



Western Fells Methodist Circuit

Filled with Thanksgiving

Service for 15th August 2021

Rev Joyce Ellis

Call to worship

God's grace and peace are with us
Let our hearts be filled with joy.

Psalm 34 : 1-3

¹ I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
² My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
³ O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.

SF 82 O Lord my God

Music [here](#)

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;

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:

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!

Prayers : Adoration

Praise to you, Lord, our God – King, of creation; maker and carer of all we know: the very heart of all being. We praise you.

Your glory is seen in majestic grandeur ...in intricate miniature, in beauty and in truth, in love, in laughter, in tears and in joy.

Praise to you, Lord, our God come amongst us. Redeemer of the world: healing brokenness, speaking truth, showing love, giving self on the cross in Christ.

Praise to you, Lord, Our God coming now giving life, breathing hope, lighting minds, falling fresh on all who call.

Praise to you, Lord our God.

Confession : using SF 419 (said)

Almighty God, we come to make confession, for we have sinned in thought and word and deed. We now repent in honesty and sorrow; forgive us, Lord, and meet us in our need.

Forgiving God, I come to make confession of all the harm and hurt that I have done; of bitter words and many selfish actions, forgive me, Lord, and make me like your Son.

Forgiving God, I come to make confession of all that I have failed to do this day; of help withheld, concern and love restricted, forgive me, Lord, and lead me in your way.

Redeeming God, we come to seek forgiveness, for Jesus Christ has died to set us free. Forgive the past and fill us with your Spirit that we may live to serve you joyfully. Amen

Readings : **Luke 17 : 11 – 19**

As Jesus made his way to Jerusalem, he went along the border between Samaria and Galilee. He was going into a village when he was met by ten men suffering from a dreaded skin disease.

They stood at a distance & shouted, "Jesus! Master! Have pity on us" Jesus saw them & said to them, "Go and let the priests examine you."

On the way they were made clean. When one of them saw that he was healed, he came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself to the ground at Jesus' feet & thanked him. The man was a Samaritan.

Jesus spoke up, "There were ten who were healed; where are the other nine? Why is this foreigner the only one who came back to give thanks to God?" And Jesus said to him, "Get up and go; your faith has made you well."

Ephesians 5 : 15 – 20

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon : ***Living Thankfully***

Text *Be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, **giving thanks to God at all times** and for every thing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Ephesians 5 : 19,20

Introduction It looks, hopefully that at last we might be coming to the end of the current pandemic. But as we watch our TV screens each day we are also aware of enormous problems affecting the world at the same time. We see continuing fighting from the Middle East, the plight of refugees across the globe, natural disasters many the result of climate change.

Television, the press, cinema and books all show us a world of destruction, pain, death, horror and division, hatred, violence and despair. All paint a constant gloomy picture. It would seem sometimes we thrive on the negative things of life, be it terrorism and violence or suffering or death. The whole tone is one of pessimism. We begin to understand what the writer of Ephesians means when he says "Your world was a world without hope and without God"

Audacity to Praise And yet we come before God each Sunday with the audacity to praise and thank God. *Why is that?* How is it that Christians through the ages have seen that a Christians life must not be dominated by the wanting and complaining and violence of the secular world ? But that the characteristic of a Christian should be one of hope

and a Christian's mind should be dominated by thankfulness ? Paul says "let your heart overflow with thankfulness"

Story of the 10 Lepers is a familiar story from Luke's gospel. 10 lepers who would be outcasts and foreigners, having to stay at a distance of 50 yards, so great was their isolation. In their distress they called out to Jesus to have pity on them. We know that Jesus sent them to the priests - a necessary formality if they were to return to society.

We are told one only came back, praising God. He threw himself at Jesus feet and thanked him; he was a Samaritan.

We can almost hear the disappointment in Jesus voice: "*Were not all 10 cleansed, the other 9 where are they? Could none be found to come back and give praise to God except this foreigner?*"

I wonder how often does this describe us? We turn to God when things go badly only to forget God when things go well

Christian Joy We know then, as Christians, the joy of our lives should mean that we overflow with thankfulness. But it also works both ways for when we live thankfully instead of resentfully then it is we find happiness and joy.

but **What happens when things do not go well?** Its all very well to speak like this, but very often we find that life does treat us badly and we seem to have more cause for complaining and resentment than for thankfulness especially when we lose loved ones unexpectedly. My neighbour, following the death of her husband, said to me 'Why did he have to die?, he was such a good man. She's certainly not the only person to ask that question. However, there are other times too when life seems to treat us harshly. There are times of illness, unemployment, difficulties in families, of mourning the loss of someone close to us. In such circumstances we may suffer from depression. And yet we believe, as we say in one of the Eucharistic prayers:

"It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks and praise." Do we really stop to think? Do we really mean it? It very often seems a tall order indeed, and yet, in the end, perhaps this is what distinguishes us as Christians, as people of faith

Dark Side of Life As we have seen, all of us experience at sometime, a dark side to life, not because we are good or bad, but because we are human. We will experience loss, anger, hopelessness, resentment and we need a time and place to express them appropriately.

But, if we allow them to continue and make us bitter and resentful, these negative emotions will ultimately destroy our happiness, or our tranquillity. They then can become destructive in our lives and the lives of others, because it turns us inward and stifles our ability to love.

We all know people who are stricken by grief and pain and yet their lives radiate an inner peace and joy. In one of my churches I had a friend, Margaret, who was in hospital receiving treatment for cancer. When I went to visit her Margaret said to me "Joyce, I am not ready to die, I have so much love still to give". However, I expect we could name others, who are eaten up with resentment and are unable to move on from 'why should this happen to me ? 'Certainly the early Christians, including Paul, knew suffering and persecution, but they knew that it was not the *fundamental* reality of their lives.

Reason for Hope

I think that the secret of the hopefulness given by our faith, is that in Christ we are helped to see things in a far broader perspective. We no longer see our world only from our inside point of view as it were, but from God's point of view. When we reach rock bottom, our only ray of hope may be our past experience of Christ. We know that our experience can never be taken away, however we may be feeling at the time. It may well be that we are only able to give thanks for the presence of Jesus in our lives and knowledge of God's strength supporting and upholding us, and for the hope for the world we see in Jesus Christ.

However, *with such a thankful frame of mind* we will be able to see the points of hope and optimism in the world. Then we will find, with gratitude, the good in people, in the community, in the world.

Unfortunately, it has often seemed in the past that the church has been far better at finding the bad, rather than finding and affirming the good both in the world and in people

Unique Christian Response to Experience

However, it is, as we have said the unique Christian response to experience that the church proclaims that it is right to thank God at all times and in all places: in peace and in war, when you have everything or when you have lost all you ever had or loved in this world.

It is an attitude totally foreign to the mass media of TV, the press and so on. But it is an attitude that marked out the early church, and countless followers of Jesus Christ ever since. It is an attitude summed up for us by Paul in his letter to the infant church of Thessalonika:

*" We urge you friends to... encourage the faint hearted, support the weak, and be patient with everyone. See to it that no one pays back wrong for wrong, but always aim at what is best for each other and for all. Always be joyful; pray continually; **give thanks what ever happens**; for this is what God wills for you in Christ Jesus." Amen*

SF 73 Fill thou my life, O Lord my God

Music [here](#)

Fill thou my life, O Lord my God, in every part with praise,
that my whole being may proclaim thy being and thy ways.

Not for the lip of praise alone, nor e'en the praising heart,
I ask but for a life made up of praise in every part:

Praise in the common things of life, its goings out and in;
praise in each duty and each deed, however small and mean.

Fill every part of me with praise; let all my being speak
of thee and of thy love, O Lord, poor though I be and weak.

So shalt thou, gracious Lord, from me receive thy glory due;
and so shall I begin on earth the song for ever new.

So shall no part of day or night from sacredness be free;
but all my life, in every step, be fellowship with thee.

Horatius N. Bonar

Prayer : Intercession

Eternal God,

The praise of the church is music to our ears. As we sing of your goodness, speak of your loving care, and whisper in gratitude of your forgiveness which never fails. But now we are silent and listen to the cry of the world; a world struggling with the covid pandemic; a world with war-torn communities.

We hear the cry of the lonely ones: those bereft of friendship, those who live alone and wish they didn't, those bereaved who long for the voice they no longer hear, parents and children who have lost the ability to communicate,

husbands and wives who have forgotten how to talk in intimacy. For all these we pray.

We hear the cry of those in pain: Those who go to sleep hungry, wondering if they will eat tomorrow, the long-term unemployed, grown bitter with no work to do, parents, helpless though they see their children suffer, children caught in the antagonism of a crumbling marriage. For all these we pray.

We hear the cry of joy and gladness: As new marriages are formed, as eagerly-awaited babies are welcomed into life, as long-held love is celebrated in anniversaries, as exams are passed, new jobs begun, and strangers welcomed, For all these we pray.

We hear the cry of confidence: From those new-born to faith in Christ, from those who find their strength in long-held trust in God, from those who hear Christ's call to service, from those who hold to truth despite persecution, For all these we pray.

Lord's Prayer

SF 81 Now thank we all our God

Music [here](#)

Now thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in whom his world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in his grace, and guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,
The Son and him who reigns with them in highest heaven,
The one eternal God, whom heaven and earth adore,
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

Martin Rinkart

Blessing

And now may the peace of God, which passes all our understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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