarkable thing is that our faith provides us with the resources to express them. Eugene Peterson has said that everything that a person can possibly feel, experience and say is brought into expression before God in the Psalms. Yes - everything – anger, disappointment, rejection at times directed to God it is all there and all expressed to God.

And in so doing we will discover that these prayers have the power to transform.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me. My loving heavenly Father who observes, who hears and knows and brings healing and hope.

Listen again to this shepherd Psalm. If like me you learned it in the old version you may wish to say it with me.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup>He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

he leadeth me beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup>He restoreth my soul:

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.

<sup>4</sup>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;

thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

# Intercessions

Let's bring our prayers to the Faithful One:

As we are very aware at times, the sheer scale of the problems of our world seem intractable. As we come to prayer, let us remind ourselves of the message of comfort and hope that God gave to his people at such a time through Isaiah 'Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all of these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls them by name. Because of his great power and strength, not one of them is missing'. Loving heavenly Father, this is your world, you created it, a world charged with the splendour of God. You came to bring healing and hope into the brokenness that we bring to you now in our prayers.

We pray for the people of Lebanon. For those who have lost loved ones, homes, businesses, jobs and lost hope because of the destruction and economic collapse. We pray that help will reach quickly those in greatest need and out of the present chaos may come a new and stable government, peace and hope. We pray for SAT-7 and many others seeking to bring help. We pray for an end to the brutality in Belarus and a peaceful transition to a just government. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the continued worldwide impact of the Coronavirus, that it's spread may be halted and an effective vaccine and treatment can be found. We continue to pray for our nation, that this crisis may somehow become a turning point in our history. When we turn away from the idolatry that is destroying our lives, our society and our environment, may we turn in repentance to you, the living God. Lord Jesus, your kingdom come in our land, your will be done. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the church team as they seek to respond to the ever-changing guidance. Thank you for those working behind the scenes each week who make these services possible.

Loving Father, we bring ourselves to you, our church family. For those who are suffering, for those who have lost jobs, or whose jobs are under threat. As we've consider grief today, we pray for those who are grieving. We bring our prayers to you, our loving Father who knows our needs, hears our cries, feel our pain and heals our wounds. Amen.

## Songs

### I've Had Questions

#### Verse 1

I've had questions without answers  
I've known sorrow I have known pain  
But there's one thing that I'll cling to  
You are faithful Jesus You're true

#### Chorus

When hope is lost I'll call You Savior  
When pain surrounds I'll call You healer  
When silence falls  
You'll be the song within my heart

### Verse 2

In the lone hour of my sorrow  
Through the darkest night of my soul  
You surround me and sustain me  
My defender forevermore

### Bridge

I will praise You I will praise You  
When the tears fall still I will sing to You  
I will praise You Jesus praise You  
Through the suff'ring still I will sing

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## Faithful One

### Verse

Faithful One so unchanging  
Ageless One You're my Rock of peace  
Lord of all I depend on You  
I call out to You again and again  
I call out to You again and again

### Chorus

You are my Rock in times of trouble  
You lift me up when I fall down  
All through the storm  
Your love is the anchor  
My hope is in You alone

### Ending

My hope is in You  
My hope is in You  
Our hope is in You alone

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## Family News

If you're new to St Saviour's and would like to join our Welcome Course in the autumn, or would like to chat with one of the team, do get in contact with the Church Office. We'd love to hear from you.

If you would like prayer support or a chat please get in touch with us via contact the office.

Our Wednesday Morning Liturgical Services continues this week at 9am. Do see the Sunday email with full details or contact the Church Office for more information. (01483 455333/ [office@st-saviours.org.uk](mailto:office@st-saviours.org.uk)).

The Church will be open for private prayer from Monday to Wednesday this week, 10am to 1pm. Please wear a face covering (unless you are exempt) if you are visiting the church for private prayer or for any other reason. Do get in contact with the church office if you have any questions or would like to chat further.

We currently have vacancies for a Kids Pastor and Youth Pastor. Do see the website for more details ([st-saviours.org.uk](http://st-saviours.org.uk)) and please do be praying as we recruit for these 2 roles.