

2nd May 2021 10 am Healing and Refreshing

Service led by Lindsey Attwood, Talk by Andrew Attwood.

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Welcome

[Andrew:] Good morning!

[Lindsey:] Good morning everybody. Hope you're well, welcome to our service today. And today is going to be a bit different, we're going to have a healing and refreshing time together, so while you can, perhaps grab a candle. We're thinking today, it'd be nice to have something to focus on as we're going through the service, so if you have a candle during this time you maybe want to get it now. Or, another thing you might want to get if you're a bit fidgety like I am, you could have a bit of paper and a pen and doodle if you need to as well. So Andrew's going to give a notice.

Notices

[Andrew:] Yeah, this is just a little bit of a heads-up with regards to our plans for returning to the building. So during May, because we're finishing off a mini-series today, but during May we will beginning to think about where God may be leading us as a church. So what I can say for now is that we will plan to focus on a season of prayer, once we return, which will be explained in a bit more detail over the next weeks. But in the meantime, can I encourage you all to begin thinking and praying ahead of time, particularly seeking the presence of God on your own and maybe together, even in a garden or walking, so just keep that season of prayer in your mind. Thank you. I'll leave Lindsey to it now.

[Lindsey:] So just another notice as normal, we have our 6pm service this evening as well. I think that's a really refreshing service as well. So today you're going to get lots of healing and refreshing, and also we have our online Bible study: it's 12 on Wednesday so do join us for that as well. So we're going to just spend a little bit of time listening to some Scripture in God's presence.

Activity

So I've got a candle here, I've got quite a big candle actually. And so I'm just going to bring that into my presence, just so you can see that. I'm going to light this. So if you have a candle, sometimes candles are just a good way... often in church we light candles, don't we, to be still. And it's just something to focus on and to remember God's stillness and His presence. So for our activity, I'm going to go through a



couple of scriptures, I'm going to go through a Matthew passage and Psalm 23, and I'm going to read Psalm 23 quite slowly. And I just want you to be still when I do that, as a way of coming before God, reflecting, perhaps looking at the candle and just looking at it, as though it's like God's steadfastness. But if you're like me or if you've got children around, feel free, as I read those, to perhaps even allow the Holy Spirit just to make you think and doodle or draw something, or write something down in response, maybe, to God for yourself. So you can be active if you want to, but I would encourage you to be still as well, if you can. So I'm going to start with Matthew 11 verse 28 to 30. This is a wonderful passage, just to set the scene for you. Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

28 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

So Father God, thank You that You are amazing, and that your burden is light for us, and I pray that you would be with us today as we come into Your presence. Amen.

So now I'm just going to read to you, it's a famous Psalm, it's Psalm 23. A lot of you know this really, really well. But just as a chance to be still. So for this bit, if you want to, just maybe sit with your hands open to receive from God. And perhaps if you've got your candle, just to look at that and just let God be with you. As I said if you want to, and you're a bit of a fidgeter, and you just need a bit of paper and a pen, you just might want to allow the words to speak over you and perhaps doodle as you do that, if you want to. We're just going to have some stillness then.¹

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
- 3 he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will 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 love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Father God, we do thank You so much, that You are our shepherd. Even in this time, when there's been all this upheaval with the virus, and not being able to do as we wanted to, we remember that You're still the shepherd. And that You desire for us to have peace, and that You want to lead us beside quiet waters. And that even when we face difficult things, You are with us. Amen.

So we're going to just have a couple of songs in a minute, *Psalm 23* and *Be Still*. Then we're going to have our reading. And Andrew is going to talk to us about healing. It's going to be a bit of a healing service, he's going to talk to us about healing, and then we're going to have a time of actual prayer for healing, we're going to really pray and expect God to turn up this morning and the Holy Spirit, even though we're not all together, we know it's really difficult, we're not together in the same room, but God is with us still, and His Holy Spirit is with us all. So I'm praying and hoping that God will this

1 [NIVUK1984]

morning be with us and be expectant what He's going to do. We're going to have some worship now.

1st Song: Psalm 23 (The Lord's My Shepherd – by Stuart Townend)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
His goodness restores my soul. | 2. He guides my ways in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights. |
|--|---|

Chorus:

And I will trust in You alone,
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.

Chorus

3. And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know.

Chorus

2nd Song: Be Still, for the Presence of the Lord

- | | |
|---|--|
| 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. | 2. Be still for the glory of the Lord,
Is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour 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. |
|---|--|
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.

Reading: John 5:1-9a [NIVUK 1984] The Healing at the Pool

1 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. 3 Here a great number of disabled people used to lie – the blind, the lame, the paralysed. 5 One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

7 “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

8 Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

Talk

[Lindsey:]

I'm going to pray for Andrew now as he comes to you to share God's Word.

Father God, I want to thank You for Andrew and his desire so much to see You work in people's lives. And we pray now, Lord, that You bless His words, and that You speak to us through the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

[Andrew:]

Thank you Lindsey. Good morning all. Good to see you today. And as Lindsey has already said, the focus of today is healing, an opportunity to be refreshed.

Just to set this in the context of the last, say, two weeks and today, these three weeks in particular have been trying to bring a little bit of consolidation or even closure, if you like, to this strange 12 to 15 to 18 months that we've all been through. I wonder what kinds of thoughts come to mind as soon as I reflect back on how lockdown has been for you. Kim very movingly talked about lament a couple of weeks ago: the struggle of loss, the struggle of losing in all kinds of different ways, and then we had last time with Jane talking about an attitude of thanksgiving through difficulty, but also good things, unexpected things that have come out of this particular period.

I just wanted to share with you something that my daughter Emily got me for my birthday, which kind of captures something of how I feel about lockdown generally. This is a birthday card that she got me, and it says, "News! I went out for a bit and then I came back." I went out for a bit and then I came back, that's kind of a common feeling really, of how things have been where everything was reduced down to such basic issues, isn't it?



Anyway, in the light of all of those experiences, be it lament or thanksgiving or just a bland nothingness when we're waiting for things to change, today we want to focus on Jesus as our healer. The irony today of me talking about Jesus as our healer is that I've had a really bad neck and shoulder for the last, say, eight, nine days. It seems kind of like strange, even ludicrous, that I'm here talking about Jesus being our healer, when I've experienced what seems to have been quite significant pain over these last few days. But we all need to come to Jesus, in some measure, for repair. My guess is that quite a lot of us are confident in coming to Jesus as Saviour, someone who's going to forgive us. A lot of us are probably quite competent in coming to Jesus for counsel, for a bit of wisdom or peace, but how readily and how frequently and how confidently do we come to Him as our healer?

When I think back to my last week, I was crying out to Jesus for healing. It got to Thursday this last week and I had blinding pain back and forth all the way down here, and ended up having to cancel a meeting or two. I was remembering a friend of mine who talks about healing ministry and helping us to gauge how bad it is. And I was given that a kind of a 9 out of 10 pain experience, it was horrible. So on that Thursday I kind of just put out a little request for prayer from Christian friends (and other requests). And on Friday then, "Please keep praying." And on Saturday, I think I scored my pain at a 5. It had changed. And today, it's still there but I'll put it as a 3 compared to where I was, so I've experienced - it might be natural, it might be an intervention from God - some measure of progress. I wanted to give you an opportunity, then, to focus on the high impact of Jesus' healing ministry, so that you can perhaps raise a bit of your own faith in Him, to seek some help at this time. It may be that part of what's happened over these months has been a general sense of being debilitated

by it, or it may be that there are particular sicknesses or illnesses, something that has kind of hemmed you in, that you really do need releasing from.

Let me give you a bit of an overview. If you were to do a review of the gospel accounts of Jesus' ministry, you will find particular words that keep cropping up. There's a Greek word called *asthenia*² [ἀσθένεια], which means every kind of sickness, *asthenia*, and this word crops up quite frequently when Jesus is describing, or rather when the authors are describing the kind of healing that Jesus did, and it's describing basically every kind of sickness, it's a general term, *asthenia*. And then it talks about *malakia*³ [μαλακία] which are debilitating illnesses that Jesus healed, things that would kind of inhibit life, that would hold you down: it could be that you can't walk straight or you've got a kind of respiratory problem. In Matthew, there's one particular phrase that comes up: it's 'lunatic'⁴ - of unsound mind, where there's something at a mental level that Jesus heals; or even later on in Matthew⁵ *paralutikous* [παραλυτικούς], which has to do with being lame or paralysed. And these words, all the way through the Gospel accounts, indicate a broad range of what Jesus attended to. He didn't just heal one kind of thing, He healed every known kind of sickness. It's also recorded in the gospels that when the people came to Him in crowds, all came and He healed often all of them. If you were to do a rough calculation you could say that literally thousands of people in various villages and cities were touched. Some people have even calculated that if Jesus visited a local village, the actual health and welfare of that village would have gone up, because people would be able to get back to work and get back to living properly.

And here's the point of mentioning all of this. Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever." Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. So the healing ministry of Jesus has not ended. He hasn't changed.

Think about the kinds of things that are recorded again and again in the accounts. Luke 5 verse 15 says this⁶:

15 But the news about Him was spreading *even* farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear *Him* and to be healed of their sicknesses.

This was a key feature of Jesus' activity when He was doing His public ministry.

Let me mention another Greek word before I get to the passage that Lindsey mentioned. There's another Greek word called *therapeuso*⁷ [θεραπεύω], which is the word in the gospels most frequently used for healing, or to heal, and it's used almost 95% of the time when Jesus does something with someone who needs to be repaired. You could just count them endlessly with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, *therapeuso*, and it's where we get our word therapy from. The emphasis of this particular word is that Jesus often, not always but often, involved the person He was dealing with in some way to do something as part of their healing. That classic example of the person with a withered hand, and Jesus said, "Stretch out your hand." In other words, they were engaged in what was happening. *Therapeuso* means Jesus doesn't just remotely make things happen. He's usually attentive to the person themselves and gets them to enter into it, like

2 e.g. in John 5:5. More often found in the plural, 'sicknesses', *asthenias* (ἀσθενειας), e.g. Acts 28:9.

3 In Matthew 4:23 – meaning weakness/softness/disease. In the 3 occurrences of this word in Matthew, you'll find it in the genitive case, *malakian* (μαλακίαν), 'of disease'

4 Ancient Greek for lunatic is *seléniazomenous* (σεληνιαζομένους), used e.g. in Matthew 4:24 [KJV] (one being moon-struck, lunar influenced – people believed that the moon caused these mental issues.). The ancient Greeks called the moon *seléné* (σελήνη)

5 In Matthew 4:24 – here meaning 'paralytics'. The original word is *paralutikos* (παραλυτικός), the adjective 'paralytic'

6 [NASB]

7 In this form it means 'I will heal' (future). The original word is *therapeuo* (θεραπεύω) 'I heal'. Also in Matthew 10:1 you have *therapeuein* (θεραπεύειν) 'to heal'

the woman who reached out and touched the hem of His garment: she did something, and it helped the healing to flow.

Final statistic before I get to the passage: it has been calculated that if you were to add up all the verses in all four gospels together, and calculate how much emphasis was on healing or healing-related issues, 66% of the gospels are to do with healing. 66%! I've still got a reminder on my phone when it comes to every other Sunday, and it says, "66%," to remind me that is a key emphasis of Jesus' ministry.

Another just precursor to the story. Can you remember when Jairus came to plead with Jesus for his daughter? In Mark 5:23 it says Jairus begs and pleads with Jesus on his knees, and he's in front of a crowd. This was a man of high status. He was well known in the crowd. The crowd opened up so he could move through. And he's saying, "Come and save my daughter!" He's earnest about his desire for Jesus to do something. And we can see, like in this occasion and in others, Jesus is responsive to straightforward, earnest requests for healing.

So I would want to encourage everybody this morning, whatever you're carrying, whatever it is that's hurting you, whatever you're weighed down by, straightforward earnest request is something that Jesus appears to respond to. So how can I help raise your faith this morning? How can I help encourage you to come to Jesus as healer? He says in Romans 10 verse 17,

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Faith comes when you start to hear about Him. So I want to encourage you to hear again this story of Jesus in John 5:1-8, where He deals with a man who has been laying by the pool for so long. In verse 2, it talks about the place where Jesus goes to, where this man was, called Bethesda. Bethesda is a local nickname, perhaps a nickname given by the sick people who were there, which means 'house of mercy'. It was probably quite a fancy place that had these colonnades, that used to be probably for people who were privileged, but at some point in history, the local sick had taken it over; perhaps the pool was abandoned for some reason, and the sick had decided to make it their own. And it had become a place where they sought mercy from God. There was this... was it a myth or was it true? There was this idea of the water being stirred and people would go into the water and something would happen. You see, in verse 3, it talks about people being gathered in this place, sick people, and it almost gives an emphasis of them in... stacked together, packed in, all together because they were all in such need of a miracle, and their eyes were all fixed on the water, waiting for something to happen. So we hear in this particular story, in verse 5, that a certain man was there. Whenever it says 'a certain man' in the Gospel accounts, it's usually someone known at the time of writing, you could probably go and find this person, if you wanted to, at the time of this account being written. And this person was a fixture in this place. Yeah? John 5 talks about this man being there for how long? 38 years! 38 years. So this is a chronic condition.

This is partly why I wanted to choose this account, I mean, let's face it, there's loads, choose this particular account of Jesus' healing ministry, because the whole nation, our whole nation has had an extended period of time of waiting and struggling and even suffering. And so the idea of something ongoing for a long period of time seemed to resonate with me: a person who was in a chronic condition for a long time: he was stuck, and he'd been stuck there literally for years.

And so then you have this provocative question from Jesus that we hear through the centuries being asked of us: "Do you want to get well?" Jesus said to him, "Do you want to get well?" Think about it for this man. He had been there for 38 years. Granted, no fault, it was his sickness, he had no kind of reason to be blamed for that. But if you're in one place for 38 years, you would have had to

fall into a way of life that was passive, with minimal responsibilities. It's possible that his sickness had become part of his identity. That doesn't necessarily explain though his appetite still to seek help. He replies to Jesus, in verse 7,

‘Sir,’ the invalid replied, ‘I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.’

This man had no help. He had no friend. He had no support. He was unable to fix himself. He was unable to sort his own problem out. I don't know how that resonates with you, how independent of spirit are you. Have you ever struggled with something, and got to the end, where you think, "I can't do this. I can't fix myself, I can't sort it." I felt like that with regards to my shoulder. I didn't know what to do. And I was very frustrated by my need to actually ask for help. But this man had no help. This man had no one to turn to. And yet in this particular moment, Jesus was the one standing right beside him. Jesus doesn't enter into further conversation with this man. He doesn't have a long diagnosis with this man, He doesn't tease out what the pros and cons are, what the what the different symptoms are. Jesus simply speaks a word of command to this man. And in verses 8 and 9 He says this:

‘Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.’

Get up, pick up your mat, and walk. And it says,

At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

There's that *therapeuso* emphasis of healing, where the man had to do something in response to Jesus' command. He engaged with what was being said and healing power flows.

How did that work? What was going on? I don't want to engage today in the complexities of why healing happens or not at times. I simply want to focus today on Jesus being the source of healing again and again and again throughout the Gospel accounts. Jesus Himself is a source of healing. Jesus' words are a source of power that unlocks healing. And something changes in the real world when Jesus speaks.

How do you feel about that? Do you find doubts rising in your head? Do you question whether this is possible? I think some of this is down to expectation. Let me give you a very practical parallel example to see how you would respond in this need. Just imagine that we're in the middle of winter, and your house boiler breaks down: the boiler that gives you your hot water and keeps your radiators nice and warm. Inevitably, within a matter of hours, if your boiler isn't working, you'll get in touch with your provider and arrange for someone to come and sort that, if you're able to afford that, that is. What would happen - just have a think about this - imagine the engineer knocking on your door, and coming in to attend to your need. Now just imagine if the engineer brought his toolbox in and sat down, and you made him a cup of tea and you sat together and you spent 30 minutes talking, and he spends all of his time simply asking how you **felt** about having a broken boiler, and he asks you leading questions like, "So, how has this made you feel? How have you been coping in the cold?" because clearly the house is cold. "That must be really hard." And the engineer encourages you and says, "Well, you know, I'm really sorry to hear that but you know it's good that we've talked about it." And then he stands up and plans to leave. How would you feel? My guess is, at some point in that conversation you'd say, "Don't leave! You're here to fix my boiler!" You're here to fix my boiler. Something actual is needed to be repaired. I want to put it to you (and I'm hearing it myself) that we need to come to Jesus to fix what needs to be fixed. We know He is a wonderful counsellor. We know He is a great saviour, forgiver of sins, but He's also a great healer. Remember what I said: 66% of the gospels are healing stories. To come to Jesus and to seek His healing is not awkward or

strange for Him to hear. This is mostly what Jesus heard from most people during His ministry. "Help me, heal me." "Jesus, help me, heal me!"

So I wonder where you are this morning. We're going to play another song in a moment and then we're going to have an opportunity to receive healing prayer, and some soaking time, even if you don't have a particular illness. We're going to hear a song in a moment but what I want you to do during this song is to get your head and heart straight as to what you need Jesus to do. What is it that you need His help with? So we're going to have a song, and then we'll come back for prayer.

3rd Song: Living Waters

1. Are you thirsty?
Are you empty?
Come and drink these Living Waters.
Time unbroken,
Peace unspoken,
Rest beside these Living Waters.
2. Christ is calling,
Find refreshing
At the cross of Living Waters.
Lay your life down,
All the old gone,
Rise up in these Living Waters.

- Chorus:*
- There's a river that flows
With mercy and love
Bringing joy to the city of our God.
There our hope is secure,
Do not fear anymore,
Praise the Lord of Living Waters.
3. Spirit moving,
Mercy washing,
Healing in these Living Waters.
Lead your children
to the shore line;
Life is in these Living Waters.

Chorus

4. Are you thirsty?
Are you empty?
Come and drink these Living Waters.
Love, forgiveness,
Vast and boundless:
Christ, He is our Living Water.

Chorus

Response / Application: Healing time

[Andrew:]

Okay, let's just be still and let's pray. Just a moment of quiet as we come to Jesus our healer.

Just in this place of stillness, it may be that you have a particular need. It may be that you simply don't have that, but you're just weary from everything that's happened in the last few months. We're going to begin with prayers for actual healing though. This could be accelerated healing, perhaps like with my shoulder, accelerating recovery or miraculous healing where it's something that simply shouldn't logically happen. Jesus can do all kinds of healing, remember. So just in the quiet, I want you to name, in your heart or even out loud if you need to, what it is you need to bring to God. I'm bringing a painful neck and shoulder, and I'm naming that in the presence of Jesus, my healer.

I'd also like you to score it. How bad is it? 1 to 10. Is it 2 out of 10? Is it a 5 out of 10 problem that nags at you most of the time in the background? Is it

a dominating thing that just stops you doing stuff, like 7 to 8 out of 10? Or is it terrible? Is it an 8 or 9 out of 10 problem? Tell Jesus, that this is a real need.

Okay, I'm going to invite God, by His Holy Spirit, to continue and release the healing ministry of Jesus now.

Holy Spirit, we can't do this. But You have poured out Yourself into the hearts and lives of believers. Jesus, we submit again to Your power and authority, and ask that You would come now in this moment, to release healing.

Now for all those who don't feel like they have a particular need, I want to encourage you to remember that you are authorised now to join in with prayer for those who are sick, even though we can't see each other at the moment and even though some people may watch this later. I'm going to be praying words that are really simple, where I'm simply going to pray, "In the name of Jesus Christ, be healed." "In the name of Jesus Christ, be healed." And I'm going to encourage all of us, every single one of us to confidently speak that out, not just for ourselves but for all who may be watching, either live or later.

So, Holy Spirit, would You come and rest on Your people again and show us that we are authorised to speak words of healing in Jesus' name.
Come Holy Spirit.

Let's just wait.

So do feel free to join in with me. Speak out loud, and speak words of healing. And if you're on the receiving end, just wait and just receive and just maybe put your hand on what hurts, maybe, name it again and leave it with open hands before Jesus. Let's pray.

In the name of Jesus Christ, for all those who are physically sick in any kind of debilitating way from a named illness, in the name of Jesus Christ, receive healing.

So join in with me.

In the name of Jesus Christ, be healed.

All God's people join in together and speak words of healing over each other.

In the name of Jesus Christ, be healed.

Holy Spirit, let Your healing grace and power flow as it did when Jesus was with that man.

And if you wish, move whatever hurts; sense what is happening. Let's just wait for a moment of quiet, see what God is doing.
Come Holy Spirit.

Let's not rush this.

In the name of Jesus Christ, receive healing.

If you can, move what you need to move. Score it again. Is it as bad as it was?

Come Holy Spirit.

And I want to pray in the name of Jesus, for a breaking of influence of fatigue and long-term sickness over people who simply feel under the

weather, or under par all the time. For those who are weary and heavy laden, in the name of Jesus Christ I break you free from those kinds of oppressive forces, in the name of Jesus Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ, I lift off you that kind of blanket of oppression that makes you under par all the time,

I want to pray for those who at different seasons of life go through changes, whether you're older, whether you're younger, if you're in transition time and the physicality of it is just getting you down, in the name of Jesus Christ receive help and healing as you travel through change.

Like Jairus, bring your need to Jesus and cry out to Him as your healer.

In Jesus' name, for those who are suffering from joint problems, from bone problems, in the name of Jesus Christ, be set free. In the name of Jesus Christ.

For those who struggle with respiratory problems, in the name of Jesus Christ, breathe more freely.

Can I just wait briefly for the Spirit to come.

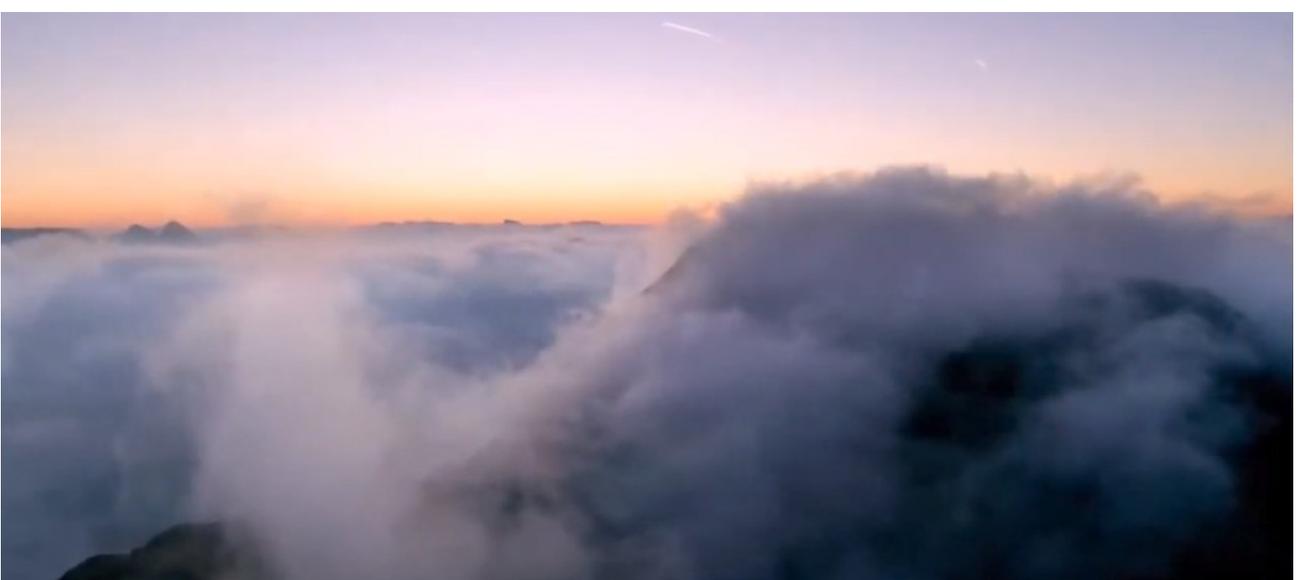
So just rest for a moment, give room to Jesus to do what He's doing.

And I want to flow into some soaking time. This can continue to be healing for those who need to receive healing. But can I just encourage everyone who's watching and listening, can you now get comfortable. Can you settle into your seats. Even if you need to, can you lie down if that's going to be helpful, it's going to be about four or five minutes of quiet music. There's some images on the screen but feel free to close your eyes and just soak in the restorative presence of God. Let me pray before the videos play.

Holy Spirit, we thank You that You want to mend and restore us, this is everybody. Would You breathe restoration and repair into our souls, and Holy Spirit, would You meet us exactly where we are. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Refreshing Time

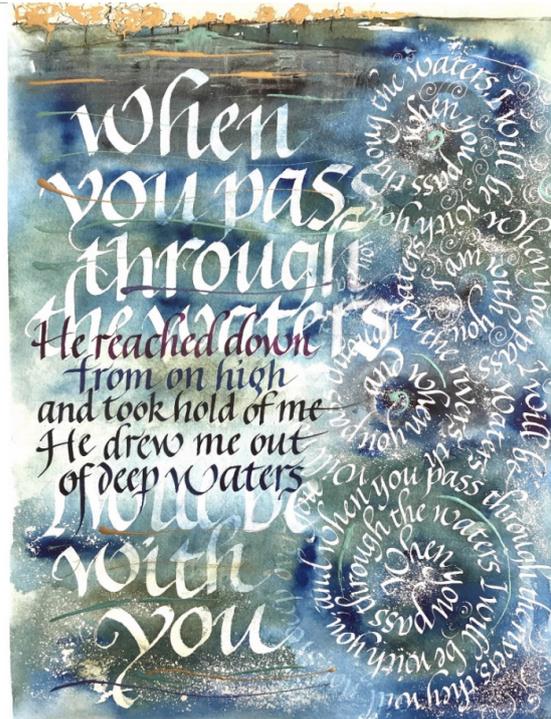
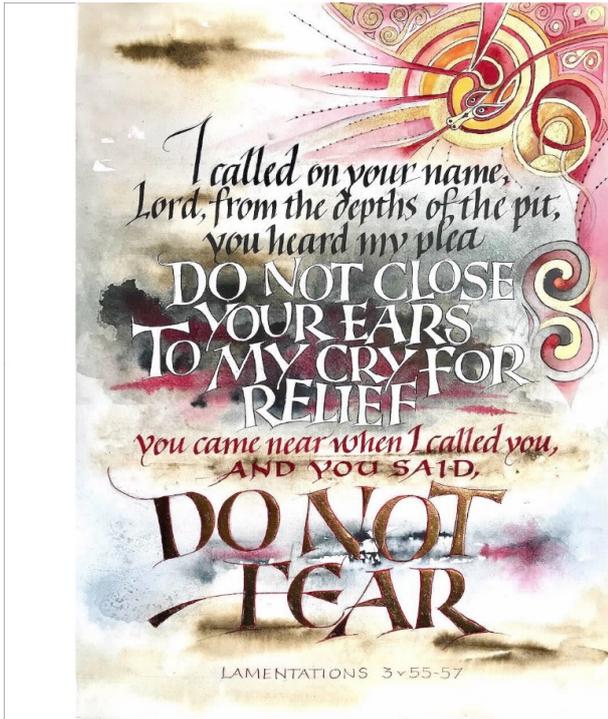




Intercessions

[Lindsey:]

Thank you, Andrew, for that. So it might well be that you are still just in a time of being still, or hopefully you just encountered with God, and you might even be laying on the floor still, I don't know, you're just listening. Do feel free, because we're coming to a time of intercession, if that's you, still have your candle lit if you want or still just being with your eyes closed in a time of quiet, that's fine and just listen as I pray. So we're going to just bring prayers for the world as well in a minute.



So Father God, we're just going to look at these images, these images that I did a while ago, and I just thought if you're not laying on the floor, you might want to just focus on that as I'm praying, and it might well be that this isn't just about you, you might be thinking that actually you're okay with God, but you may have family or friends or people, colleagues or people that you know, who you know are struggling at the minute. And maybe you could be saying these or seeing these on behalf of those people. So rather than just for yourself, maybe thinking, maybe there's a friend that you have who's really angry with God or struggling and this Lamentations verse might be for them.

So Lord, we pray, particularly for India at the moment, where many people are crying out in desperation. Comfort those who have lost loved ones, and who are suffering with grief. Let Your justice prevail. Thank You that people around the world are sending equipment to them, and I pray, Lord Jesus, that You would hear their cries and that You will be generous to them and that the world will be generous to them. Lord Jesus, You promise to bind up the broken-hearted, please be with them in their desolation as in the Lamentations quote, do not close Your ears to their cry for relief. We really pray, Jesus, that You would have Your justice and send them the things that they need, and be close to the broken-hearted.

We pray, Lord Jesus, for the vaccine rollout in other countries. And please protect the economies of countries that rely on tourism for their income. On the one hand, Lord, protect the livelihoods of those people, but at the same time help us to be wise in opening up doors until we contain the virus. Help

us to protect the vulnerable above our need for travel and wealth.

Maybe you've got somewhere else in the world that you'd like to pray for while you're being still, or use those verses again to think about those people that you know.

Father God, we thank You for our country, and we pray for our country. We are so grateful for the continued successful vaccine rollout, and we're amazed at this. And Jesus, we want to speak also gratefully for our health care system, we're talking about healing today, and that we are so grateful that we have doctors and nurses, and also scientists and researchers who are the ones who actually, You know, develop vaccines, and that's part of Your healing as well, but we are so fortunate to have that and I pray that we will be grateful for it.

We know that Your desire is for *shalom*, for peace in every way, whether it's financial or health, or communities. Jesus, thank You for the financial support and the furlough scheme. But we do pray for any businesses or individuals who are affected who don't fall out of that category. And remember that just as You are healer, You are the ultimate provider. Help us as a nation to not just go back to where we were before. I pray that we act justly to the poor and to our environment.

I pray, Jesus, that You would raise up entrepreneurs who can be creative in ethical new ways of doing business.

I pray that You'll be a light in this country, to everything that reflects Your generous and compassionate nature.

Jesus, let Your Kingdom come, and Your will be done.

Father God, thank You for the blessing of our family and friends. I know that during this time, many people have struggled with loneliness, depression and mental health issues, and even struggled with marriages. We were made for fellowship with You and each other. I pray that we would once again receive the benefit of rich and loving fellowship with each other. Help us to forgive one another, with Your help. May we also be like Christ to one another and to those we meet.

Maybe just in a moment, you just want to think of your friends and family and just pray for people that may be struggling, or just have a moment of prayer in quiet for those.

Jesus, obviously today has being a lot about healing for ourselves and things, but thank You so much that You care about us. We are cherished by You and nothing is too small to bring before You. This time of healing and refreshing has shown us that You are a God who longs to heal us in all sorts of ways, whether physical, emotional or spiritual. Help us to know that nothing's too small, that we're not to feel guilty that our needs aren't big enough, that other people are more important. You cherish us as well.

Father, though, I just pray that we would have an even more heavenly perspective of our ultimate destiny in healing, which is the new heavens and the new Earth. I pray that while we may face daily struggles in some ways that we would hold this life lightly, remembering that by knowing Jesus, we have a sure hope that one day all tears will cease. I pray that we rejoice in the fact that Jesus will return, where all things will be made right. And we give all these things to You, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Conclusion and Blessing

So we're just coming to the end of our service now. This has been a bit of a different type of service. It's always a bit strange to do this when you're remote. And when myself and Andrew are doing this you sort of doing it with the faith that God will be doing stuff in people's hearts, whether that's today or when other people watch this at a later date, and we thought that it would be really helpful for us, if God has been working with you today and you have really felt God's presence, or a sense of healing, or a touch from God, it might be really helpful if you could perhaps get in touch with the office in some way, because it could be something really good to share with others. I mean testimony is such a massive part of our witness as Christians, and a way of encouraging others, so if you have an encouraging story, if God has been doing something in you right now, it'd be great if you could share that with us, so that we could be able to share that back and encourage you that God is working, it's not just some sort of nice idea: God really wants to be with us and heal us and bless us.

And just one more thing before I end with the blessing prayer, if you would like some further help, or you've been struggling and you would like some prayer, again, the other thing to do is maybe contact the office as well through Denise, and where we can actually find some people who could pray with you, whether that's in a quiet space or socially distanced, so that you don't feel alone at the minute. So if that is you, and you'd love to match your prayer with other people, do get in contact with the office and we can find somebody who will pray with you.

So we're going to end now with a blessing prayer, and then we're going to end with the blessing song.

King of Glory, thank You for revealing Your love to us today in a powerful way. May we go out in the strength of the Holy Spirit. And may Your love and grace be with us through this week. Uphold us in the palm of Your hand and help us to take time to be still this week, and let You show us Your will. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Amen and just a blessing on you this week.

4th Song: The Blessing

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

Repeat verse 1

Chorus:

Amen
Amen
Amen

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

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

Chorus x 4

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

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