

30th October 2022

Hymn TIS 215 You servants of God, your master proclaim.

The minister greets the people and reads one or more of the following.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Sentence

Today salvation has come to this house, for the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.

Luke 19:10

THANKSGIVING.

**Gracious God, we humbly thank you
for life and health and safety,
for freedom to work, leisure to rest,
and for all that is beautiful in creation and human life.
But, above all, we praise you for our Saviour,
Jesus Christ,
for his death and resurrection;
for the gift of your Spirit;
and for the hope of sharing in your glory.
Fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, righteous Judge of all, who sent Jesus among us to seek and to save those who are lost: grant that we may eagerly seek the Saviour, and joyfully welcome him into our homes and lives. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4

This is a vision the prophet Habakkuk received from the Lord.

Here is what Habakkuk said.

Lord, how long do I have to call out for help? Why don't you listen to me? How long must I keep telling you that things are terrible? Why don't you save us?

Why do you make me watch while people treat others so unfairly?

Why do you put up with the wrong things they are doing?

I have to look at death. People are harming others.

They are arguing and fighting all the time.

The law can't do what it's supposed to do. Fairness never comes out on top.

Sinful people surround those who do what is right. So people are never treated fairly.

I will go up to the lookout tower.

I'll station myself on the city wall.

I'll wait to see how the Lord will reply to me.

Then I'll try to figure out how to answer him.

The Lord replies,

"Write down the message I am showing you in a vision.

Write it clearly on the tablets you use. Then a messenger can read it and run to announce it.

The message I give you waits for the time I have appointed.

It speaks about what is going to happen. and all of it will come true.
It might take a while. But wait for it.
You can be sure it will come. It will happen when I want it to.
"The Babylonians are very proud. What they want is not good.
"But the one who is right with God will live by faith.

Psalm 94:1-15

1 The Lord is a God who avenges. O God who avenges, shine forth.
2 Rise up, Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve.
3 How long, Lord, will the wicked, how long will the wicked be jubilant?
4 They pour out arrogant words; all the evildoers are full of boasting.
5 They crush your people, Lord; they oppress your inheritance.
6 They slay the widow and the foreigner; they murder the fatherless.
7 They say, "The Lord does not see; the God of Jacob takes no notice."
8 Take notice, you senseless ones among the people; you fools, when will you become wise?
9 Does he who fashioned the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see?
10 Does he who disciplines nations not punish? Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge?
11 The Lord knows all human plans; he knows that they are futile.
12 Blessed is the one you discipline, Lord, the one you teach from your law;
13 you grant them relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked.
14 For the Lord will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance.
15 Judgment will again be founded on righteousness, and all the upright in heart will follow it.

2 Timothy 4:9-22

9 Do your best to come to me quickly,
10 for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.
11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.
12 I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.
13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.
14 Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.
15 You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.
16 At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.
17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth.
18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
19 Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus.
20 Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus.
21 Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters.
22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.

John 5:5-15

5 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

8 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."

9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

11 He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' "

12 Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?"

13 But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.

14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Sermon

Affirmation of Faith.

**We believe in one God,
who made and loves all that is.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was born, lived, died and rose again,
and is coming to call all to account.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who calls, equips and sends out God's people,
and brings all things to their true end.**

This is our faith, the faith of the Church:

**We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

The following Confession may be introduced.

'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson they shall be like wool.'

Isaiah 1.18

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Let us now confess our sins to almighty God.

**Heavenly Father,
you have loved us with an everlasting love,
but we have broken your holy laws**

**and have left undone what we ought to have done.
We are sorry for our sins
and turn away from them.
For the sake of your Son who died for us,
forgive us, cleanse us and change us.
By your Holy Spirit,
enable us to live for you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

God desires that none should perish,
but that all should turn to Christ, and live.
In response to his call we acknowledge our sins.
God pardons those who humbly repent,
and truly believe the gospel.
Therefore we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ.

Amen

**Christ died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way,
count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 6.10–11**

Hymn TIS 607 Make me a channel of Your peace

THE MINISTRY OF 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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers,
feeding us with your word,
and encouraging us in our meeting together.

**Take us and use us
to love and serve you
and all people,
in the power of your Spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

hymn TIS 147 To God be the glory

blessing.

May the God of peace equip you with everything good for doing his will, working in you what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

What About Me?

Song by Moving Pictures Source: [Musixmatch](#) Songwriters: Frances Claire Swan / Allan Frost Garry

What About Me? lyrics © Warner/chappell Pty Limited, Warner/chappell Pty Ltd

Well, there's a little boy waiting
At the counter of the corner shop
He's been waiting down there, waiting half the day
They never ever see him from the top
He gets pushed around, knocked to the ground
He gets to his feet and he says

What about me? It isn't fair
I've had enough, now I want my share
Can't you see, I wanna live
But you just take more than you give

Well, there's a pretty girl serving
At the counter of the corner shop
She's been waiting back there, waiting for a dream
Her dreams walk in and out; they never stop
Well she's not too proud, to cry out loud
She runs to the street and she screams

What about me? It isn't fair
I've had enough, now I want my share
Can't you see, I wanna live
But you just take more than you give
More than you give

Take a step back and see the little people
They might be young
But they're the ones
That make the big people big
So listen as they whisper:
"What about me?"

And now I'm standing on the corner
All the world's gone home
Nobody's changed, nobody's been saved
And I'm feeling cold and alone
I guess I'm lucky, I smile a lot
But sometimes I wish for more, than I've got

What about me? It isn't fair
I've had enough, now I want my share
Can't you see, I wanna live
But you just take more

What about me? It isn't fair
I've had enough, now I want my share

Can't you see, I wanna live
But you just take more, you just take more
You just take more than you give

What about me?
What about me?
What about me?

John 5:1–15

1 After this, there was a Jewish festival, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool, called Bethesda in Aramaic, which has five colonnades. 3 Within these lay a large number of sick people—blind, lame, or paralysed—who were waiting for the movement of the water. 4 For an angel would go down at certain times into the pool and stir up the water. Whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. 5 One man was there who had been sick for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew he had already been sick a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” 7 “Sir,” the sick man answered, “I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. While I’m going, someone else goes down ahead of me.” 8 Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” 9 Instantly the man was healed. He picked up his mat and walked. That day was the Sabbath. 10 So the Jews told the man who had been healed, “This is the Sabbath! You are not permitted to carry your mat.” 11 He answered them, “The one who made me well told me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’” 12 Then they asked him, “Who is the man who told you, ‘Pick it up and walk’?” 13 But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. 14 Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “Look, you are well now. Do not sin anymore so that nothing worse happens to you.” 15 The man went back and reported to the Jews that it was Jesus who made him well.

Choose Your Own Adventure

A while ago now there were a lot of children's books published with the theme of Choose your own Adventure. Publishers allowed the purchaser to insert their child's name as the main character in the story. Throughout the books there were moments of decision where the reader would have to decide what course of action to take. Depending on the decision, the reader would skip to a specified page and continue the narrative from there until the next decision point. The intention was that these stories helped children to learn that choices have consequences and equipped them to make sound choices in life.

Similarly, today's story of healing in John's Gospel is another example where we can read ourselves into the narrative taking the role of the cripple who was healed and ask ourselves some deep questions.

We have all been crippled or harmed as we journeyed through life. How are you afflicted? Physical limitation? Mental illness? Betrayed by those you should have been able to trust and now you are unable to trust people? You didn't have the education opportunities or opportunity to become what you dreamed you would be? An unfortunate accident changed your life? Social convention forced you into a lifestyle you didn't want? Abusive parents or spouse? Something else?

Do you really want to get better? Are you content in your misery? What are you trusting in to get better? Win Lotto? Meet the right person? Own the right stuff? Have an ideal job? Not be in a job? Better home or garden? Something else?

Who or What gets in your way? Social conventions? Imposed gender roles? An abusive person in your childhood who squashed your hopes and dreams? Influential or powerful people who block your way? Your own sense of defeat? Something else?

Jesus picks you out from the crowd, are you pleased? Want to hide? don't believe that he really wants you? Prefer to stay as you are? Confused? Something else?

How does that make you feel? Are you grateful for someone in your life? Are you upset, is there someone you need to forgive? Should you forgive yourself? Pause here and honestly ask God for the grace to be Grateful and/or Forgiving.

What About Me?

Moving Pictures released the song What About Me in 1981 and it went to number 1 on the Australian charts and was the highest selling single in 1982. The song obviously struck a chord with a lot of people. I have included the lyrics on page 1. This song is a Little Person's Anthem, was it a song which resonated with you? For me the first verse was my life story. Bullied, belittled, intimidated, not getting a fair go, no real sense of self-worth, disempowered to make a go of life.

The second verse reminds me of being in the Disney shop in Paris, I wanted to buy a tee shirt with a picture of the dwarf named Grumpy with the text "Just call me Grumpy". An angry Frenchman was shouting at a young shop assistant who was valiantly doing her job, but to his indignant dissatisfaction. I wished I had the words to put him in his place.

The third verse asks who is really important in the world, the high and mighty, or the little people who by their hard work support the prominent people in their ivory towers? The song calls the little people to stand up and make a difference.

The fourth verse expresses a feeling of emptiness, powerlessness to effect positive change. Wanting things to be better, but frustrated.

Which verse describes your life situation? This song is a fair commentary on the way of this world which favours the already privileged more so than the ordinary people.

Contemplating by the Pool

Ponder your response to the song and then ask what back story do you bring into the story of the cripple by the pool? Each of us will bring a different shade of meaning, a different understanding of the characters in the story and the dynamics of what is going on. Each insight is valid, each one carries meaning for each of us in our unique life story. Each of us will have our own insight to share with another.

The theologian Bruce Milne does not perceive the cripple as being a likeable person, before or after his healing. Though my perception differs from his, I accept his insight and learn from it. A key idea is that even the unlikeable and socially incompetent are loved and welcome to come for healing.

For me I am on side with the cripple, his description of the situation is not a whinge or complaint, but a straight relating of the facts. One of those facts is that those in least need of healing barge in, pushing the more needy aside so they get the benefits. Like him I was knocked down, ignored, in despair, beaten before I began life properly.

Theologian William Barclay asks did the cripple really want to be healed? A beggar could make a good living in first century Jerusalem. Some people are happy in their misery, they will grumble but not do anything positive to help themselves, or seek a way out. This is also a fair question and the cripple's answer has some vigour to it. In wanting to be put in the water, he does not want a namby-pamby being led down the steps lest he stub his toe. Rather he wants to be dumped in, he wants a bodily one-two-three-chuck into the water.

Therefore, what is it that cripples you? A physical problem/illness? Mental illness? Trauma long ago, or recently? Betrayal by a trusted person? An intractable habit? Or?

Do you really want to get better? Is there something you've been putting off? Do you need to accept a wise suggestion by someone? Do you need to swallow pride and ask for help? Do you have to forgive someone and let go of festering resentment? Or?

Who or what hinders you? An addiction? An unhelpful relationship? Letting go of the lies others made you believe about yourself? Do you need to try one more time, and another? Or?

Jesus picks you out from the crowd. Dare you trust him? What are you really trusting in? Chemicals: drugs tobacco alcohol? Accumulating the stuff and clutter and fashions of this world? Superstitious rituals and dodgy religion? Or?

Spend time praying at each step, be honest with God and he will be honest with you. Expect an answer, but it may not be what you expect. Your perceived need may differ from your most critical need. In singling out the cripple in the story, Jesus knew the man, what he really needed and his potential.

Wholly Healed to be Holy and Healed

Consider our cripple, he is healed in body, mind and soul.

In Body: he is able to immediately do the impossible, stand, walk and carry. No corrective surgery, no protracted Physiotherapy visits, or big medical bills. This is a picture of Jesus' Kingdom of God in which we are ultimately fully sound and capable to do whatever we need to do.

In Mind: he is no longer cowed and put down. He has found his voice and confidently and boldly answers the questions of the Jews about carrying his bed on the Sabbath. He doesn't yet know who his healer is, but is convinced that his healer is greater than the religious heavies, and the myth of the pool. In the Kingdom of God we look forward to growing in godly confidence and readiness to speak up gently, boldly challenging the status quo.

In Soul: Jesus finds him again in the Temple, the house of God, among the godly, no longer attached the superstition of the water in the pool, but is instead in the presence of the living God and His worshippers. Jesus challenges him to continue in a new life of holiness. In the Kingdom of God we are likewise trusted and expected to grow in the knowledge of God and His ways, to live a holier life, to have a hope beyond what we see to long for something far better and enduring.

Today you stand at a decision point in your own Choose Your Own Adventure. Where do you go from here? What new priority should you take up? What challenge should you grapple with? What must you let go of so you can live more truly? Will you put your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee and walk with him?