



Worship at Home : 20th September

Psalm 96

O sing to the Lord a new song ;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.

Sing to the Lord, bless his name ;
tell of his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvellous works among all the peoples.

For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised ;
he is to be revered above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.

Honour and majesty are before him ;
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

O sing to the Lord a new song ;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.



Earth's creator, everyday God,
Loving Maker, O Jesus,
you who shaped us, O Spirit,
recreate us, come, be with us.

In your presence, everyday God,
we are gathered, O Jesus,
you have called us, O Spirit,
to restore us, come, be with us.

Life of all lives, everyday God,
love of all loves, O Jesus,
hope of all hopes, O Spirit,
light of all lights, come, be with us.

In our resting, everyday God,
in our rising, O Jesus,
in our hoping, O Spirit,
in our waiting, come, be with us.

In our dreaming, everyday God,
in our daring, O Jesus,
in our searching, O Spirit,
in our sharing, come, be with us.

God of laughter, everyday God,
God of sorrow, O Jesus,
home and shelter, O Spirit,
strong and patient, come, be with us.

Way of freedom, everyday God,
star of morning, O Jesus,

timeless healer, O Spirit,
flame eternal, come, be with us.

Word of gladness, everyday God,
word of mercy, O Jesus,
word of friendship, O Spirit,
word of challenge, come, be with us.

Gentle father, everyday God,
faithful brother, O Jesus,
tender sister, O Spirit,
loving mother, come, be with us.

Our beginning, everyday God,
our unfolding, O Jesus,
our enduring, O Spirit,
journey's ending, come, be with us.

Alleluia, everyday God,
now and always, O Jesus,
alleluia, O Spirit,
through all ages, come, be with us.

Bernadette Farrell (b.1957) CCLI 677690

Let us pray.

Lord, we praise you for the privilege of walking
with Christ and bearing his name; for the joy that
he has brought into our everyday lives.

We praise you for Jesus and for the way he
changes our lives. We praise you that walking with
Christ is an everyday experience, one that
accompanies us in the ordinary and in all the highs
and lows.

We praise you for those moments when your Holy
Spirit has opened our eyes to the fingerprints of
God in creation and opened our ears to his word in
the Bible or his voice in the presence of others.

We praise you for those times when we have
known the touch of his love and have been used as
channels of his caring.

We praise you for those times when the light of
Christ has illuminated our lives and brought hope,
joy, love and wholeness.

Lord our God, we offer to you our thanks and
praise. Amen.



Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of
creation !
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and
salvation !



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All ye who hear, brothers and sisters, draw near,
praise him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and
defend thee ;
surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend
thee :
ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
who with his love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord, who doth nourish thy life and
restore thee,
fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever before
thee,
then to thy need he like a mother doth speed,
spreading the wings of grace o'er thee.

Praise to the Lord, who, when darkness of sin is
abounding,
who, when the godless do triumph, all virtue
confounding,
sheddeth his light, chaseth the horrors of night,
saints with his mercy surrounding.

Praise to the Lord ! O let all that is in me adore
him !

All that hath life and breath, come now with
praises before him !

Let the amen sound from his people again :
gladly for aye we adore him.

Joachim Neander (1650–1680)

translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878) and

Rupert E. Davies (1909–1994) CCLI 677690

Matthew 20:1-16

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went.

When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.'

When evening came, the owner of the vineyard

said to his manager, 'Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'

But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'

So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

Reflection

Once more we delve into a story that describes God's economy as being very different to ours. I have some sympathy with those who worked the longest hours and got the same wage as those who worked least. Yet, in God's economy, should we be surprised?

I was asked once what made me Methodist. I was tempted to say all kinds of things, not least its tradition of singing our faith. However, the more I reflected on the question, the more I realised it came down to the Covenant Service. In this service there is a very short sentence that sums up all that we say and do when we make or renew our Covenant with God. "In this covenant God promises us new life in Christ. For our part we promise to live no longer for ourselves but for God."

God's promise of New Life extends to those who gave their whole life to him and those who only knew God briefly. The reward is the same.

Does that still sound unfair?

I remember being in a conversation about what heaven would be like. For some it meant unlimited amounts of all their favourite things. Some imagined fields of green grass and flowing rivers



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and the delight of all creation as imagined on a glorious summer day. Then someone spoke up and said, "But what does it matter? We are going to be in the presence of Jesus, the presence of God – surely everything else will fade into insignificance compared to that."

Maybe that person had the better grasp of what heaven will be like. Certainly here on earth we get glimpses – small, yet wonderful insights into what heaven might be like, into what the Kingdom of God is like. Even Jesus only ever said 'the Kingdom of heaven is like ...' In truth, we will only know when we get there. Then we will know much more completely and the glory of the Lord shall not be filtered or subject to any of the distractions that fill our lives and understanding. We will be in the glorious new life that God has promised. Do we really need the detail?

This story seems to say that God's promise, as we see it through our Covenant service, is that same reward. New Life with God. Could we dream of anything more?

Yet, there is another aspect to this story which is equally difficult to ignore. The landowner kept going back and kept hiring new staff.

Back when I was in Norfolk, there was a saying that the difference between a good farmer and a bad farmer was about two weeks. What they meant was, that when harvest time came, if you didn't take the right opportunity, the quality of your crop could easily suffer. In harvest season, the tractors would be out long before sunrise and long after sunset. The pressure to get the harvest 'safely gathered in' was great.

We know that God keeps growing his church from one generation to another. We know that we have been commissioned by Jesus to make disciples of all nations – 'baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.' (Mt 28:19, 20)

The harvest is still plentiful and God continues to call us into the field, and will not stop calling us to gather his people in. It is an ordinary, everyday calling which we do not do alone, because, to quote the Covenant Service once more, 'The power to do all these things is given to us in Christ who strengthens us.'

May God continue to bless us in the work he calls us to.

Amen.



*Here I am, wholly available,
as for me, I will serve the Lord.*

The fields are white unto harvest
but O, the labourers are so few,
so Lord I give myself to help the reaping,
to gather precious souls unto you.

The time is right in the nation
for works of power and authority;
God's looking for a people who are willing
to be counted in His glorious victory.

As salt are we ready to savour,
in darkness are we ready to be light,
God's seeking out a very special people
to manifest His truth and His might.

Chris Bowater CCLI 677690

Let us pray.

Loving and gracious God, we thank you for those who have gone before us, sowing seeds of faith in the hope and prayer that they will grow within us.

We thank you for the faithfulness of those who, by their lives, by their teaching and encouragement, helped to bring us closer to you.

We thank you, Lord our God, that now, we may do the same for others and play our part in the work of the harvest. Sometimes intentionally, often unknowingly, bringing people step by step closer to a knowledge and love of you.

Lord, help us to realise that the work is not done, that there is much more to do. Give us your strength to continue, and your light to guide our path.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for your church, a church constantly working in the field to bring in the harvest. Help us not to do so wearily, as if the sun and heat has beaten us down. Rather help us to do so joyfully,



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singing your praises and ever pointing to your glory and love. May that sustain us when times are hard.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for your world, in places ravaged by fire or wasteful conflict.

We pray for the nations of the world as they negotiate with each other, hoping for a better world, but seeking their own interests first.

Lord, give to us a global vision where each person is valued, respected and loved. May these things which have no price ticket or law be our guide. And may those who have been mistreated, oppressed, or discriminated against, discover a new hope in a changed world.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for ourselves, for our families, friends and colleagues, as we pray also for those we find difficult to love. May your love and power bring a new light to their path and joy to their step.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In the quietness of this moment, we bring before you, O Lord, those we know who are ill or anxious, bereaved or dying, or caring and looking on, not knowing what to do for the best. Surround them all with your love, we pray.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, we bring these and all our prayers together with the words that Jesus taught us:

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.



Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy,
be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the
day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and
the lathe,
be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of
the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to
embrace,
be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is
balm,
be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the
day.

Jan Struther (Joyce Placzek) (1901–1953) CCLI 677690

May God bless us this day.
May we know God's blessing upon us.
May we share God's blessing with all those we
meet, this day and for ever more.
Amen.

