

Sunday 13 October 2024 HC 2.1

**Hymn TIS 608 Where cross the crowded ways of life**

Where cross the crowded ways of life,  
Where sound the cries of race and clan,  
Above the noise of selfish strife,  
We hear thy voice, O Son of Man.

In haunts of wretchedness and need,  
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,  
From paths where hide the lures of greed,  
We catch the vision of thy tears.

From tender childhood's helplessness,  
from human grief and burdened toil,  
from famished souls, from sorrows's stress  
your heart has never known recoil.

The cup of water given for thee  
Still holds the freshness of thy grace;  
Yet long these multitudes to see  
The true compassion of thy face.

O Master, from the mountain side,  
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain;  
Among these restless throngs abide,  
O tread the city's streets again;

till all the world shall learn thy love,  
And follow where thy feet have trod;  
Till glorious from thy heaven above,  
Shall come the city of our God.

**The Grace**

of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you.  
**And also with you.**

'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

**Lord have mercy on us, and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit.**

**Sentence of the Day**

For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction. Psalm 1:6

## Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Prayer of the Day

O God, you have made heaven and earth and all that is good: help us to delight in simple things and to rejoice always in the richness of your bounty; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## Joshua 1:7-9

7 “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

## Psalms 1:1-6

<sup>1</sup> Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,

<sup>2</sup> **but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.**

<sup>3</sup> That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.

<sup>4</sup> **Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.**

<sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

<sup>6</sup> **For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.**

## Romans 4:1-8

1 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? 2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. 3 What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” 4 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 5 However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

This is the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

## Matthew 13:36-43

<sup>36</sup>The Parable of the Weeds Explained <sup>36</sup> Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” <sup>37</sup> He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup> The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. <sup>40</sup> “As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. <sup>42</sup> They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

This is the gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

## **Sermon - Psalm 1**

### **Question Time**

### **The Apostles Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 from the dead, he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **The Prayers of the People**

Let us pray for the world and the church

**Response:** Christ Jesus, intercede for us, and in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

**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.**

### **Scripture Sentence**

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one, so that your Father who is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. Mark 11:25

### **Prayer of Approach**

**We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.**

### **The Confession**

The Spirit of truth comes to convict us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. Let us open our hearts and confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

**Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Greeting of Peace**

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

### **Hymn - TIS 341 My song is love unknown**

**My song is love unknown, My Saviour's love to me  
Love to the loveless shown, That they might lovely be  
O who am I that for my sake  
My Lord should take frail flesh and die**

**He came from His blest throne, salvation to bestow  
But all made strange and none The longed-for Christ would know  
But O my Friend, My Friend indeed  
Who at my need, His life did spend**

**Sometimes they strew His way, And His sweet praises sing  
Resounding all the day Hosannas to their King  
Then Crucify Is all their breath  
And for His death they thirst and cry**

**Why, what hath my Lord done? What makes this rage and spite?  
He made the lame to run, He gave the blind their sight.  
Sweet injuries! Yet they at these  
themselves displease, and 'gainst Him rise.**

**They rise and needs will have My dear Lord made away  
A murderer they save The Prince of Life they slay  
Yet cheerful He to suffering goes  
That He His foes from thence might free**

**In life no house no home, My Lord on earth might have  
In death no friendly tomb but what a stranger gave  
What may I say? Heaven was His home  
But mine the tomb wherein He lay**

**Here might I stay and sing, No story so divine  
Never was love dear King, never was grief like Thine  
This is my Friend, In whose sweet praise  
I all my days could gladly spend.**

### **Thanksgiving for Offering**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

## The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. By his death on the cross, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin, and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

## The Holy Communion

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

**The gifts of God for the people of God**

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord. Grape juice is available.

Please come to the Communion Rail if you are able, observing appropriate social distancing.

## After Communion

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and love.

Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in love and obedience that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you for ever.

**Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen**

## **Notices**

### **Hymn - TIS 228 - Crown him with many crowns**

**Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon the throne;  
hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own:  
awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for me,  
and hail him as your chosen king through all eternity.**

**Crown him the Son of God before the worlds began:  
and we who tread where he has trod, crown him the Son of Man,  
who every grief has known, that wrings the human breast,  
and takes and bears them for his own, that all in him may rest.**

**Crown him the Lord of love; behold his hands and side,  
those wounds yet visible above, in beauty glorified:  
no angel there on high can fully bear that sight,  
but downwards bends a burning eye at mysteries so bright.**

**Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave,  
and rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save:  
his glories now we sing, who died, and rose on high,  
who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.**

**Crown him the Lord of peace, whose power a sceptre sways  
from pole to pole, that wars may cease, absorbed in prayer and praise:  
his reign shall know no end, and round his pierced feet  
fair flowers of paradise extend their fragrance ever sweet.**

**Crown him the Lord of years, the Potentate of time,  
Creator of the rolling spheres, majestic and sublime:  
all hail, Redeemer, hail! for you have died for me;  
your praise shall never, never fail throughout eternity.**

## **Blessing**

The peace of God which passes 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 among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

## **Dismissal**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## Sermon - Psalm 1 - WORSHIPPING GOD

Today we are starting a new sermon series on Psalms. I was going to preach on psalms 1 through 7, but since next week's service commemorates the 75th anniversary of the snowy scheme, and our stained glass window commemorating the scheme quotes psalm 121, I'll slip that in as well.

Before we look at psalm one, what is a psalm? What makes a reading from the psalms different to any other Bible reading?

You probably know that most Sundays we have four different readings from the Bible: one from the old testament, one from the psalms, one from the new testament, and one from the gospel accounts of Jesus's life and ministry. Normally we have a reader (or me) read the old testament and new testament, I read the gospel, but we say the psalm together responsorially: the leader says the first verse, the rest of the congregation responds with the second, and so on. This should hint to us that the psalms are poetry, or songs, which after all, are just poems sung to music.

I am sure you all know that the half of our bibles we call the Old Testament is the Jewish faith's whole Bible. Jewish synagogues use the psalms as their hymn book. In the back of the pews in front of you there are our red hymn books which are quite separate from the Bible (which are also in front of you). In fact, if you look through our hymn books, you will see that many of our hymns are based on specific psalms, and so, by singing and reading psalms, we are following in the Jewish tradition of using psalms as part of our worship.

There are 150 psalms in the Bible, and although there are many different subjects and topics, they are all about worship. Just like we have different prayers throughout our worship service - prayers of praise, confession, intercession and so on, so there are different styles of psalms. They are all psalms of worship, but some are for confession, some are laments, some are intercession for God to act in specific situations.

As I mentioned, today we are looking at the first psalm, Psalm one.

It's a pretty short psalm, only six verses, and whoever, under God's inspiration, arranged the book of Psalms, probably put it first as an introduction to the whole book of Psalms.

Let's have a look at what it says, and then I want to come back and see how it introduces the rest of the psalms.

The first three verses of the psalm say:

- 1 **Blessed** is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,
- 2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.
- 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.

These 3 verses talk about people who verse 6 calls the righteous, and are contrasted with the wicked, in very much the same way our gospel reading today contrasted the good seed and the weeds. Both passages divide all of humanity into these two groups, even though it is a bit of a simplification. Neither passage talks about people who are sometimes wise and sometimes wicked, or whether people can move from wicked to righteous or vice versa, yet I suspect most of us are like that - neither completely good nor completely bad.

Nevertheless, the characteristics of the righteous ones are that they do not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers. The psalmist is saying that their righteousness is based on whose example they follow. Do you seek to emulate wicked people, (those who are morally wrong, or hostile to God) or sinners (those who are sinful, or guilty) , or mockers (those who mouth off, or scoff, at the righteous and good). If that is your general way of life, then you should be grouped with the wicked. If, on the other hand, you seek to follow God's way, then you are righteous.

The righteous delight in the law of the Lord, and meditate on it day and night. This reminds me of our Old Testament reading this morning, where God commissioned Joshua to lead the people into the promised land after Moses died. God really emphasised the law, they were to meditate on it day and night, so that they would be careful to do everything written in it.



Our psalm tells us that those who follow God's commandments rather than listening to the foolish people around them are like trees planted (or perhaps transplanted) by streams of water, yielding fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither; whatever they do prospers. Living in this drought prone region we understand what happens to plants without a steady source of water, as well as how they flourish when they get it. The righteous are like that well watered plant, producing plentiful good fruit for God's kingdom when the season is right.

The psalm contrasts these righteous people with those he refers to as the wicked. He says:

4 Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

Instead of being well watered, fruitful trees, the wicked are chaff, the died-out seed husks that are blown around by the wind, useful for nothing, and actually worse than useless. They are annoying, irritating, blowing into your nostrils, ears and eyes.

These wicked, or sinners as he calls them in the second half of verse 5, will not stand in the final judgement - they will be found guilty and condemned. As a consequence, they will not be continue to associate with the righteous.

Verse 6 is something of a summary:

6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

That is, God will protect his righteous people, but the wicked will condemn themselves to eternal destruction, shut out from eternal life.

Now, there are just a couple of comments I would like to make about this psalm. Firstly, as Christians we know that the righteousness that the psalmist mentions is not just avoiding following the footsteps of the wicked, nor not doing the evil that they do. I mentioned earlier that no one leads an absolutely, completely good life. We are all imperfect, and as Romans 3.23 tells us, all have sinned and fallen short. So the righteousness we have is not moral perfection, because if it were, there would be none who would be considered righteous.

The righteous that the psalmist is talking about cannot be man's righteousness, it has to be God's righteousness. And our New Testament reading from Romans 4 tells us those who trust God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness, as God's righteousness.

And the final point I want to mention is that you may have noticed that the psalm is pretty preachy. I have said that psalms are all about worshipping God, but this one just seems to tell us how we should and shouldn't live.

What had this to do with worshipping our great and marvellous God?

The reality is that God is most worshipped, that is, his worthiness is most clearly demonstrated when his people walk in his righteousness. I've said already that no one has ever done that perfectly except Jesus Christ, and yet Christians can walk in God's righteousness when their wickedness, their sinfulness had been washed clean with Jesus's blood on the cross when he took the punishment that we deserve for our sin, or rebellion against God.

God is most glorified when his people put their faith in Jesus, repent of their sin, are forgiven and gain eternal life. As we read the psalms, and they are recited in our church service, we hear about the greatness of God and God is glorified. But God is glorified even more when his people turn from their wickedness and walk in his righteousness.

So, as we look at the psalms over the next few weeks, let us not only glorify God with our words and our thoughts, let us glorify him by walking in his righteousness, by keeping his commandments, and by loving the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind, and loving our neighbours as we love ourselves. This is our truest form of worship.

Will you strive with your whole being with me to worship our great God as we read his Psalms?

Amen