

# The Bride Valley Telephone Service for Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023

## Fourth Sunday of Trinity

### *Opening Sentence*

... I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me. *From Psalm 13*

1 Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace  
to let you be my servant, too.

2 We are pilgrims on a journey,  
and companions on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.

3 I will hold the Christlight for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.

*Richard Gillard (born 1953) © 1977 Scripture in Song/Maranatha! Music/Adm. by Song Solutions CopyCare, CCLI  
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### *Hymn: Brother, sister let me serve you*

4 I will weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh, I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
till we've seen this journey through.

5 When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.

6 Brother, sister, let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace  
to let you be my servant, too.

### *Prayer of Confession*

In a dark and disfigured world we have not held out the light of life: Lord have mercy.

**Lord have mercy.**

In a hungry and despairing world we have failed to share our bread: Christ have mercy.

**Christ have mercy.**

In a cold and loveless world we have kept the love of God to ourselves: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

### *Absolution*

May God our Father forgive us our sins and bring us to the eternal joy of his kingdom, where dust and ashes have no dominion. Amen.

### *Collect*

**Gracious Father, by the obedience of Jesus you brought salvation to our wayward world:  
draw us into harmony with your will, that we may find all things restored in him, our Saviour  
Jesus Christ. Amen**

### *Old Testament Reading: Genesis 22. 1-14*

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw

the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.' Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together.

When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill\* his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide';\* as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'

### ***New Testament Reading: Romans 6: 12-23***

Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### ***Gospel Reading Matthew 10.40-42***

[Jesus said] 'Whoever welcomes you welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes God's messenger because he is God's messenger, will share in his reward; and whoever welcomes a good man because he is good will share his reward. You can be sure that whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of the least of these my followers because he is my follower, will certainly receive a reward.'

### ***Reflection: Messenger***

Jesus refers to a common attitude in his day: if anybody brings you a message from the king, you should treat the messenger as respectfully as you would treat the king. Honouring the

messenger is honouring the one who sent them. So in this passage, Jesus is calling on the people to respect his 12 apostles, who preached his message with the honour due to Jesus himself. In fact any preacher, any Christian who speaks about Jesus to their friends, is acting as a messenger for Jesus and should be treated with respect. The words in the older translations, 'one of these little ones', seems to have meant 'any follower of Jesus, however humble and insignificant'. So he is telling us we should treat other Christians as though Jesus himself had come to visit us. Of course, that does include small children; if we give any child a drink of cold water, for Jesus's sake, because Jesus loves us all equally, then that act of kindness is as praiseworthy as if we had given the water to Jesus himself.

Jesus said that any kind deed, no matter if it is done to somebody quite ordinary and insignificant, will receive a reward. Now if you expect to receive a reward here on earth for the kind things you have done, you will probably be disappointed. No, he was probably referring to 'rewards in heaven', after we die, when we are all together again and together with Jesus, our Saviour and our loving friend. So this is a direct statement from Jesus that each of us, if we turn to him, will live in a much better universe than the one we live in now. And if there is a judgement before we get there, it is to forgive us our unloving actions, and reward us for every little kindness we have given.

In fact, we do good deeds not in hope of a reward, but in gratitude to Jesus for his kindness to us. The promise of a reward is an added bonus. We shall certainly be rewarded if we make grand plans which make the world a better place: but equally, we shall have a reward even for giving a drink to somebody who was thirsty. A loving disposition, witnesses to unbelievers that we believe in a God of love, and are returning to God's love in the only way we know how. We must also learn how to receive kindness graciously. As the hymn says: 'Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.' Take the cup of cold water if it is offered to you, for that will ensure your benefactor a reward in heaven. Simple gifts are the best!

### ***Hymn: Amazing Grace***

1 Amazing grace! – how sweet the sound  
that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,  
was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
and grace my fears relieved;  
how precious did that grace appear  
the hour I first believed!

3 Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come;

'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promised good to me,  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

5 When we've been there ten thousand years  
bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise  
than when we first begun.

*John Newton (1725-1807), William Cowper (1731-1800), John Rees (1828-1900)*

### ***Prayers of Intercession:***

Generous God, your love bids us welcome. Give to your Church an open heart ...

Unite your gathered people into a true fellowship of your Son.

Generous God, your Son gave a model of simple charity. Transform our governance with such willing compassion ...

May the hungry find food shared and the thirsty be revived.

Generous God, break down the barriers that divide communities and increase hostilities.

Extend the hands of friendship to soften hardened hearts ...

Remove all that diminishes people's worth.

Generous god, pour out your love and compassion on all who are suffering in turmoil, whatever that may be ... Shine your light in the darkness.

Generous God, receive with mercy and forgiveness all who have died ...

Comfort those who grieve and bring us to share in the reward of the righteous.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Let us now pray the Lord's Prayer together*

**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. Lead us not into temptation But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

***Final Hymn: To God be the glory***

To God be the glory great things He has done  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son  
Who yielded His life an atonement for sin  
And opened the life gate that all may go in

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord*

*Let the earth hear His voice*

*Praise the Lord praise the Lord*

*Let the people rejoice*

*O come to the Father through Jesus the Son*

*And give Him the glory great things He has done*

O perfect redemption the purchase of blood

To every believer the promise of God

The vilest offender who truly believes

That moment from Jesus a pardon receives

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord*

Great things He has taught us

Great things He has done

And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son

But purer and higher and greater will be

Our wonder our transport when Jesus we see

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord*

***Final Prayer:***

**In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy, help us, heavenly Father, to trust your love, to serve your purpose, and to praise your name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

***Ending with:***

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen.**