

Welcome

Hymn Morning has broken *by Eleanor Farjeon*

1. Morning has broken like the first morning; blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning! Praise for them springing fresh from the Word!
2. Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven, like the first dew fall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden, sprung from completeness where his feet pass.
3. Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise ev'ry morning, God's recreation of the new day!

We begin our service by **confessing** our shortcomings

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed

Lord have mercy **Lord have mercy**

We have not loved you with all our heart, and have not loved our neighbour as ourselves

Christ have mercy **Christ have mercy**

In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be

Lord have mercy **Lord have mercy**

God's Pardon May the Father forgive you by the death of his Son and strengthen you by his risen life to live in the power of his Spirit all your days **Amen.**

Collect Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father; give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen**

Readings Genesis 21:8-21

- 8 So the child (Ishmael) grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.
- 9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.
- 10 Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."
- 11 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.
- 12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.
- 13 "Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed."
- 14 ¶ So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.
- 15 And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs.
- 16 Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.
- 17 And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.
- 18 "Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."
- 19 Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink.
- 20 So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.
- 21 He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Matthew 10:24-39

- 24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.
- 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they call those of his household!
- 26 Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.
- 27 Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.
- 28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
- 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.
- 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
- 31 Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.
- 32 Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.
- 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.
- 34 Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.
- 35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';
- 36 and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'
- 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than

Me is not worthy of Me.

38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Reflection

Isn't it lovely to wake up (& to go to bed) to the sound of all the robins, blackbirds, & the sparrows singing.

Here in my hand is my first pocket New Testament that I have had for over 63 years. In it is a feather (that's been there for all those years) It's a feather from a sparrow that got into my parents conservatory & flew around trying to get out. In the process of panic he lost this feather. Eventually exhausted he dropped to the floor, so I carefully picked him up and put him outside to get his breath back & fly off.

I then put this feather into my testament at today's reading from Mt10:29 which says *"Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. Father God cares for the sparrows but you are of more value than many sparrows."*

What a wonderful reminder that God watches, sees and cares for his creation however insignificant it may be.

In fact on another occasion in Lk12:6 Jesus mentioned **5** sparrows sold for 2 coins - ie one is thrown in for nothing - it was just an extra, of no value.

At times we may feel undervalued, even value-less but we are not to Father God. He watches, sees and cares.

Hagar was a slave girl with a helpless baby in Abraham's family. She was also a threat to Sarah's position, so Sarah got Abraham to throw her out

and there in Genesis 21 we find her in the wilderness, homeless, hungry and helpless, like many in Africa, Asia, and the Middle and Far East today.

What could exhausted Hagar do? She put her child in the shade of a wilderness shrub and moved off, *a bow shot away*, to not see him die. I guess that both of them felt hopeless, unwanted and God forsaken. And there she wept - like her baby!!

Sometimes tears are all we have to express our griefs and problems.

Ps 56:8 tells us that our tears are an expressions of not just inner pain but also inexpressible prayer that God keeps in his bottle.

I am always saddened when people say 'Pull yourself together. Don't cry' - especially in church

A well known preacher once said 'If you can't bleed in hospital and can't cry in church where can you??'

Gen21:17 says: *And God heard the voice of the lad.* Then God sent an angel who called out of heaven to Hagar, and asked, *"What's troubling you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is."*

God sees the sparrow fall, this child under the bush, and Hagar weeping. And he provided for them Scripture says: *God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink.* Scripture concludes, *God was with the lad*

So, be encouraged today whoever you are, whatever your circumstances - you are the object of God's interest, care, provision and plan; though we might be tempted to say: 'What has God done for me?'

Many years later Paul wrote to people struggling in Rome. Roms 6 says: *We know this: that Christ, having been raised from the dead, He dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him! So we believe that we shall also live with Him if we died with Christ.*

WHO-ever we are (or aren't) Jesus knows all about us

WHAT-ever we are going through he knows all about our struggles because he became one of us and He is gracious

as Paul says - Jesus died for us and rose again for us! He is greater than our difficulties, even death itself.

The sparrows are of value to God because he made them - he is their creator

But .. *you are of more value than many sparrows.* God cares for them as Creator but we are of MORE value because Christ is not only our Creator, he is our Saviour - he gave his life for us

So God's Word says to us today: *Look at the sparrows and do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows*

Whoever we are (or aren't) Jesus knows all about us

Whatever we are going through Jesus knows about it and he is gracious.

In love he died for us and also rose again for us He is greater than all.

God's word tells us in 1Jn4:4 *greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world*

Jesus says: just look at the little sparrows and *do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows*

Hymn

There are hundreds of sparrows *by John Gowans*

1. There are hundreds of sparrows, thousands, millions, they're two a penny, far too many there must be

There are hundreds and thousands, millions of sparrows, but God knows ev'ry one and God knows me.

2. There are hundreds of flowers, thousands, millions, and flowers fair the meadows wear for all to see.

There are hundreds and thousands and millions of flowers, but God knows ev'ry one and God knows me.

3. There are hundreds of planets, thousands, millions, way out in space each has a place by God's decree

There are hundreds and thousands, millions of planets, but God knows ev'ry one and God knows me.

Prayers

Thank you Father for your care for all your creation whether large or small, whether planets, plants or people. May we, mindful of our stewardship for this world, care for all that you have created by guarding and protecting it.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

As we read the story of Hagar and her child Ishmael we pray for adults and children struggling with hunger and thirst, with failure of crops, and worries about how to make ends meet

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

As we hear in the news of child abuse, youth crime, and anti-social behaviour we bring to you dysfunctional families, divided communities and lawless individuals. And we pray for all those trying to help them.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for countries torn apart by violence and war, and leaders who fail to be examples of justice, truth and service

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those who feel sidelined and worthless, who struggle with isolation and depression. May they find in you and your unfailing love a peace that passes all understanding

We pray for all who suffer in body mind and spirit, make your Word to be a comfort and help to those in need

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for ourselves that we might find new life, forgiveness, peace and purpose under the shadow of the wing of Jesus Christ our Lord

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that 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

Hymn What a friend we have in Jesus *by Joseph Medlicot Scriven*

1. What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry ev'rything to God in prayer

O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear

All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

2. Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged: take it to the Lord in prayer

Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our sorrows bear?

Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness - take it to the Lord in prayer.

3. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Saviour, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.

Do thy friend despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In his arms he'll take and shield you, we will find a solace there.

Blessing The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you his peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be on you and those for whom you pray this day and for evermore **Amen**

Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England.

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