

have given up on this idiot long ago. We would have come to the conclusion that he will never change, he is too wrapped up in his own ideas and his own world that he will never change. He is too set in his attitude about the Ninevites about the judgement he thinks they deserve; it might be better to just choose someone else. But notice how God comes back to Jonah again and again. He doesn't give up. He rescues him from a watery grave and orders a big fish to swallow him. He is patient with Jonah's half-hearted effort in delivering his message, and to top it all off he hangs in there when Jonah becomes angry with God saying, "I knew it! I knew you would be loving and merciful. I knew that you would go back on what you said and save the people of Nineveh!" God hasn't changed one bit from the days of Jonah. We know how frustrated and impatient we can get with other people and so you can imagine how frustrated and impatient God must get with us. The way we hurt others around us through our selfishness and lack of consideration and the way we hurt God with our sin must leave him upset and offended. And yet he doesn't let this get in the way of his love and mercy and, like he did for Jonah, he comes back to us again and again wanting us to love him, trust him and turn our lives around from self-centredness and sin to lives of love, and patience and understanding. Just as God spoke his word through Jonah, as poor and inadequate as Jonah's effort was, he speaks to us through the Bible, through other people, through our parents, neighbours and friends, calling us to trust him and believe in him as the God who loved us so dearly that he sent his Son, Jesus into this world to be our Saviour. The Son of God came to earth and from his earliest days on this earth, he was hated and hunted down by kings and rulers and religious leaders. He did this because of his love for us. He lived in this world and endured hunger, pain, thirst, sadness and death that he would not have endured had he stayed in heaven. He did it for us. He died, not a peaceful and quiet death, but with nails in his hands and feet, a crown of thorns pressing on his head, because of his love for you and me. Jesus came to this earth to tell us that believing and trusting in him is the only way to eternal life. He said it clearly and plainly, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no-one goes to the Father except by me." Jesus has promised to walk with us all the days of our lives through the ups and downs. He has assured us that he will always be there for us to call on in times of sickness, sadness, trouble, even death. The love that God has for us is stated over and over again in the Bible. That's how God felt about the people of Nineveh and grumpy Jonah. That's the way God feels about you! So, people can change – despite what many may think. "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" well, let me tell you, you can... I've worked for Children's Services for almost 25 years now, supporting vulnerable children and families and I've heard time and time again "people with problems almost never change,

real change, is rare." But I've seen first-hand that with the right support and guidance people can change for the better. So, the people who say these things are probably just like Jonah - not believing that God has the power to bring about change in the lives and hearts on the people of Nineveh. But this is where faith comes in.

Faith is the willingness to be amazed, shocked by the surprising changes that God can bring about in our lives. Faith is the willingness to be surprised at the depth and power of God's love for us and his constant willingness never to give up on us. Faith is the willingness to believe that with God's power in our lives we can change. The first words Jesus preached after his baptism were "turn away from your sin and believe." They are as relevant to us today as they were when they were first spoken. When we take God seriously, don't be surprised when he challenges us to make some radical and risky changes in our lives. In fact, just when we have our world settled, fixed, finished, God comes along with his amazing grace and turns our whole life around. That's what happened at Nineveh when Jonah preached. And that's what happens when God and his never-ending love touches our lives. **Amen**

HYMN - MEEKNESS AND MAJESTY

MEEKNESS AND MAJESTY,

Manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony,
The Man who is God.
Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility, And washes our feet.

*O what a mystery,
Meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship
For this is your God,
This is your God.*

Father's pure radiance,
Perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience
To death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life,
Conquering through sacrifice,
And as they crucify prays: 'Father forgive.'

Wisdom unsearchable,
God the invisible,
Love indestructible
In frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity
To the heights of His throne.

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the Knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**



Welcome to issue number 44. It's now ten months since all these worship sheet began. Matthew and I were comparing the first recorded service to those of recent weeks. In March 2020 the hymns were projected on the screen in church and then recorded by phone. These days, Matthew produces a more professional recording of services. Each hymn has three or more recordings behind it, to get the best sound quality possible. Each hymn line has a picture behind it that is then copied into it. Thank you, Matthew for all you do.

HYMN - IN CHRIST ALONE

IN CHRIST ALONE my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;

This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!

My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! – who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied –
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine –
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

LET US PRAY

Lord, we know our futures are in Your hands and that You show us mercy and grace daily. Help us to praise You with all of our hearts, soul, mind and strength so we can change our experiences in the wilderness to opportunities to show the people we meet Your love. Lord, You suffered so we could have life in You and life in abundance. Thank You for blessing us with Your presence today. Amen.

HYMN - RESTORE, O LORD

RESTORE, O LORD,

The honour of Your name,
In works of sovereign power
Come shake the earth again;
That men may see
And come with reverent fear
To the living God,
Whose kingdom shall outlast the years.

Restore, O Lord,
In all the earth Your fame,
And in our time revive
The church that bears Your name.
And in Your anger,
Lord, remember mercy,
O living God,
Whose mercy shall outlast the years.

Bend us, O Lord,
Where we are hard and cold,
In Your refiner's fire
Come purify the gold.
Though suffering comes
And evil crouches near,
Still our living God
Is reigning, He is reigning here.

EVENING PRAYER

Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. *Matthew 3:2*

Enter not into judgement with Thy servant, O Lord; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. *1 John 1:8,9*

DEARLY beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me:

ALmighty and most merciful Father, We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy

laws, We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done, And there is no health in us: But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders; Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults, Restore thou them that are penitent, According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord: And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel. Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy; so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.

The Lord's Name be praised.

BIBLE READING - JONAH 3:1-5, 10

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ²"Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." ³Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." ⁵The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

¹⁰When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD - THANKS BE TO GOD.

NUNC DIMITTIS - Luke 2:29

LORD, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace : according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen : thy salvation,

Which thou hast prepared : before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles : and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. *Amen.*

THE APOSTLES' CREED

IBELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth :

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into hell; The third day he rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick Church; The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray. - Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the Queen.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon Thee.

Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.

And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people.

And bless thine inheritance.

Give us peace in our time, O Lord.

Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

O God, make clean our hearts within us.

And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

COLLECT - 3rd SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth Thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O GOD, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by Thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

LIGHTEN our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

HYMN - ALL OF MY HEART

*All of my heart, all of my soul,
All of my mind, all of my strength.
All of my heart, all of my soul,
All of my mind, all of my strength.*

With everything within me,
I want to praise You Lord
I want to love You with all that I am,
And bring joy to Your heart.

Chorus

Repeat verse, adding:

Let me bring joy to Your heart
All of my life.

O LORD our heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth: Most heartily we beseech Thee with thy favour to behold our most gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen ELIZABETH; and all the Royal Family: Endue them with thy Holy Spirit; enrich them with thy heavenly grace; prosper them with all happiness; and bring them to thine everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who alone workest great marvels: Send down upon our Bishops and Clergy, and all Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful

Spirit of thy grace; and that they may truly please Thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

THE grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

HYMN - GOD WILL MAKE A WAY - Don Moen

God will make a way
Where there seems to be no way
He works in ways we cannot see
He will make a way for me
He will be my guide
Hold me closely to His side

With love and strength for each new day
He will make a way, He will make a way
(REPEAT)

By a roadway in the wilderness, He'll lead me
And rivers in the desert will I see
Heaven and Earth will fade
but His word will still remain
And He will do something new today

Oh, God will make a way
Where there seems to be no way
He works in ways we cannot see
He will make a way for me
He will be my guide
Hold me closely to His side
With love and strength for each new day
He will make a way, He will make a way

JUST A BRIEF WORD - Revd Mark

The story about Jonah and the big fish has to be a favourite of many children. It has something of a fairy tale quality about it. It's not only a story that appeals to the imagination, but it's also a story about one of God's most reluctant prophets.

The Ninevites had caused so much grief and pain to the people in the surrounding countries so why should he go there as God's messenger and call them to change their ways? They won't change and Jonah didn't want them to change. They only deserved God's wrath. But Jonah knew that God was loving and merciful and that he was great on giving second chances but as far as the Ninevites were concerned they didn't deserve a second chance? Why should such horrible, cruel and merciless people be given the opportunity to repent and change their ways? Besides, people like that don't change. And even though Jonah tries to ignore God's call and boards a ship for a place on the edge of the world – called Tarshish, God still persists and sends a storm and a big fish which swallows Jonah and rescues him from death. But, whilst in the belly of this fish Jonah relents and after three days he is vomited up onto the beach.

Jonah walks through this enormous city calling out a simple message – not a call to repentance, not a message of God's love, only a threat, "In forty days Nineveh will be destroyed!" It seems as if Jonah is making his message as offensive and as blunt as he possibly can. All the time trying to prove a point to God, "See, people like this don't change?" But that's where he's wrong – out of the blue a miracle happens. The entire city from the king down to the poorest peasant believed God's message. Even the sheep and cattle are involved. Everyone put on sackcloth and ashes and prayed to God that he would not destroy them. This is every ministers dream. A whole city of people turning to God. But what are we to make of this whole story about Jonah? As I said at the beginning this Old Testament story makes a great story for children but what message does God want to convey to us today? Well, most importantly this is a story of God's love and mercy. Look how often God was patient with Jonah. If it was up to us, we would