



Where is God?- 16th August 2020 Ruth Dawson

Good morning Everybody and welcome to our worship this morning

Call to Worship

*When Jesus asked, Simon Peter answered:
"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,"
Let us make the same bold answer,
And let us come together to worship
Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.
Amen.*

And we commence our service this morning as we sing the hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

Hymn - Great is thy Faithfulness

*Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be:*

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

*Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love:*

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

*Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!*

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;*

Salford Methodist Circuit



*all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

We come now to our first set of prayers – but let's just take a moment to thank God for all his goodness and faithfulness to us as we spoke about it that hymn a few moments ago,

There is a response to our prayer which will come up on screen in bold type so you may say it as you wish.

Lord, thank you that you are always ready to forgive us
when we trust you enough to confess our sins to you,
even when we feel we don't deserve it.

Be merciful to us, O God.

Forgive us for the times when
just because someone else's story is different from ours
we don't always want to believe it.
Forgive us for the times when we only live our stories,
not seeing the bigger picture.

Be merciful to us, O God.

Forgive us for the times
We see you as less than the Son of God,
And our whole outlook on life
Needs a good dose of your love and understanding

Be merciful to us, O God.

Amen.

We are now going to hear this morning's scripture readings. The first reading is from Romans Chapter 12 verses 1 to 8 where St Paul reminds us that we are all part of the Body of Christ here on earth, and that God has given us all various abilities and gifts that we can use in his service. This will be followed by our Gospel reading from Matthew chapter 16 verses 13 to 20 where Jesus asks the disciples "who do the people say that I am ?" and more importantly he asks the disciples again "Who do you say I am?".

Reading - Romans 12 : 1 - 8

And so dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice –the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is. As God's messenger, I give each of you this warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much



faith God has given you. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of his one body, and each of us has different work to do. And since we are all one body in Christ, we belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others. God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy; speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you. If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. If your gift is to encourage others, do it! If you have money, share it generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

This is the living word of Christ. Amen.

Reading - Matthew 16 : 13 - 20

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

"Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets." Then he asked them, "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of man, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter, which means 'Rock', and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven." Then he sternly warned them not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

In our Matthew reading Jesus asks his disciples two very important questions.

"Who do people say the son of man is?"

"Who do you say I am?"

Why is he asking these questions if they spend so much time together, travelling and sharing the word of God with all who are willing to listen, and also proclaiming the coming of the Messiah ?

The first question, "who do people say the son of man is?"

Jesus gets a general answer that the son of man is one of several of the Old Testament prophets or even John the Baptist. So once again Jesus asked the question "who do you say I am?"

It's only Simon Peter who comes up with the answer. "You are the Messiah the son of the living God." Jesus knows this answer has come from God to Simon Peter, and from that point onwards Simon is known as Peter the rock. Not just any kind of rock but a living foundation on which Jesus will build his church. Like

Salford Methodist Circuit



all buildings the church will need a sure foundation and Jesus has started this process in his ministry, then when the time comes Peter will carry on his work on earth and in heaven. The rock will be strong enough to stand up to all the powers of hell.

When I think of rocks, they remind me of the beach at Llandudno. How the beach changes so much along the shore line; how parts are all rocks, so many different shapes and sizes, colours and textures; how they move around under our feet when we walk on them. And how the elements can also change them if they become wet. They become slippery. But it doesn't matter how many times the sea washes over them or how rough the waves are, they stay there upon the beach. Individual rocks holding together to form a whole beach.

We are like those rocks. We may feel we are standing alone at the moment but that's not the case. We are all joined together in our faith, we are all individual rocks who bring our own talents together to unite as a whole rock with a sharing of faith and belief in God.

In our Romans reading Paul is sending words of encouragement to the early Christians on how they should live their lives. He's explaining how the church should be built and what it needs to do to help its growth. We are like the rocks on the beach all individual but coming together to form a whole beach. That whole beach is the church of God. We are all so different but we all have a variety of talents. Our talents are all different but each one is a gift from God. A gift he has given us to use in this world. It is only by listening to God we can hear and understand what God is asking each one of us as a person and a church. It is only by acting on what God says we can make a difference in the world. As the communion service reminds us, though we are many we are one body because we all share in the one loaf, the body of Christ.

We are at the moment living in a very strange time, where we can't be together with friends and family. where we can't meet as a whole church to worship together. We may feel alone, but God's love is very constant for us. When I was looking at today's readings, they reminded me of the rocks on a beach and some of the words of the Paul Simon song "I Am A Rock" where he states "I am alone, I am a rock, I am an island, I've built walls, a fortress deep and mighty that none can penetrate." He doesn't need friendship, he's burying all his emotions, away so he can no longer feel pain, no one can touch him because he a rock, an island and a rock feels no pain and an island never cries.

The rock that Jesus gave us is steadfast and a very secure foundation for everyone to grow with together in faith. It's not the rock the song talks about, but a joining together as one in the fellowship of Christ to become a whole rock with no barriers, with no walls to hide behind, but with a welcome for everyone. There may still be some tears along the way but it's also going to be built on a sharing of love, laughter, worship and most important our trust in God.

Salford Methodist Circuit



And to reaffirm our trust in God, we are now going to sing the hymn 'Trust and Obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.'

Hymn - Trust and Obey

*When we walk with the Lord
In the light of his word,
What a glory he sheds on our way!
While we do his good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey:*

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.*

*Not a burden we bear,
Not a sorrow we share,
But our toil he doth richly repay;
Not a grief nor a loss,
Not a frown not a cross,
But is blest if we trust and obey:*

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.*

*But we never can prove
The delights of his love
Until all on the altar we lay;
For the favour he shows,
And the joy he bestows,
Are for them who will trust and obey:*

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.*

*Then in fellowship sweet
We will sit at his feet,
Or we'll walk by his side in the way;
What he says we will do,
Where he sends we will go –
Never fear, only trust and obey:*

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.*

Salford Methodist Circuit



We come now to a our prayers of Thanksgiving and for others.

Lord,

We bring you our heartfelt thanks for your constant love for us and your faithfulness to us. For the many blessings we have received which show themselves in many different ways, in the beauty of creation, the love of family and friends and the answering of prayer at the time you know is right for our individual circumstances. For all these and many others we offer you our thanks and praise.

Your Kingdom come

Your will be done.

Lord, the psalmist tells us that when we are troubled you protect us against our enemies. We ask that you grant us that protection now Lord, that you will protect all your children wherever they are from further suffering due to the global pandemic, from starvation, war and all forms of disaster.

Your Kingdom come

Your will be done.

We pray for your protection on all those in the medical profession, the social care sector, and all key workers that they might know your protective presence with them as they go about their daily tasks. We pray too for those who are researching and developing treatments and vaccines for Covid-19.

Your Kingdom come

Your will be done.

We pray for all those who are finding themselves at a crossroads in their lives due to loss of employment and all the young people who have been affected by the flawed process of determining their exam results asking that you give all them encouragement, hope and strength to re-build their lives. We continue to pray for our leaders in government at local, national and international levels. Grant them wisdom to do what is right for local, national and international communities so that your people see justice being done and peace and prosperity for all.

Your Kingdom come

Your will be done.

We pray for your blessing and protection on our families and our friends both near and far, thinking especially of those who are ill, those recently bereaved or struggling in any way. You know who these people are Lord, hold them in the palms of your hands.

We pray for ourselves asking for your protection and strength as we go about our daily lives – trying to be your eyes, hands and feet in our world today.



Your Kingdom come
Your will be done.

And we draw all our prayers together this morning as we join in saying the traditional form of the Lord's Prayer.

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen.*

We're going to sing our next hymn now, which is 'Take my Life and Let it be' a hymn where we commit ourselves to the work of God and listen to what he wants us to do by giving ourselves wholly to him.

Hymn - Take My Life

*Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

*Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.*

*Take my voice, and let me sing
always, only, for my King;
take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee.*

*Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect, and use
every power as thou shalt choose.*

Take my will, and make it thine;

Salford Methodist Circuit



*it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart – it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.*

*Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure-store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.*

As we close our service this morning, we want to leave you with 'Go Peaceful' by Paul Field which is going to be played and sung by Clare. We pray that this will bring you peace throughout the coming weeks and days. Amen

Song - Go Peaceful

*Go peaceful
in gentleness
through the violence of these days.
Give freely.
Show tenderness
in all your ways.*

*Through darkness,
In troubled times
let holiness be your aim.
Seek wisdom.
Let faithful
burn like a flame.
God speed you!
God lead you,
and keep you wrapped around his heart!
May you be known by love.*

*Be righteous.
Speak truthfully
in a world of greed and lies.
Show kindness.
See everyone
through heaven's eyes.*

*God hold,
enfold you,
and keep you wrapped around his heart!
May you be known by love.*

Salford Methodist Circuit



CCL: 30925

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Words and Music: © 1923, renewed 1951, Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188, USA. All rights reserved

When We Walk With The Lord - John Henry Sammis

Take My Life And Let It Be - Frances Ridley Havergal

Go Peaceful - Paul Field

Words and Music: Paul Field, © Meadowgreen Music / EMI Christian Music Publishing. Administered by Kevin Mayhew Limited.

Reproduced by permission of Kevin Mayhew Limited (www.kevinmayhew.com)