

At Home Service

Opening words

Mighty God, we meet to celebrate your greatness. We join with the hosts of heaven to sing your praise and offer you our worship. For you are worthy of adoration from every mouth and every tongue should praise you. You created the earth by your power, you save the human race by your mercy and make it new by your grace. Father, Son and Holy Spirit we offer you our grateful praise. Amen.

(from Companion to the Lectionary Volume 3 – Neil Dixon)

Singing the Faith 51 Great is thy faithfulness

- 1 Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been thou for ever wilt be:
Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.
- 2 Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love:
- 3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866–1960). Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 51
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Prayers of adoration, thanksgiving and confession

Loving God, we read of your mighty acts among your people. We rejoice in your power shown to us in Jesus. Through his life, death and resurrection.

We thank you Father for your glory displayed in the world and for creation around us. We thank you for your undeserved grace in our lives, drawing us to yourself. For the gift of the Holy Spirit to nurture us, to sustain us, to guard us and guide us.

Forgive us Lord for times of our lack of faithfulness and trust, which is not the way you would have us be. Forgive us when we pray but do not trust you for answers. Forgive us when we want to stay in our comfort zone, content to live as we have always lived.

Loving God forgive.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught his disciples, I pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Jonah 1: 1 – 9

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” ³But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

⁴But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.

⁵Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that *was* in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep.

⁶So the captain came to him, and said to him, “What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish.”

⁷And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble *has come* upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸Then they said to him, “Please tell us! For whose cause *is* this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?”

⁹So he said to them, “I *am* a Hebrew; and I fear ^[c]the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry *land*.”

We know that Jonah was then thrown into the sea. Jonah realised that his rebellion from God had brought danger to all aboard the ship. God has many ways to get our attention!

Mark 4: 35 – 41

³⁵On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side.” ³⁶Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. ³⁷And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. ³⁸But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

³⁹Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Peace, be still!” And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰But He said to them, “Why are you so fearful? How *is it* that you have no faith?” ⁴¹And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, “Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!”

Singing the Faith 556 – Just as I am

1	Just as I am, without one plea but that you died to set me free, and at your bidding, ‘Come to me!’ O Lamb of God, I come!	2	Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt, fightings within and fears without, O Lamb of God, I come!
3	Just as I am, you will receive, will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve: because your promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come!	4	Just as I am — your love unknown has broken every barrier down — now to be yours, yes, yours alone, O Lamb of God, I come!

5 Just as I am, of that free love
the breadth, length, depth and height to prove,
here for a time and then above,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Charlotte Elliott (1789–1871) adapted by Jubilate Hymns (alt.). Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 556
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Reflection

We have God's call to Jonah.

The book of Jonah teaches that only true repentance can bring salvation. It also demonstrates God's compassion towards all. God wants all people to truly repent and receive salvation. Jonah is a minor prophet with a major message.

Many, many years ago, when my youngest daughter and her friend belonged to the Ringsash circuit's Girls Brigade, they put on a production. It was Jonah. Those young people en-acted the story so well that it has always stuck in my mind. The poignancy of the story came across as so human, so real. Sometimes when God calls or prompts us to do something, do we feel like Jonah? He did not want to go to Nineveh to cry out against wickedness.

What we see and hear and have heard all around us recently, do we feel like crying out against the wickedness?

Maybe at times we hold back when we should speak up. I am as guilty as anyone.

The reading of Mark Chapter 4.

At first, I could not link these two readings but in the case of Jonah it would have taken a lot of faith to go to Nineveh and also in the account given to us by St Mark.

The disciples in the boat, they too were scared, as I am sure most of us would be. Teacher do you not care that we are perishing? Jesus arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea; 'Peace, be still'.

He asked his disciples 'Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?'

This experience had shaken the disciples so much that they began to ask each other 'Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey him?'

They had been with Jesus, they were his disciples, surely they knew who he was? But they were human, they had been through a very frightening experience. When we experience the storms of life, maybe at times we feel like asking, 'why?' It had shaken them through and through.

As Christians we have that assurance over and over in God's word that, if we trust in the words of Jesus then we know that he holds the whole world in his hands.

That is the reassurance that the presence of Jesus must have given the disciples when they realised that the sea was calm. The voyage with Jesus was a voyage in peace.

In recent months and in these present days Jesus is still saying 'Peace, be still'.

We are all anxious for our loved ones, that is natural, and we hold them all in our hearts, as we come to our prayers of intercession.

Prayers of Intercession

Loving Father, we bring all peoples everywhere.

Let us pray for the Church of Christ throughout the world.

For its unity in Christ

For the fulfilment of its mission.

For all ministers of the gospel, for our own minister and preachers

For Christians in our communities and for all families.

Pause

Lord, give peace.

Strengthen your church to carry forward the work of Christ, that we and all who profess your name may be united in your truth, live together in your love and reveal your glory to the world.

Pause

Lord, give peace.

Let us pray for all nations and peoples everywhere. For our own government, that they may have wisdom to work for the good of all, especially in these times of uncertainty and anxiety. Give wisdom to all in authority. Direct this nation and all nations in the ways of justice and peace, that all will honour one another and seek the common good.

Pause

Lord, give peace.

We bring you Lord our families, our friends and our Church families. Strengthen and protect them. Give us all the faith that can 'sink the mountain to a plain'. Give us the right words to say to those who as yet do not confess thee as Lord and Saviour of their lives.

Pause

Lord, give peace.

We ask these prayers in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ the giver of our salvation. Amen.

Singing the Faith 661 – Give me the faith

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| 1 | Give me the faith which can remove
and sink the mountain to a plain;
give me the childlike praying love,
which longs to build thy house again;
thy love, let it my heart o'erpower,
and all my simple soul devour. | 2 | I would the precious time redeem,
and longer live for this alone:
to spend, and to be spent, for them
who have not yet my Saviour known;
fully on these my mission prove,
and only breathe, to breathe thy love. |
| 3 | My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,
into thy blessèd hands receive;
and let me live to preach thy word,
and let me to thy glory live;
my every sacred moment spend
in publishing the sinners' friend. | 4 | Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
with boundless charity divine:
so shall I all my strength exert,
and love them with a zeal like thine;
and lead them to thy open side,
the sheep for whom their Shepherd died. |

Charles Wesley (1707–1788). Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 661 .

Final Prayer

May God enfold you,

May Christ uphold you,

May the Holy Spirit keep you in heaven's sight.

May the grace, love and peace of the Lord Jesus be with you. Amen.