**14th March 2021 10.30 am Mothering Sunday Neil & Glynis**

**Call to worship Psalm 148:1-6**

Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord from the heavens;

Praise him in the heights above.

Praise him, all his angels;

Praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

Praise him, sun and moon;

Praise him, all you shining stars.

Praise him, you highest heavens

and you waters above the skies.

Let them praise the name of the Lord

for at his command they were created,

and he established them for ever and ever.

Amen.

**Hymn No. MP 506 How great thou art**

O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder

consider all the works Thy hand hath made.

I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,

Thy power throughout the universe displayed;

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,*

*How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,*

*How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander

and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees

when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,

and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;

*Then sings my soul*....

And when I think that God His Son not sparing,

sent him to die - I scarce can take it in,

that on the cross my burden gladly bearing,

He bled and died to take away my sin:

*Then sings my soul*....

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation

and take me home - what joy shall fill my heart!

Then shall I bow in humble adoration,

and there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

*Then sings my soul*....

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**Prayer and Lord’s Prayer**

**A Prayer for Mothering Sunday**

Thank you God for the love of our Mothers;

thank you God for their care and concern;

thank you God for the joys

they have shared with us;

thank you God for the pains

they have borne for us;

thank you God for all that they give us;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

**…Lord’s Prayer**

**Notices, Mission Prayer & Dedication of Offering**

**Reading: 2 Kings 4 Verses 8 to 37**

**Reading: Hebrews 4 Verse 12**

**Hymn No. MP 33 And can it be**

And can it be that I should gain

an interest in the Saviour's blood?

Died He for me, who caused His pain?

For me, who Him to death pursued?

Amazing love! How can it be

that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

‘Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies:

who can explore His strange design?

In vain the first-born seraph tries

to sound the depths of love divine.

‘Tis mercy all! let earth adore,

let angel-minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above -

so free, so infinite His grace -

emptied Himself of all but love,

and bled for Adam's helpless race.

'Tis mercy all, immense and free;

for, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay

fast bound in sin and nature's night;

Thine eye diffused a quickening ray -

I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;

my chains fell off, my heart was free,

I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;

Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!

Alive in Him, my living Head,

and clothed in righteousness divine,

bold I approach the eternal throne,

and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

CHARLES WESLEY (1707-88) CCLI 150801

**MAKING A ROOM FOR GOD**

I find preparation for anything very challenging and stressful but I like the end results. I guess it's because I am a last minute person and planning is not my strongpoint. In the book of 2 Kings 4 from verse 8 we find the Shunammite woman giving Elisha a very warm welcome into her home with a delicious meal every time he came. She discerned that Elisha was a holy man of God and she suggested to her husband that they must make a small room for him and put in it a bed, a table, a chair and a lamp. Then he can stay there whenever he went to them.

There were no mobile phones for Elisha to ring for his next visit therefore he just turned up as if it was his own home and he was welcomed with warm hands by this woman and her husband. The Bible says in Hebrews 13 v 2 "*Do not forget to entertain strangers for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it".* On one of his visitations Elisha called this lady into his room made by her and her husband, to find out as to what can be done for them to return the favour but the Shunnammite woman was too wealthy to ask for anything, but Gehazi, Elisha's servant noticed that she did not have a child and her husband was very old.

He called her a second time, and in verses 15-16 Elisha told her that she will have a son by this time next year. I don’t think she was prepared for this as she objected the prophecy and did not want to raise her hopes up, however in verse 17 this woman became pregnant and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her. In verse 18 we find this child getting a headache and died. If you remember prior to this, the lady objected because she didn't want to raise her hopes up. Now the child is dead, and this lady went straight to Elisha and asks him to solve the problem. Prior to going to Elisha, she laid her dead child on the same bed that she put in Elisha's room and that is where the boy was brought to life by Elisha.

This woman prepared a room for the man of God. As I prepared this sermon I asked myself as to what does this story mean to me? Preparing a room in my heart for God to come in with no hidden agenda, where I can enjoy His company and gaze upon His beauty because He is so beautiful. Psalm 34 v 5 declares that those who look to Him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. When we create that room in our hearts for Him, He gives us that peace that surpasses all understanding and that joy of knowing that we are the apple of His eye.

She also put a bed in Elisha's room. I guess it had a lovely bedspread and it was clean and inviting for Elisha. How do we prepare a bed for God in our hearts? By keeping our hearts pure and walking in His ways. Does He need to lie down? No, He never sleeps nor slumbers but He comes in and joins in our sleep. No skeleton in the closet is allowed but allowing God to come and bask in the luxury of your heart and takes away your fears, worries and anxieties gives you a spring in your footsteps.

She also put a table in this room. This is when we invite God to come and dine with us as we feast in His word and ask Him to show, to guide and lead us in the way we should go. *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow and discerning the thoughts and intensions of the heart”* [Hebrews 4 v 12]. In His word that is where you find peace when troubled, joy when sad and discouraged, healing when sick. It is our manual, BIBLE [basic instructions before leaving earth]. That is why the Bible says in Deuteronomy the power of life and death is in the tongue hence we have to be careful what we say with our mouths. Jeremiah declares that God's word came and he ate it. It is our divine food to keep us spiritually healthy and satisfied in Jesus's name.

This Shunammite woman also put a chair for Elisha to sit on it, I guess when he was dining on his table. Through our worship we create a seat for God to come and sit on it as He inhabits the praises of His people. Jesus said in John 4 V 23 [B] worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. How the unnamed woman in Luke 7 v 36-39 worshipped Jesus by anointing his feet by pouring oil [from the alabaster jar] on His feet and wiped His feet with her hair, and the fragrance of her worship filled the room. When we worship God, we create a seat for Him to come and enjoy our company. Though life is stormy, this is the key to breakthrough, just worshipping God and basking in His unfailing love, absorbing and feeling His amazing Grace. What a good God we serve. Worship is not just singing but reminding God of His goodness and mercy. Telling Him how good He is and just in your quietness meditating on what He means in your life.

The last item she put in Elisha's room was a lamp. Psalm 119 v 105 declares that *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”* Mathew 5 v 14-16 declares that we are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. As we walk this journey of faith, let us be a lamp that is not hidden but be seen by all so that God will be glorified. When the boy died the Shunnamite woman used the same items she put for the man of God for her son's resurrection. Whatever we are doing for God, we shouldn't get discouraged because God will one day use it to resurrect our dead gifts etc. When we work for Him, we should not look to the left and to the right but focus on Him because He is the Author and the Finisher of our faith. His reward is better than any wealthy men and women put together. In Ephesians 3 v 20 the Bible says that God is able to do exceedingly above and beyond what we can think or imagine according to His power that is at work within us. We serve a living and a loving God therefore we have to create a room, put a bed, a chair, a table and a lamp in our hearts for His greater Glory. Hallelujah! Amen.

**Hymn No. MP 543 Onward Christian Soldiers**

Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war,

with the cross of Jesus going on before.

Christ the royal Master leads against the foe;

forward into battle, see, His banners go!

*Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,*

*with the cross of Jesus going on before.*

At the name of Jesus Satan's legions flee;

on then, Christian soldiers, on to victory.

Hell's foundations quiver at the shout of praise;

brothers, lift your voices, loud your anthems raise.

*Onward, Christian soldiers* ...

Like a mighty army moves the Church of God;

brothers, we are treading where the saints have trod;

we are not divided, all one body we,

one in hope and calling, one in charity.

*Onward, Christian soldiers* ...

Crowns and thrones may perish,

kingdoms rise and wane,

but the Church of Jesus constant will remain;

gates of hell can never 'gainst that Church prevail;

We have Christ's own promise, and that cannot fail.

*Onward, Christian soldiers* ...

Onward, then, ye people, join our happy throng,

blend with ours your voices in the triumph-song;

glory, praise and honour unto Christ the King;

This through countless ages men and angels sing.

*Onward, Christian soldiers* ...

Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924) CCLI 150801

**Prayers of Intercession**

Ever gracious and loving God on this Mothering Sunday we thank you for all Mothers and we thank you for our Mother Church. We pray at this time for all in our fellowship at Westfield - that every member and friend of this church would sense your great love, your great peace and the joy of knowing Christ Jesus. Please continue to protect the NHS staff and those working in care homes and in the clinics. Please may the vaccines people are taking help to reduce the infection of Covid-19 and reduce hospitalisations and deaths. Be with everyone in society who are affected by the pandemic and strengthen those who have little hope for their future. Lord, please especially bless, guide and inspire our leaders at this time, and may the coming together of our communities this last year because of COVID-19 have left a legacy of habitual sharing, caring and kind acts amongst our people. We pray for the Duke who is in hospital that he would be able to return to his family soon. We pray for the wars and conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Armenia to end and we pray for those persecuted because of their Christian faith. Bless the children of the world wherever they live and may they see and grow up in a world that cares and protects them more. Come close to the diseased, those who are hungry, those who are homeless and those who have nothing to look forward to. Father, make your church strong and one that speaks the love and salvation of Jesus in to the lives of many across the world. In the precious and beautiful name of Jesus we bring all these prayers. Amen.

**SHINE come to share with us**

**A Prayer for Mothering Sunday**

Thank you God for the love of our Mothers;

thank you God for their care and concern;

thank you God for the joys

they have shared with us;

thank you God for the pains

they have borne for us;

thank you God for all that they give us;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

**Hymn No. MP 31 Amazing Grace**

Amazing grace - how sweet the sound –

that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

was blind, but now I see.

‘Twas grace that taught my heart to fear ,

and grace my fears relieved;

how precious did that grace appear

the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares

I have already come;

‘tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,

and grace will lead me home.

When we’ve been there ten thousand years

bright shining as the sun,

we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise

than when we’ve first begun.

JOHN NEWTON (1725-1807) CCLI 150801

**The Grace shared together**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us today and for ever more. Amen.