

## At Home Service 11<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### *Singing the Faith 335 Rejoice the Lord is King Charles Wesley (1707–1788)*

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|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Rejoice, the Lord is King!<br>Your Lord and King adore;<br>mortals, give thanks, and sing,<br>and triumph evermore:<br><i>Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;<br/>rejoice! Again I say: rejoice!</i>        | 2 | Jesus the Saviour reigns,<br>the God of truth and love;<br>when he had purged our stains,<br>he took his seat above: |
| 3 | His kingdom cannot fail,<br>he rules both earth and heaven;<br>the keys of death and hell<br>are to our Jesus given:  | 4 | He sits at God's right hand<br>till all his foes submit,<br>and bow to his command,<br>and fall beneath his feet:    |
| 5 | Rejoice in glorious hope;<br>Jesus the Judge shall come,<br>and take his servants up<br>to their eternal home:<br><i>We soon shall hear the archangel's voice;<br/>God's trumpet-call shall sound: rejoice!</i> |   |  |

### **Prayers**

Lord God, faithful and loving, we do not always feel like rejoicing. Even as we gather to worship you, our minds are sometimes distracted and elsewhere, weighed down by the burdens of our lives. Help us, in this moment, to find it within our hearts to REJOICE in your constancy and loving care for us. People of God, let us rejoice. Amen.

Lord God, we never know what the future holds or where life will take us next. We never know what is just around the corner and what the outcomes of things will be. But we know that whatever follows on from this moment, you are here with us, by our side, above and beneath us, entwining your life with ours, surpassing all human understanding. In this moment, bless us and awaken us to your abiding presence. Amen.

Eternal God, so often we give up if something goes wrong or doesn't go our way. So often we are overwhelmed by our own problems that we forget to look out for others. So often we are consumed with negatives and endings that we lose sight of the positives and beginnings. Eternal God, forgive us for our self-centredness, our blindness and our deafness, and reawaken your Spirit within us. Amen.

Lord, in your goodness, open our eyes to your light, and so fill our hearts with your glory that we may always acknowledge Jesus as Saviour, and hold fast to his word in sincerity and truth. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Isaiah 25.1-9**

- <sup>1</sup>O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name;  
for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.
- <sup>2</sup>For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin;  
the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt.
- <sup>3</sup>Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
- <sup>4</sup>For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress,

a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.  
 When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, <sup>5</sup>the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.  
<sup>6</sup>On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.  
<sup>7</sup>And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; <sup>8</sup>he will swallow up death for ever.  
 Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.  
<sup>9</sup>It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

**Philippians 4.1-9**

<sup>1</sup>My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. <sup>2</sup>I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. <sup>3</sup>Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.  
<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup>Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

***Singing the Faith 776 – In the Lord I'll be ever thankful***

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,  
 in the Lord I will rejoice!  
 Look to God, do not be afraid;  
 lift up your voices, the Lord is near;  
 lift up your voices, the Lord is near.

Original Catalan:

El Senyor és la meva força,  
 el Senyor, el meu cant.  
 Ell m'ha estat la salvació.  
 En ell confio, i no tinc por.  
 En ell confio, i no tinc por.

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**Matthew 22.1-14**

<sup>1</sup>Once more Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup>'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup>He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. <sup>4</sup>Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." <sup>5</sup>But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup>while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. <sup>7</sup>The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. <sup>8</sup>Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup>Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." <sup>10</sup>Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. <sup>11</sup>But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, <sup>12</sup>and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." <sup>14</sup>For many are called, but few are chosen.'

## Reflection

Isaiah gives a vision of God bringing together a new community to replace those who previously held the reins of power. A celebration will come, a banquet of new life. Grief will be a thing of the past and God will wipe away every tear. Does Jesus have this vision in mind when he tells the parable of the wedding banquet? Here the invited guests find excuses not to attend and so they are replaced by all and sundry from the surrounding area.

In Philippians we hear of two women co-workers in the church who have had a disagreement and Paul urges his 'loyal companion' to support the reconciliation between these two so that peace may be seen in the church. The verses after this suggest ways of being and behaving designed to minimise quarrels, use prayer to bring peace and remove anxiety. Think about good, honourable and beautiful things so that hearts and minds are guarded.

Parables can only take us so far in understanding what God is like and what heaven offers to us. But it is clear from this parable that the refused invitation opens up the possibility for others to attend. In these days where wedding receptions have been limited to a maximum of thirty guests (which may by now be even lower) you can see that where someone turns down the invitation another might be included in their place. However, the picture in the parable is worse as people who have accepted the invitation chose then not to attend!

I remember going to a party organised by some friends. We were told to arrive early as there were to be over 100 guests, so we did. By 10pm it was clear that the 30 there would not be added to by a late influx. Such a waste of food and money – though all present had a great time. What would you do on such an occasion? I have seen others invited in from outside or food distributed to those in the bar.

We are invited to a great feast in heaven and we have a choice to make in this life about whether we are going or not. The parable almost gives the picture that there is something worse than refusing the invitation – accepting and finding an excuse for not turning up. Accepting the invitation with the full intent of attending gives us something beyond grief and death. It makes us God centred, filled with His peace and love.

But before you get carried away the readings also point to the possibility of God's wrath where you fail to live up to the expectations. There is a need for us to peacefully sort out those disputes within our church communities and within our social circles. And there remains an expected standard of dress – we need to clothe ourselves with Christ to attend the banquet. To be like him in the way we live, the way we behave and in how we respond to others.

### ***Singing the Faith 35 The trumpet sounds (Graham Kendrick b. 1950)***

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|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | The trumpets sound, the angels sing,<br>the feast is ready to begin;<br>the gates of heaven are open wide,<br>and Jesus welcomes you inside. | 2 | Tables are laden with good things,<br>O taste the peace and joy he brings;<br>he'll fill you up with love divine,<br>he'll turn your water into wine. |
|---|--|---|---|

*Sing with thankfulness songs of pure delight,  
come and revel in heaven's love and light;  
take your place at the table of the King,  
the feast is ready to begin, the feast is ready to begin.*

- 3 The hungry heart he satisfies,  
offers the poor his paradise;  
now hear all heaven and earth applaud  
the amazing goodness of the Lord.

## **Intercessions**

### **Silent prayer**

Loving God, giver of every good gift, we pray that we may be your grateful people.

We pray for those with power and influence; that they may be grateful for the opportunities their positions give them and show their gratitude by fulfilling their responsibilities conscientiously and with wisdom, justice and compassion. Our prayer is heard: **thanks be to God.**

We pray for those with money and possessions; that they may be grateful for the security that their money gives them and show their gratitude by using what they have to enrich the lives of those who have not.

Our prayer is heard: **thanks be to God.**

We pray for those who know your saving love; that they may be grateful for the joy and peace that faith in you gives to them and show their gratitude by sharing their faith and living in love with others.

Our prayer is heard: **thanks be to God.**

We pray for ourselves, each with special gifts from you; that we may be grateful for the unique calling that we, as individuals, have received and show our gratitude by using our talents in the service of others and to the glory of your name. Our prayer is heard: **thanks be to God.**

We remember with gratitude all those who lived their lives as a thank-offering to you, loving God, for all that you have done for us in Christ. May we follow their example, in his name. **Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

We say together the prayer that Jesus gave us: **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.**

### **Offering and prayer of dedication**

God of all goodness and grace, receive the gifts we offer; and grant that our whole life may give you glory and praise; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Mission Praise 464 May the Lord bless you and keep you Susie Hare ©1983 Thankyou Music**

May the Lord bless you and keep you,  
make His face to shine upon you  
and be gracious unto you.

May the Lord lift up the light  
of His countenance upon you  
and give you peace.

### **Final Prayer**

As we go into places of suffering, may your love wipe all tears away.

As we go into places of hunger, may your love give bread and hope.

As we go into places of fear, may your love provide peace and companionship.

As we go into your world, may your love speak of grace, and sing of joy:

**Loving God, grant us the courage to go where you would send us.**

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