

Who did this?

Sunday 25 April 2021

Call to Worship

Psalm 133

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.

**He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.**

**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.**

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

**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.**

O what a gift

O what a gift, what a wonderful gift;
Who can tell the wonders of the Lord?
Let us open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts;
It is Christ the Lord, it is He!

In the stillness of the night,
When the world was asleep,
The Lord made His message known.
It was then that His word came down from on high,
From the Father's royal throne;
Christ our Lord and our King!

He came to his people, the chosen race,
That his Father's will would be known;
Lion of Judah, Light of the World,
Our Redeemer came to his own:
Christ our Lord and our King!

Now look around you and open your eyes;
Remember the Spirit is here.
Here within his Church, his people are one.
Look, the Lord is near:
Christ our Lord and our King!

[Reading](#) John 10:11-18

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

[Prayer of Adoration and Confession – Colin Harvey](#)

Father, we just want to stop for a moment to say Thank You.
You have been to each of us, a Father we have never deserved.
Unlike our earthly fathers that are limited in resources and ability,
You are sovereign. You do anything You want, anytime You want. I And You're
not answerable to anyone.
It is the best privilege to be Yours, we are truly grateful.
Lord Jesus, You are the best Lord. You are true and real.
Even if the world proves You false,
Your goodness and faithfulness is the rock upon which our confidence in You is
built.
We thank You because this confidence cannot be shaken.
Father, when we pay attention to the love You have gifted each of us,

When we think and meditate on it, our hearts cannot understand it.
How can a God so vast, Live in each of us, so small?
For You have called us as sons and daughters in Your kingdom.
You've given us first, Faith to believe, Then, the power to be.
Creator of the universe we praise You.
When we consider the works of Your hands- The sun, the moon and the stars,
We am left in awe of who You are, and what You can do.
you control times and seasons, Situations and circumstances.
Before the beginning of time, You have been God. After the end of eternity,
you still will be God
Almighty Father!
You know the things hidden in the depths of the hearts of people.
You see actions in darkness, and You are aware of motives.
Please, search our hearts and make them right with You. Gracious God, our
sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive.
what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear. Set us free
from a past that we cannot change; open to us, the future in which we can be
changed; and grant us the grace to grow more in your likeness and love. We
are asking You to forgive us, for all our sin, not on the bases of our good works
or what we will do, but what you, Lord Jesus, have already done for each of us,
at the Cross. Saviour of the world, Thank You for going all the way to Calvary
for each of us,
Thank You for showing us, love we do not deserve, Thank You for healing our
hearts from the hurt of sin, and setting them ablaze for You.
O Lord Jesus, rescue every heart in this world.
May the world see the wonders You do, In our lives, every day. Amen

Reflection

Kiribati and Climate Change

Population of around 119 000. 32 atolls and one raised coral island, with a total land area of 811 square kilometres. The only country in the world to be situated in all four hemispheres. The people are currently negotiating with a number of countries and have bought 20km² of land in Fiji for the possibility of mass migration as sea level rises makes it impossible to remain.

- What feelings and thoughts come as you look at this picture?
- What stories from the Bible, from church experiences can you apply to this picture?
- What is God saying to you through this picture?

Notices

The Peace

Indescribable

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea
Creation's revealing Your majesty
From the colours of fall to the fragrance of spring
Every creature unique in the song that it sings
All exclaiming

Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light
Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night
None can fathom

Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
Incomparable, unchangeable
You see the depths of my heart and You love me the same
You are amazing God
You are amazing God

Reading Acts 4:5-12

⁵ The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem,
⁶ with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were
of the high-priestly family. ⁷ When they had made the prisoners stand in their
midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸ Then
Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders,
⁹ if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who
was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all
of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in

good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. ¹¹ This Jesus is

‘the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.’

¹² There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”

Message Who did this?

Have you ever been into a room to find it utterly trashed? You look around to find the perpetrator sitting in the middle of the room looking up innocently. ‘Who did this?’ Comes the question. ‘It wasn’t me,’ is the immediate response, sometimes followed by a few tears to lay it on thick. Kids can be funny. Thing is, it’s not so funny when the culprit is a bit older. We see it frequently in the courts when someone who is quite obviously culpable pleads not guilty. It can be interesting to watch the news with a few people when someone is being charged with a crime. All of a sudden there will be a group of legal experts yelling at the screen telling the talking head why it is or isn’t so. Put them away for life. Bring back the death penalty. There’s no way they’re guilty. The system is rigged against them.

I suspect it may have been a little like that when Peter and John were taken before the high priest and his family. Let’s take a few moments to get it all in context for the courtly family. They had dealt with Jesus – at least as far as they knew. It had been a messy affair and yes, there had been some recriminations. But it had to be done, and now that it was, best to move on. The house was being put back in order. The Sabbath worship was happening without disruption again and the various marketers and salespeople who kept the temple running through sales of sacrifice materials and the like were back on deck after that disastrous mess that Jesus had made. Even the people were beginning to get on with life as usual. The beggars were back in their places and ordinary folk went about their business as if nothing untoward had ever happened. Things were starting to get back to normal and that was definitely a good thing. A place for everything, and everything in its place.

And now these two had come in and messed up the room. Some low-life beggar sitting by the Temple had been healed and was running around as if he had never walked in his life. The other beggars were running around telling everyone within earshot of what had happened. And everyone else was running to see what was going on. It was chaos out there! And to make matters worse some of those Jesus disciples were talking up a storm and

telling everyone that he wasn't really dead. As if! Something definitely needed to be done. The only for it was to have the culprits arrested. The guards were duly sent and the Peter and John characters were left in prison overnight so they could consider their various misdeeds and sins.

Meanwhile the various leaders gathered together and arranged a court hearing for the offenders the next day. It was quite an assemblage of the important people of the city, well the important Jewish people of the city. By the time you had the rulers, the elders, the scribes and the high-priest along with all his family there must have been at least 60 or 70 men plus any hangers-on who managed to find their way in. Which is something of an indicator of just how worried all these people were about what was happening.

Have you ever had the sense that something was going on, but you couldn't quite put your finger on what it is? It's one part intuition, one part situational awareness, and one part, 'who knows!?' I suspect that this is what was happening for these leaders. They knew something was going on, but they couldn't quite figure out exactly what and how it was going on. They thought they had nipped the issue in the bud when they had Jesus crucified, but it just wasn't going away. There had to be more to what was going on, but they couldn't identify just what it was. And this disruption here was clearly a part of the puzzle. Uneducated, uncouth men like these had no right to be speaking out as clearly and fluently as they were. And people were listening to them too.

That meant that as leaders they had a responsibility to get to the bottom of the matter, and quickly, before things got out of hand. The last thing they needed was for the next room to be trashed and then the next, because then the Romans might take an interest, and nobody wanted to go there.

Of course that kind of begs a question: Why did all this matter so much anyway? The most obvious answer is that Jesus and his disciples threatened the power structures of the time. If the people were listening to and celebrating Jesus, then they weren't listening to and celebrating the cartel who thought they should be in charge. On the surface, that is a reasonable and logical answer. It is also an answer that can mean we don't look deeper. And I think that when we look deeper it was about far more than a simple power struggle.

For at least several hundred years and potentially up to a couple of millennia there had been a very clear pathway for people to communicate with God. The priesthood were the conduit who passed messages from the people to God

and from God to the people. The priesthood were a small group of men who took their role as mediators between God and human beings very seriously. And as a part of that they got to choose who was in and who was out. In a way they were gatekeepers and if you wanted to get into see God you had to go through them. So historically, politically and traditionally everything about who they were and how they were – their very identity – was threatened by the message Jesus, and subsequently the disciples, brought to the people. If it turned out to be true that people no longer needed to go through the priesthood to commune with God, then they were out of a job. More than that, they no longer had reason to exist as priests at all.

And that is where it gets really interesting. Look at Acts 5:12 “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.” That is the sucker punch to the traditional religious leaders of Israel. You are no longer necessary. The role that you have held for generations has no place in the new way of being. Why? Because there is salvation in no-one else but Jesus. And when people find their salvation in Jesus they also find a direct line to God. Salvation is not about what sacrifices we bring. It is not about whether we say the correct words. It is not about following a particular set of rituals. It is about receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

In Jesus we find a mediator who is no longer bound to traditions and rituals. We find a mediator whose sits at the right hand of God. Who intercedes for us unceasingly and who is the bond that holds us in the heightless, depthless love of God. A mediator who knows and cares intimately for his own, just as a shepherd cares for the flock in their care. Just as farmer watches over the herd and knows each one, the docile, the bolshie, the leaders and the followers. This Jesus has laid down his life for each and every one in his care.

Today is ANZAC day. It is a day that many in our communities around New Zealand set aside to remember the sacrifice of the men and women who fought in two world wars and other wars since. In a very real way they laid down their lives for a people and a way of life. Yet there is a difference between their actions and those of Jesus because none of them knew me. I have known none of them. There is no personal relationship involved. I cannot for a second presume to know or understand the motives of those who went away to fight or to support those who fought. I do not know what they thought as they bled and died or as their minds were slowly peeled away by the horrors of war. And I am grateful that they were prepared to pay the price they paid

although I'm not convinced that if they knew me it would be sufficient motivation to go through it all.

Yet the difference remains. Jesus paid the ultimate price for me. In spite of what he knows about me. In fact, because of what he knows about me. He knows that I will never be able to connect with God through my own efforts. I need a good shepherd who not only lays down his life, but takes it up again so that I can be in relationship with God.

And the funny thing is that Jesus continues to mess up the room. I have no sooner got my thinking in order about how the world is and how I fit in it, than Jesus comes and asks me to step out of the safety and comfort of my boat and walk to him. I'm pretty sure he does that for all of us – if we let him. I've always wondered about the disciples who didn't get out of the boat. What might have happened for them if they had walked on water too? Bears thinking about.

We Pray

Good, good shepherd who knows and calls us by name. You see into the depths of our hearts. You know our thoughts before they even occur to us. How we long to be held by you. You pray for us constantly and search out the best for us. Help me, help all of us, to receive your love and your mercy. Help us to live in relationship with God and to step out of our comfort and into your grace and presence. Teach us to walk on water, not because it is cool to walk on water but because it gets us closer to you.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen

How great is our God

The splendour of a king, clothed in majesty
Let all the earth rejoice, all the earth rejoice
He wraps Himself in light and darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice, trembles at His voice

How great is our God, sing with me how great is our God
And all will see how great, how great is our God

Age to age He stands and time is in His hands
Beginning and the end, beginning and the end
The Godhead Three in One, Father, Spirit and Son
The Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb

Name above all names, worthy of all praise
My heart will sing how great is our God

Offering

Ever-present God who speaks in thunder and earthquakes and in the softest whisper: we long to hear your voice over all the noise of the world this day. In a world so divided and polarized, we need to hear not only the voice of the Shepherd but the cries of other sheep who are being marginalized, forgotten, and abandoned. May the gifts we offer today be our response to hearing the one who speaks in the language of love and compassion. In his holy name, Amen.

Prayer for Ourselves and Others – Catherine Harvey

Oh Holy one.

We come to you so often with our own wants and our needs. Please forgive us for being so inward looking. We now intentionally turn our thoughts to the needs of others and petition you on their behalf.

As we read our newspapers and watch the news on TV we are confronted by man's inhumanity to man. The ongoing repression of democracy in Hong Kong and Myanmar resulting in imprisonments and death of those who dare to challenge the autocratic regimes. The amassing of Russian troops on the Ukrainian border, the continues wastage of resources by richer nations while third world countries suffer from hunger, lack of medical supplies and lose hope.

Oh Loving One, please help us to not just be made aware of these situations throughout the world, but also look at ways that we can make a positive difference, no matter how small or inadequate it may feel.

As the corona virus impacts on so many families throughout the world, we pray for comfort and peace, not only for those who contact the virus and the families of those who have died from it, but also for those who are suffering from anxiety and separation from their loved ones. We pray that the vaccine will prove to be effective and available for all. We pray that the people who have the responsibility of giving advice to the decision makers, will do their research thoroughly and give wise counsel. We pray that the decision makers will listen to them and base their decisions on that wise counsel.

Here in our own town we are aware that not everyone enjoys an easy and satisfying life. Families have been torn apart by alcohol and drug abuse. Some folk do not have a place to call their home, others are unable to find work and some people simply do not wish to find work. Lord, please help us to be less judgemental and instead look at ways we can assist the various organisations who seek to alleviate these situations. Thank you for those folk who responded

to the call to assist in the Buddy programme. We pray that the buddies they team up with will benefit greatly from those relationships.

We pray that the relatives and friends of the young lad from Fiji, who was taken off life support last week, will be comforted and strengthened and know your peace. Especially his school friends from St. Kevin's. We pray for wisdom and sensitivity for the staff at St Kevin's as they journey with those affected by this young lad's accident and death.

Lord we pray for your love to enfold those who have lost loved ones recently. As we name these people in our hearts Lord, we pray for your comfort and peace and for their memories to bring a smile to their faces and in their hearts. As we join together in the prayer that you taught us, may we mean every word we say. Let us pray together the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, holy 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.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen

The King of Love

The King of love my Shepherd is,

Whose goodness faileth never;

I nothing lack if I am his

And he is mine for ever.

Where streams of living water flow

My ransomed soul he leadeth,

And where the verdant pastures grow

With food celestial feedeth.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill

With thee, dear Lord, beside me;

Thy rod and staff my comfort still,

Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
Thy unction, grace bestoweth:
And O what transport of delight
From thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
Within thy house for ever.

Benediction and Grace

May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God,
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, now and forevermore. Amen.