

## Traditional Home service

### Sunday 4th July

#### OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

#### PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

**O King enthroned on high,  
filling the earth with your glory:  
holy is your name,  
Lord God almighty.  
In our sinfulness we cry to you  
to take our guilt away,  
and to cleanse our lips to speak your  
word, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

#### PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts. Open our lips, Lord:  
**and we shall praise your name.**

#### HYMN 1 (*Amazing grace*)

READINGS - 2 Samuel 5.1-5,9-10  
2 Corinthians 12.2-10  
Mark 6.1-13

#### TALK

#### CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

#### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.*

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed 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. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

#### HYMN 2 (*Be still, my soul*)

#### CONCLUSION

May God give to you and to all those you love his comfort and his peace, his light and his joy, in this world and the next; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

## HYMNS TO USE

1 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.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils and snares

I have already come:

'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,

and grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me,  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

5 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,

and mortal life shall cease:

I shall possess, within the veil,  
a life of joy and peace.

6 The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,  
the sun forbear to shine;  
but God, who called me here below,  
will be forever mine.

Be still, my soul, The Lord is on thy side

Bear patiently, the cross of grief or pain

Leave to thy God, to order and provide  
In every change, He faithful will remain

Be still, my soul, thy best thy heavenly friend

Through thorny ways, leads to a joyful end

Be still, my soul, thy God doth undertake

To guide the future as He has the past  
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake

All now mysterious shall be bright at last

Be still, my soul, the waves and wind still know

His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below

*In You I rest, in You I found my hope*

*In You I trust, You never let me go*

*I place my life within Your hands alone*

*Be still, my soul*

Be still, my soul, the hour is hastening on

When we shall be forever with the Lord

When disappointment, grief and fear are gone

Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored

Be still, my soul, when change and tears are past

All safe and blessed, we shall meet at last

*In You I rest, ...*

Sermon Notes - Matthew Beeby  
2 Corinthians 12:2-10

In today's reading there is a lot of references to our struggles, we live through them with Paul as he struggles to establish the early churches. As well as this reading, we are going to look at a couple of stories about struggles and we will see if they can help shape our attitudes towards a subject that all of us will contend with at some point or another, and of course some more than others.

Watchman Nee, the Chinese church leader and evangelist, who did immeasurable work in the 20's and 30's recounts a story. He was leading a group of Chinese Evangelists, who were going from village to village preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. One day they were resting beside a lake and the party chose to use their time washing clothes and bathing.

After a while, one of the number got into severe difficulties and was shouting at the top of his voice for help, floundering in the centre of the lake. Watchman Nee looked at the guy standing next to him, Nee knew that this guy was a very strong swimmer, yet he stood there looking, making no move. There were more shouts, the struggler was getting more and more frantic, to the astonished Nee, the guy stood next to him still didn't move.

Then there was a final gasp of air, a final attempt to cling on to life, and it was clear that that this struggler had gone down for the last time. Then suddenly the guy next to watchman Nee moved, he dived into the water, he swam to the middle of the lake in no time, he dived down, andimmerged a moment later with the victim, who he easily swam to the shore with.

Once they had got the victim on the bank, there was some mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and very quickly the his lungs were coughed up of water and there was life once again.

Later that day the party were walking to the next village and Watchman Nee found himself walking alone with the swimmer. He

asked, 'Why did you wait until the last moment before you saved our friend, you could have saved us all a lot of anxiety, not to mention him himself?'

The swimmer replied, 'Have you ever tried to save a drowning man? He is so terrified that he develops this almost super-human strength. When you reach him, he will cling on to you so tightly that that he will drag you down too, and both will drown. You have to wait till he has given up, then when you reach his lifeless body, he becomes easy to control, and easy to bring to the shore'.

Watchman Nee listened to the man's explanation and was greatly intrigued by it, so much so that he pondered over the story for quite some time. Once he had finished his pondering, he came to the conclusion that only a man of great faith and wisdom could come to, he concluded that this is exactly how God works. God is waiting for our store of strength to be used up, exhausted, before he will step in and save us. We are to stop trying, and to start trusting.

In today's reading Paul is experiencing these trials for himself, in the previous chapter he talks about having been repeatedly flogged, imprisoned many times, shipwrecked three times, stoned, in danger from bandits, numerous others, been tired, hungry and thirsty, the list goes on and on. Yet despite all these things the Lord has seen fit to give him some type of thorn in his flesh, which Paul has asked to be removed, but the Lord has refused.

Verse 10 of today's reading says this this, 'That is why for Christ's sake that I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, I am strong.'

God has told Paul, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' And Paul replies with, 'Therefore I will boast, all the more gladly, about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.'

I don't know about you, but I find this is one of the hardest lessons to take onboard about

our faith, yet on the occasions when it has sunk in for a period of time, the flow of life seems so much easier. But it is not ease of life that comes to our aid, it is actually Spiritual power.

God has done perfect work in His Son Jesus Christ, the work is not only perfect, but it is complete, it's finished work. Yet I continue to believe that if I do some of the work, somehow the work will be even more complete, even more perfect. Really! Who am I kidding?

We will all have troubles through our lives, some of us here today are experiencing major troubles right now. We are tried, we are tested, relationships breakdown, illness comes, money troubles, worldly troubles, you have been slandered, we pray to God to lift the burden, we literally can not breath.

We may say, 'God if you could only lift this burden, I could do great things in the name of Christ.'

However, we must see that God is at work in our lives now; He is even using the limitation that we see as a deficit to glorify His Name. Us, with all the limitations of which we are so very much aware, are part of His glorious plan to magnify His Name. We are an instrument to His glory wielded in powerful fashion, even now.

There is a story told of a young girl who brought a cocoon she had found into her bedroom. She had been told that from this cocoon a beautiful butterfly would appear, and she wanted to help things along. She was concerned that the butterfly would struggle to free itself from the cocoon, she had been told that it doesn't always go the way nature intends. With this in mind, she decided she could help the butterfly, so she set about cutting the tiny silk threads herself.

Bless the little child, what she didn't understand was that the struggle was necessary if it was to fulfil the destiny for which it had been created. Without the struggle, the butterfly would never be able to fly as it was created to do. By helping the poor creature, she doomed it to a brief life of

walking, rather than a full life of flying and fulfilling it's role in the eco-system.

The tiring struggle to free itself from the cocoon was necessary for the butterfly to become the creature God intended it to be. We too are prone to forget that whatever trials we are going through in life currently, the day-by-day struggles, the wind in our faces, it is precisely these struggles that will make us strong.

It is the same with Paul, the thorn in his side, which we have no idea what it was. There is clearly God's purpose here, the fact that He is allowing Satan to have a foothold, to enable Paul to breakthrough. In his weakness, Paul would be driven to look to the Lord for strength. We are left with the impression that Paul looked to the Lord every day to complete even the simplest of tasks.

The Bible is chock full of God's promises to us. Here is our promise for today's message. It's Job 23:8-10.

"Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I do not perceive him; on the left hand when he is working, I do not behold him; he turns to the right hand, but I do not see him.

But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold."

In the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, Amen.