

Order of Service 7th August 2022

The Way of Trust

Welcome

Hello, and welcome to Hearsall at Home for 7th August 2022. Today we think about the way of trust. Can we live according to God's great dream of a better world, even in the midst of the toil and pain of this one?

Call to Worship

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people he chose for his inheritance.

13 From heaven the Lord looks down
and sees all mankind;

14 from his dwelling-place he watches
all who live on earth –

15 he who forms the hearts of all,
who considers everything they do.

16 No king is saved by the size of his army;
no warrior escapes by his great strength.

17 A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
despite all its great strength it cannot save.

18 But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,

19 to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine.

20 We wait in hope for the Lord;
he is our help and our shield.

21 In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.

22 May your unfailing love be with us, Lord,
even as we put our hope in you.

Psalm 33:12-22

Our trust is not in the empty things of this world, but in the saving power of the Lord, Jesus Christ. We sing together, *Praise my Soul the King of Heaven...*

Hymn (BPW 65) **Praise, my Soul, the King of Heaven**

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To his feet your tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me his praise should sing:
Praise Him, praise Him,
Praise Him, praise Him,
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for his grace and favour
To our fathers in distress;
Praise Him still the same for ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise Him, praise Him,
Praise Him, praise Him,
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, He tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame He knows;
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Praise Him, praise Him,
Praise Him, praise Him,
Widely as his mercy flows.

Frail as summer's flower we flourish,
Blows the wind and it is gone;
But while mortals rise and perish,
Our God lives unchanging on.
Praise Him, praise Him,
Praise Him, praise Him,
Praise the high Eternal One!

Angels, help us to adore Him,
You behold Him face to face,
Sun and moon, bow down before Him;
Dwellers all in time and space,
Praise Him, praise Him,
Praise Him, praise Him,
Praise with us the God of grace.

Thanksgiving Prayer

Loving Lord, your gifts to us all are too many to count! For starlight and sunlight; for childhood and ageing; for music and silence; for food and for fasting; for marriage and for singleness; for life in all its fullness; and for the strange mystery of dying; for Jesus who ate and drank and lived and died to bring us all salvation; and who rose again on the third day to open the path to life everlasting; for fellowship, family and friendship; for the joy of your Holy Spirit flowing through us all... Every good gift comes from you, but most of all we praise and adore you for yourself alone: in all your mystery, majesty, beauty, holiness, truth, grace and love we are made to sit in awe and wonder before you and to allow our hearts and voices to burst into life in your endless praise. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

All the earth is called to sing God's praise! We sing together, *If I were a butterfly...*

Song (WT 203) **If I were a Butterfly**

If I were a butterfly, I'd thank you Lord for giving me wings.

If I were a robin in a tree, I'd thank you Lord that I could sing.

If I were a fish in the sea, I'd wiggle my tail and I'd giggle with glee

But I just thank you, Father, for making me, me.

Chorus

For you gave me a heart

And you gave me a smile,

You gave me Jesus

And you made me your child,

And I just thank you, Father,

For making me, me.

If I were an elephant, I'd thank you Lord by raising my trunk.

If I were a kangaroo, You know I'd hop right up to you.

If I were an octopus, I'd thank you Lord for my fine looks

But I just thank you, Father, for making me, me.

Chorus

If I were a wiggly worm, I'd thank you Lord that I could squirm,

And if I were a fuzzy, wuzzy bear, I'd thank you Lord for my fuzzy, wuzzy hair.

If I were a crocodile, I'd thank you Lord for my great smile,

But I just thank you, Father, for making me, me.

Chorus

Offering

Lord, receive our humble gifts to the food bank, church and other charities. Please bless our acts of giving. May our gifts enable your kingdom to be a lived experience in our world today. Amen

We hear now our Bible readings from Hebrews and from Luke.

Bible Readings

Hebrews 11:1-13

Faith in action

11 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ²This is what the ancients were commended for.

³By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

⁴By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

⁵By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: 'He could not be found, because God had taken him away.' For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

⁷By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

⁸By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹²And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

Luke 12:32-40

³² 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Watchfulness

³⁵ 'Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. ³⁷ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will make them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. ³⁸ It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or towards daybreak. ³⁹ But understand this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.'

Our prayers of intercession have been written by Eric Bremner and are read by Andy Thompson.

Prayers of Intercession

Dear Lord, help us to enjoy a trusting relationship with You. A relationship that accepts that You are doing the best for all of us, even when we do not understand why certain things are happening. Help us to avoid relationships that question the motives and actions of our friends, an accusatory rather than accepting one.

In all areas of unresolved conflict in our world, where deep-seated grievances and complex history collide, where shattered lives and destroyed cities are evidence of our wars, and we feel helpless to do anything about it, Lord of our hope, help us to Trust in You.

In political decision making in many key areas where true leadership and wisdom matter, when Government should meet the needs, and not the wants, of the people,

when costly decisions are needed and self-interest needs to be put aside, Lord of our hope, help us trust in you.

In our relative security and safety in our country, where we are tempted to trust in our own strength, when our compassion fails, when we lack the imagination to walk in the shoes of refugees and the dispossessed, and we lose sight of our own dependence on you, Lord of our hope, help us to Trust in You.

In all our dreams and longings, where freedom itself is at stake, and we long for a better, fairer and kinder world, teach us to seek your presence and listen to your voice in all our ways and for all our days. God of our hope, we place our Trust in You.

Lord, save us from the darkness all around us; from the darkness within our own hearts. Help us to be strong and take courage. Teach us to be a strength to our family, friends and associates; help us to be a rock that holds them up, not a stone that drags them down. Help us to be beacons of light and hope in our world. Amen

Many thanks for those prayers. When life is stormy it can be hard to keep on trusting in God. But Jesus is the light of the world, and he will always help us to find our way home. We sing, *My Lighthouse*.

Song My Lighthouse

Verse 1

In my wrestling and in my doubts,
In my failures you won't walk out.
Your great love will lead me through.
You are the peace in my troubled sea, whoa oh,
You are the peace in my troubled sea.

Verse 2

In the silence you won't let go,
In my questions your truth will hold,
Your great love will lead me through.
You are the peace in my troubled sea, whoa oh,
You are the peace in my troubled sea.

Chorus

My Lighthouse, my Lighthouse (Whoa-o-a-oh)

Shining in the darkness,

I will follow You. (Whoa oh)

My Lighthouse, my Lighthouse, (Whoa-o-a-oh)

I will trust the promise

You will carry me safe to shore, (Oh-a-oh-oh-o)

Safe to shore, (Oh-a-oh-oh-o)

Safe to shore, (Oh-a-oh-oh-o)

Safe to shore.

Verse 3

I won't fear what tomorrow brings,

With each morning I'll rise and sing.

My God's love will lead me through.

You are the peace in my troubled sea, whoa oh,

You are the peace in my troubled sea –You are my light!

Chorus

Fire before us; You're the brightest.

You will lead us through the storm.

REPEAT x4

Chorus

Sermon

The Way of Trust

What do you really value in life? What kind of life do you dream of living? What kind of world do you want to live in? Today's is a lesson about living the dream!

Ella Toone and Chloe Kelly were both substitutes for the Euro's football final last Sunday. Ella had to wait for 56 minutes on the bench before being called into action. Chloe had to wait over an hour, and came on after 64 minutes.

As they waited, they did not know whether or not they would be called into action. If they were going to be needed, they didn't know when. So they had to just sit, dressed in the right kit and ready to warm up at a moment's notice. Manager, Sarina Wiegman, made very effective use of substitutes, with Allesia Russo coming off the bench in every Euro 2022 game and scoring four goals, including an audacious backheel against Sweden.

But we should also remember Hannah Hampton, Ellie Roebuck, Demi Stokes, Lotte Wubben-Moy and Bethany England who were all unused members of the squad. These five women had to train, share the team spirit, prepare and be ready - but were never called into action during the tournament. They had to be match-ready even if they never made it to the subs' bench!

Jesus' story of the servants at home waiting for their Master to return from a wedding reception bears some comparison. They had to be ready. They didn't know when the boss would get home. They didn't know when they'd be needed. They had to be in the right kit and keep the home just so, ready for whenever their master might arrive.

The letter to the Hebrews declares that faith is confidence in what we hope for, and assurance about what we **do not** see. In everyday life, a Christian commits to living from the vision of Christ's kingdom of peace, justice and love, even in a world full of violence, suffering, greed, malice and pain. It's hard to be kingdom-ready in such a difficult world.

Hebrews 11 goes through a list of examples from the Old Testament of those who did not see, or fully see, what they were promised, but **lived by it anyway**. We hear of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Sarai and Abram. These people all acted on trust. Abel trusted that doing what was right would bring its own reward. Enoch lived a righteous life and pleased God; then, by the way, he vanished into heaven rather than dying. Noah got on with building the ark even though the flood was yet to come. Abram left Harran at the age of 75, and his wife Sarai went with him. They went on to trust in God's promise that, old as they were, they would become the parents of a great nation.

The chapter in Hebrews goes on beyond our reading to list many more: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Joshua, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David

and Samuel. It waxes lyrical about how, through faith, they conquered kingdoms, administered justice, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of flames, received back their dead; how they were tortured, flogged, imprisoned, stoned, sawn in two, wandered in deserts and lived in caves and in holes in the ground.

The writer concludes that all were commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better **for us**, meaning in the Christian era, so that only **together with Christians** would they be made perfect. Hebrews 11 depicts faith, not as simply belief, as in weakly believing that something might be so, but **a trust that leads to solid action**. These people, who showed faith by their resolute deeds, did so at a time when they had not yet received whatever they had been promised.

* * *

But isn't something else going on? As they lived according to the trust in God and in God's promises, so they brought a little bit of God's kingdom into reality. Faith means trusting our lives to God's vision for the world.

So, what about you? Do you believe in God's kingdom as the way the world should be? Do you think that mercy, kindness, truth, forgiveness, courage, compassion, justice and love should be the defining features of our world? Then let's live that way! And by trusting our lives to his way, we begin to bring the kingdom into reality in our little corner of the world.

Romans 12, in the J. B. Phillips' translation, urges Christians not to let the world squeeze them into its mould. Well, the pressures on Christians from the mould of the world today are very great indeed. How can we live out God's dream, rather than simply going the way of the world?

* * *

My very simple model today for living by trusting God's way is in four steps and may be remembered by the letters of the word HOOP!

Hoop begins with an H, and H is for our **hearts** - the core of our beings. Now Jesus was absolutely adamant that it all started from **within**. If you don't think that's true, read the Sermon on the Mount - Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7. In Jesus' view, we do

our spiritual activities largely in private, but by golly do we actually do them, but then live outwardly in line with our spirituality. What are we treasuring? That's what's shaping our hearts.

A life without a transformed heart is like an ornately carved lamp with the bulb switched off. So, my first tip for living the dream is to switch your heart on each morning. Pray. Maybe read a few verses from the Bible. Above all, **remember who you are** - a beloved child of God, a citizen of heaven called to share his kingdom in your world that day.

Then comes O, which is for **opportunities**. If we get our hearts switched on each day, we can be sure to notice little opportunities to put our faith into practice. Try it! Ask God for little chances to show what it means to be a believer. God will oblige. A neighbour needs a hand. A church friend needs a listening ear. A discussion develops somewhere and you know you want to share a Christian perspective. A colleague needs our support. Other moments come when you have the opportunity to witness to your faith in word or deed.

We might find little dilemmas cropping up. How are we spending our money? Are we living in an environmentally friendly way? Rejoice in these opportunities to live out your faith. You've switched the light on in the morning, so let it shine in your decisions, words and actions throughout the day!

Next is a second O, which is for **others**. The pressures to be squeezed into the mould of the world around us are so intense that we need back-up. We need Christian friends to listen to us, and to support us, to pray with us, and to share with us as we try to live out our faith.

Team up with a fellow believer. Don't go solo as a Christian. Join a homegroup. Get a spiritual director. For most of us it's virtually impossible to live out our faith alone. If we are neglecting to share meaningful fellowship with other Christians, we will find it tough to live a consistently Christian faith.

And the letter P is simply for **Ponder**. At the end of the day, take a few moments to review what's been happening. Have you kept your inner light switched on? Have you taken the opportunities that have come your way? In a prayerful spirit, take just a

couple of minutes or so to review your day. Ask for forgiveness if you see that you went wrong. Learn from your experiences and pray for the strength to get it right the next day.

If you're living with someone else, enlist them if they're willing to take part with you in this sharing process. Talk about it together and support each other.

So... HOOP! What's your weakest link?

Getting your heart right with God each morning? Being open to opportunities to live out your faith? Getting fellowship from others and getting the Christian support you need? Pondering prayerfully as you review each day? Where's your strength? Where are you falling down? What can you do about that?

When I spoke of the five unused substitutes in Euro 22, I didn't remind us what Ella Toone and Chloe Kelly went on to do in the final. Ella Toone scored a sublime opening goal with a chip over the German keeper, executed with exceptional skill and great poise. And Chloe Kelly scored the vital winner, toe-poking the ball into the net at the end of a goal-mouth scramble in a dramatic extra-time goal.

To embrace Trust as a way of life may sometimes mean waiting on the bench and just being ready, even if nothing much happens. But, if we **are** ready, maybe God will bring along some wonderful moments, and you'll get the chance to make a big difference in the life of someone you care about, in the life of our church or our neighbourhood.

As a girl, Leah Williamson was a mascot for England, and stood beside the then captain, Kelly Smith, who signed a picture for little Leah, telling her to "dream big". Now Leah Williamson is, of course, England's captain and has just lifted one of the biggest trophies in world football.

Well, we can't all be international soccer stars, and I don't subscribe to the notion that you can become whatever you dream you want to be. Neither do I think that any dream will do!

But I do believe that God gives us all a kind of dream - a sense of what his kingdom is like. And if we attend to him, he gives a sense of who we are becoming in that

broader kingdom life. And Christians who want to make a difference in this world don't wait for heaven to come after death; they get on - as far as they are able, with the great help of God, and with the warm support of fellow believers, with the prayers of the church, and with the vision of scripture - they get on with living that dream today in the here and the now.

“Jesus is the truth. If we follow truth, in a way we also follow him. Let's sing, *Will you come and follow me...*”

Hymn (BPW 363) **Will You Come and Follow Me?**

Will you come and follow me, if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare, should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you, and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see, if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean in you, and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide, if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
Through my sight and touch and sound in you, and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In Your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show,
Thus, I'll move and live and grow in you, and you in me.

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;

And the love of God;

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

Be with us all, evermore.

Amen

Sung Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you

Wherever he may send you;

May he guide you through the wilderness;

Protect you through the storm;

May he bring you home rejoicing

At the wonders he has shown you;

May he bring you home rejoicing

Once again into our doors.