



**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

Notes from our Sunday Morning  
Pre-recorded Worship

# Welcome

## Song

### Rescuer

#### Chorus

He's our Rescuer  
He's our Rescuer  
We are free from sin forevermore  
Oh how sweet the sound  
Oh how grace abounds  
We will praise the Lord our Rescuer

#### Verse 1

There is good news for the captive  
Good news for the shamed  
There is good news for the one who walked away  
There is good news for the doubter  
The one religion failed  
For the good Lord has come to seek and save

#### Verse 2

He is beauty for the blind man  
Riches for the poor  
He is friendship for the one the world ignores  
He is pasture for the weary  
Rest for those who strive  
Oh the good Lord is the way the truth the life  
Yes the good Lord is the way the truth the life

#### Bridge

So come and be chainless  
Come and be fearless  
Come to the foot of Calvary  
There is redemption for every affliction  
Here at the foot of Calvary

Benjamin Hastings | Bryan Fowler | Chris Llewellyn | Gareth Gilkeson © Capitol CMG Amplifier (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) Musical Moodswing (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) Rend Family Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) SHOUT! Music Publishing Australia (Admin. by SHOUT! Music Publishing UK), CCLI Licence No. 963500.

# Reading:

## Genesis 15: 1-6

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

“Do not be afraid, Abram.

I am your shield,  
your very great reward.”

**2** But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” **3** And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

**4** Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” **5** He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

**6** Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

## Talk by Lucy Webb– “Process the Past”

One of the best things about my job is that I often get to hear stories of how people come to faith. I absolutely love stories anyway, but these stories in particular are ones that are always about transformation and hope. Freedom, God’s love, purpose, meaning fulfilment.

I know that for me, when I found a faith of my own as a teenager, I was buzzing. I was so caught up and on fire, I was studying the bible, praying all the time, hearing God’s voice and seeing answers to prayer left right and centre, or so it felt at the time. And I was part of a community of people who were on the same page, just as on fire, just as pumped, they spurred me on, and I got stuck in – I wanted everyone to share the faith I had, I wanted everyone to fall in love with Jesus like I had and know the amazing grace of his incredible love. So, with my friends, I put my faith into action and we volunteered a ton – youth groups, homeless cafes, outreach projects, you name it, we were there.

Fast forward 15 years and things look quite different. For some of us – we are committed to faith and working it out in a more complicated and busy time of life. For others of us, we want our kids to have faith so we go to church, but that’s about it. For others, faith is now a distant memory and life has been reduced to the same level of disenchantment that grinds on the rest of our never believing peers. The fire has been burnt up and now there’s nothing left.

Someone once told me you don’t reach your 30<sup>th</sup> birthday without a great tragedy affecting you. I think this is true for almost the entire human species, and especially true for those of us who call ourselves Christians.

Because the added issue when you experience tragedy as a person of faith, is that we believe in an all powerful and all loving God. So how could this happen? How could that person get cancer so young? How could that longed-for baby miscarry? How could his depression end in him taking his life? How could they leave me when all I do is love them? How could I lose my job and house? How could that prayer go unanswered? How could we be stuck in such an awful mess? Life isn’t supposed to be like this and why isn’t God doing something about it??

In Peter Scazzero’s book, this moment he describes as hitting the wall.

Many of us will know exactly what this feels like, because we have hit the wall, perhaps recently, during this awful pandemic, or perhaps a long time ago. One of the problems when we hit the wall is that we think we are alone and no one else understands. We think that God has abandoned us. We feel confused, angry, sad and very very alone.

But the reality is quite different. The wall is actually a part of spiritual development, and going through it is what is required to reach maturity in faith. It happens to everyone – and going beyond the wall is what is described in the bible as growing from infancy in faith – like babies who rely solely on milk – to maturity.

Don't get me wrong – hitting the wall is horrible, and is not helped by well meaning people say things like 'God has a plan' or quote unhelpful scripture at you.

But the truth is that hitting the wall in our journey of faith is inevitable. Some people hit bigger walls than others, but the wall will come to us all.

Take Abraham – he was promised in this reading we just heard that he would be a great nation. He would be a source of blessing to the world through his descendants. And he was told this as a childless man aged 80.

Do you know how long Abraham had to wait to have his son Isaac? 25 years.

25 years of hoping and praying everyday that God would remember him.<sup>7</sup>

25 years of second guessing that he hadn't misheard or misunderstood

25 years of disappointment and let down.

I don't know why God chose to leave it this long, but my hunch is that during this period Abraham hit his wall. And then travelled beyond it – to a place of deeper faith, to greater intimacy with God and others, to spiritual maturity.

And it's not just Abraham – read about the life of Moses, or Esther, or Paul, or Jesus' mother, Mary – all of these bible greats at some point reached a moment of 'where is God now?'

It is really easy to get stuck at the wall. It's sadly what happened to some of my friends. When disappointments hit them, when tragedy struck, some became bitter, and others just chose to walk away as they were unable to live with this disconnect of what they wanted the world and God to be like, and the reality of what actually was.

So how do we avoid getting stuck at the wall? How do we grow deep roots so that our faith moves on and doesn't shrivel and die under the pressure?

There's no silver bullet here – no quick fix and nothing magic. Life is at times really hard – not just during this pandemic. But we can grow in our resilience to face these pressures and hopefully move beyond the wall:

Peter Scazzero suggests that spiritual disciplines may help us do this.

I don't love the word discipline – it doesn't sound very friendly or intimate does it. But you know, some days we don't feel like praying. And when life is tough, days can become weeks, months or maybe even years. We don't feel like praying and so we don't, and God's voice becomes more and more distant.

I have a set time each day when I try to pray. And because it's a discipline, a set time, I do it whether I feel like it or not. And you know what? The discipline of praying everyday has weathered a fair few storms – even when all I can do is pray 'my God, why have you forsaken me?'

The second thing we can do is to keep showing up – showing up in our times with God – and be honest about what's really going on for us. But we also need to keep showing up with our community – with our church family, with our small groups. It can be so tempting to want to hide away, worry that people can't handle our pain or doubts, but this will only lead to further disconnect from God and our faith.

But what is life beyond the wall? What are the characteristics of someone who has reached the next stage of their journey of faith?

Peter Scazzero details 4 characteristics:

1. A greater level of brokenness

People who have crossed over to the other side of the wall are free from judging others. And I think that's because they have woken up to the reality that everyone else has their secret struggles and burdens and handles them differently.

Christians can often be judgemental – saying things like ‘they can’t be a real Christian’ ‘their style of worship is so unspiritual’ or things like that. People who have crossed the wall hold out patience, respect and a degree of gracious humility towards those who are different from them, knowing that we are all dealing with our own brokenness in different ways.

People who have crossed the wall are also less defensive, and as Peter Scazzero suggests, less offendable, because they are secure in the love of God, and no longer feel the need to compete, or hide the reality of their lives from God or other people.

## 2. A greater appreciation for Holy Unknowing or mystery

I wonder if you are like me- there have been many times of great pain and sadness in my life, where I have cried out to God because things weren’t happening the way I wanted them to and it felt like God was letting me down. In hindsight however things always look different, and it becomes clearer how God was actually there, helping me to learn, grow and let go through what I first perceived to be silence.

I have studied theology for quite a few years now and the truth is, the more I read and learn, the less I know, the less I am willing to defend whatever the cost, because God is mystery, we cannot box or contain God, we need to allow God to be free to be God.

## 3. A deeper ability to wait for God

I am rubbish at waiting – I like things done yesterday, just ask my husband! But when we cross the wall, we probably have learnt a thing or two about waiting. Like Abraham waited for his son – it’s interesting how he waited 11 years and thought, that’s long enough and took matters into his own hands, forcing his slave Hagar to have a son with him. That was not God’s plan, and Abraham had to learn and to wait another 14 years for the fulfilment of that promise.

Jesus himself had to wait, to seek God, in the wilderness for 40 days, and after that time he was filled with power from the Holy Spirit – we need to trust that when we wait on God, God will do the same in us.

## 4. A greater detachment

Detachment is the great secret for inner peace according to PS. Eastern religions have grasped this so much more than us in the west.

As Christians we know that ultimately our lives are hidden with Christ – that this earthly life is not all there is. Yet we cling so hard to our marriages, our children, our possessions, that we are not free to enjoy them as good gifts. When we hit the wall, we realise that life is more than these things, and in that place we are brought into closer relationship with God.

If we want to experience the freedom that comes from this kind of detachment, then these 5 truths might be helpful for us to hear and reflect on.

Life is hard

You are not that important

Your life is not about you

You are not in control

You are going to die

Ultimately, when we hit the wall we are being told, perhaps for the 1<sup>st</sup> time, perhaps for the 300<sup>th</sup> time, that actually we are not in control. Corona virus is a bit like a huge wall to the world – none of us is actually in control if this tiny virus can cause so much destruction. But what do we do when we are confronted with that wall – we can grasp even more tightly at the illusion of control or we can let go – realise the truth of our situation, hand things over to God, and move beyond.

# Intercessions

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you care for this world. You are not a remote God who just sets things in motion, watching from a distance. You are involved and a true sign of your involvement is to see your church all over the world being involved with people, helping, reaching out.

Father, Lebanon has been hit hard this week. We pray for all who live in the city of Beirut who are trying to make ends meet and struggling. We pray for this situation and ask for your redemption and redemptive power to work there. We pray for strength, for all those who are working hard to provide simple things like food, water and shelter. Father, we pray that you would help the nations in this world to respond well to this crisis.

Lord we also pray for our situation here in the UK. You see the constant stream of refugees landing on our shores. Help us to respond right in this time of need. Unemployment is on the rise and we pray for those who have lost their jobs, those in our church family and beyond. Father, we pray that you would provide for each family situation.

Lord, we hold before you those who need a breakthrough and need healing. Lord, you see personal circumstances and situations. We lift them before you now and pray for real breakthrough in their lives and what they need, and to lay hold of. We pray that you would provide for them in their hour of need. 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 for ever.  
Amen.

# Songs

## We Praise You

### Verse 1

Let praise be a weapon that silences the enemy  
Let praise be a weapon that conquers all anxiety  
Let it rise let praise arise

### Verse 2

We sing Your name in the dark  
And it changes ev'rything  
We sing with all we are and we claim Your victory  
Let it rise let praise arise

### Chorus

We'll see you break down ev'ry wall  
We'll watch the giants fall  
For fear cannot survive when we praise You  
The God of breakthrough's on our side  
Forever lift (Him) (You) high  
With all creation cry God we praise You

### Interlude

Oh we praise You oh

### Verse 3

Let faith be the song  
That overcomes the raging sea  
Let faith be the song  
That calms the storm inside of me  
Let it rise let faith arise

### Interlude

Oh we praise You oh we praise You  
Oh we praise You oh we praise You

### Bridge

This is what living looks like  
This is what freedom feels like  
This is what Heaven sounds like  
We praise You  
We praise You  
(REPEAT)

### Ending

Oh we praise You oh we praise You  
Oh we praise You oh yeah with all Your praise

## You Are My Vision

### Verse 1

You are my vision O King of my heart  
Nothing else satisfies only You Lord  
You are my best thought by day or by night  
Waking or sleeping Your presence my light

### Interlude

Oh oh oh

### Verse 2

You are my wisdom You are my true word  
I ever with You and You with me Lord  
You're my great Father and I'm Your true son  
You dwell inside me together we're one

### Verse 3

You are my battle-shield sword for the fight  
You are my dignity You're my delight  
You're my soul's shelter and You're my high tower  
Come raise me heavenward O Power of my power

### Verse 4

I don't want riches or man's empty praise  
You're my inheritance now and always  
You and You only the first in my heart  
High King of heaven my treasure You are

### Verse 5

High King of heaven when victory's won  
May I reach heaven's joy O bright heaven's Son  
Heart of my own heart whatever befall  
Still be my vision O Ruler of all

Eleanor Henrietta Hull | Mary Elizabeth Byrne | Rend Collective © 2011 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Integrity Music).  
CCLI Licence No. 963500.

## Family News

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.