

Podcast Order of Service 23th October 2022

***Good News For The Poor***

Welcome

Hello and welcome to Hearsall at Home for 23rd October 2022. Today we reflect on Jesus' teaching in Luke 4, when he announced good news to the poor.

Call to Worship

We come to worship God.

1 Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord, my soul.

2 I will praise the Lord all my life;

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.

3 Do not put your trust in princes,

in human beings, who cannot save.

4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;

on that very day their plans come to nothing.

5 Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

whose hope is in the Lord their God.

6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth,

the sea, and everything in them –

he remains faithful for ever.

7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed

and gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets prisoners free,

8 the Lord gives sight to the blind,

the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,

the Lord loves the righteous.

9 The Lord watches over the foreigner

and sustains the fatherless and the widow,

but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

10 The Lord reigns for ever,

your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Psalm 146

We celebrate the saving power of our God, as we sing two worship songs together now...

## 2 Songs

### (WT 82) **Far and Near Hear the Call**

#### Verse 1

Far and near hear the call,  
Worship Him Lord of all.  
Families of nations come  
Celebrate what God has done.

#### *Chorus*

*Say it loud, say it strong!  
Tell the world what God has done.  
Say it loud, praise His name,  
Let the earth rejoice, the Lord reigns!*

#### Verse 2

Deep and wide is the love  
Heaven sent from above.  
God's own Son for sinners died,  
Rose again, He is alive!

#### *Chorus*

#### Verse 3

At His name let praise begin,  
Oceans roar, nature sing  
For He comes to judge the earth,  
In righteousness and in His truth.

#### *Chorus x 2*

Song (WT 358) **Reign in Me**

Reign in me, Sovereign Lord,  
Reign in me,  
Reign in me, Sovereign Lord,  
Reign in me.

Captivate my heart,  
Let Your Kingdom come,  
Establish there Your throne,  
Let Your will be done.

\* Repeat from beginning

Reign in me, Sovereign Lord,  
Reign in me.

Prayer (Kate Compston)

O God,  
who am I now?

Once, I was secure in familiar territory,  
in my sense of belonging,  
unquestioning of  
the norms of my culture,  
the assumptions built into my language,  
the values shared by my society.

But now you have called me out  
and away from home  
and I do not know where you are leading.  
I am empty, unsure, uncomfortable.  
I have only a beckoning star to follow.

Journeying God,  
pitch your tent with mine  
so that I may not become deterred  
by hardship, strangeness, doubt.

Show me the movement I must make  
toward a wealth not dependent on possessions,  
toward a wisdom not based on books,  
toward a strength not bolstered by might,  
toward a God not confined to heaven  
but scandalously earthed, poor, unrecognised...

Help me to find myself  
as I walk in others' shoes.

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.

And we acknowledge the joy of giving ...

### Offering

Lord, what a privilege and joy it is to share some of the gifts you have given to us,  
with other people. Take our gifts to church, to charities and to food bank and use  
them all to bring your good news to the poor. Amen.

And we sing the hymn *Immortal Invisible*.

Hymn (BPW 383) **Immortal, Invisible**

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,  
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;  
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above  
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all life thou givest, to both great and small;  
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;  
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,  
And wither and perish but nought changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,  
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;  
But of all thy rich graces, this grace, Lord, impart –  
Take the veil from our faces, the veil from our heart.

All praise we would render; O help us to see  
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth thee,  
And so let thy glory, Almighty, impart  
Through Christ in the story, Thy Christ to the heart.

Our prayers of intercession this week are led by Peter Fearn.

Prayers of Intercession

There is a response to these prayers today. When I say, “Lord, hear us”,  
please respond: “**Lord, graciously hear us**”.

Let us pray together.

Loving Heavenly Father, as we raise before you our prayers of intercession,  
Lord, hear us; **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Father God, we pray for all church leaders, that as they spend time in prayer and preparation, they are filled with divine inspiration and revelation, so that when they speak, it will be your word which comes in power to challenge, **convince** and empower.

Lord, hear us; **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Mighty God, we pray for all who carry civic and political responsibilities both locally and throughout the world. Help the leaders of the nations put aside all selfish ambition as they seek to be the instruments of your will for humanity and carry out your desire for the welfare of all people, which will culminate in glory to you and in happier human lives.

Lord, hear us; **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Loving God, thank you for the abundance of life, relationships, health, comfort, and wealth you have provided, and thank you that even in times of need, despair, and brokenness, you are there. Please, put your arms around children and families in extreme poverty so they feel comfort and hope; meet their needs both physically and spiritually, and Lord, guide us so we can be your hands and feet pursuing justice for the poor and upholding the cause of the needy.

Your love for humanity was revealed in Jesus, whose earthly life began in the poverty of a stable and ended in the pain and isolation of the cross. Draw near to all those who are struggling and comfort them in spirit. Bless those working locally to provide for them, including food banks, homeless shelters and refuges.

Lord, hear us; **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Living God, where there is sickness, turn weakness into strength, suffering into compassion, sorrow into joy, and pain into comfort. Help all who suffer to trust in your goodness and hope in your faithfulness, even in the middle of their suffering. Let them be filled with patience and joy in your presence, as they wait for your healing touch. In a moment of silence, we each name in our hearts those on our minds at this time.

Lord, hear us; **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Faithful God, your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank you that

we can live in Your light and walk in Your truth. May the things that you have revealed and thoughts that we have shared dwell in our hearts and stir us to action. Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Many thanks Peter for those prayers; and we hear our Bible reading now from Luke chapter 4.

### Bible Reading

#### **Luke 4: 14 - 21**

##### *Jesus rejected at Nazareth*

<sup>14</sup> Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. <sup>15</sup> He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

<sup>16</sup> He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup> 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,

<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

<sup>20</sup> Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. <sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

We reflect on that reading in the words of our next song, *When your pure light shines...*

Song (WT 464) **When Your Pure Light Shines**

When your pure light shines  
so brightly in our world,  
I see the colours change  
from greyness into glory.  
Our hearts, like coloured glass  
that were so dark and dusty,  
turn radiant and lovely  
in the glory of your light.

*Chorus x 2*

*Shine within my heart!*  
*Shine within your church!*  
*Shine ever brighter in your world!*

The broken and the lonely  
are welcome in your church;  
the hungry ones are fed  
and migrants treated kindly;  
slaves at last are freed,  
the unemployed find work,  
and mourners relearn gladness  
in the family of God.

*Chorus x 2*

*Ending:*

*Shine ever brighter,*  
*Shine ever brighter,*  
*Shine ever brighter in your world.*

Sermon

**Good News for the Poor**

Jesus's words at the synagogue in Nazareth are well-known. Luke the artist weaves



together material from Isaiah 61, Isaiah 58, Mark 6 and other sources to craft an account of Jesus setting out his stall at the start of his public ministry. Fresh from his baptism, road-tested by temptations, he shows up in his hometown and delivers a clear statement of his agenda.

Luke writes for a Gentile audience and verse 15 carries a sense of that - Jesus, we are told, preached in **their** synagogues. Anyway, Luke's Gentile hearers would approve of this portrayal of Jesus. The text confirms him as the **bringer of salvation** in a general way. These words of hope for the poor, the imprisoned, the blind and the oppressed offer hope to anyone willing to see themselves in such terms. And Jesus announces that these words have been fulfilled in their hearing.

In **his own person**, Jesus is the enricher, the liberator, the healer, the revolutionary. In short, this man speaking in the Nazareth synagogue is saying he is the Saviour. But whose Saviour?

In the section we read, we hear of the warm approval of his **Jewish** hearers. But immediately afterward the part we heard, Jesus seems to provoke the rejection of his home Jewish crowd - something that might have explained this has dropped out of the text. And so Jesus, being rejected by the Jews after all, is therefore presented as being all the more ready to be the Saviour to the **Gentiles**.

They would love to hear how all eyes are fixed on Jesus that day in the synagogue. He comes in the power of the Spirit. His gracious words evoke praise. And if any of them felt they were poor, held captive by social structures, unable to see what the powerful could see and generally oppressed by the world around them - well these words spelt HOPE to them.

But how might we hear these words today? Let's consider how they might apply to individuals, to churches and to society in general.

How might you hear this as an **individual** today? Do the words apply to you? Well, you might have the humility to hear that Jesus is your **personal** Saviour.

Jesus is good news to the poor. Do you feel at all impoverished by life? This might refer to finance, but it can also suggest a sense that life itself is not as rich and lovely as it ought to be. Our text implies: *Jesus is the answer*. He is the **door** who brings

open access to God. He is the **sacrifice** who bears the penalty for human sin. He is the living embodiment of the assertion that **God is love**.

And God is love not for the world as an abstract aggregate of humanity; he is the Saviour for **you** personally. He can enrich **your** life with his Spirit, and he offers a sense of purpose, hope, fellowship and belonging that can reorient and transform your life in wonderful ways. Jesus brings good news to the poor, and that includes **you**.

He brings freedom if we feel captive. Some are unfortunate enough to be in prison, but, assuming that's not you, how free are you to live your life well? Many things can imprison us, including our own inner attitudes, our food, alcohol, drugs... Some are enslaved to their work, or their reputation, or even to their wealth. Whatever keeps you captive, Jesus spells **freedom**, for he is your personal Saviour.

Some listening to this may be partially sighted or even blind. **Spiritually**, we are all **partially sighted**, and Jesus opens the eyes of our hearts and helps us to see what's really going on.

What stops us from seeing clearly? All kinds of things, including poverty, wealth, trauma, the news, social media, family expectations and pressures at work. Jesus opens our eyes to the truth that, in the end, life is about **love**: the love of God and neighbour even as we love ourselves. And he pours his love into our hearts and shows us how to share that with others. This love opens the eyes of our hearts.

Jesus would be **your** personal Saviour. Why not invite him to open your eyes with his love?

In a world when religion has so often been bad news, Jesus actually brings personal **good** news. Your life **is** worth living. The year of the Lord's favour - and not his condemnation - can begin for you right now.

So, do you know Jesus as your personal Saviour? If not, why not open your heart to him today. It's like switching on a bright new light, having lived in the shadows so long.

And how do we read this story **as a church**? It's a clear reminder of the **character** of a Jesus-centred church. A local church which took Jesus' Nazareth manifesto seriously would be a very wonderful community indeed; and so many churches are!

A local church is a living community embodying the values of Jesus. In such a church, social structures which hold people captive or poor, dissolve.

In so much of the world, you have to be educated to a certain standard to be able to lead. Not so in the church; in the church you need the heart of a servant in order to lead. Those the world side-lines or ignores through classism and racism are seen as valuable in their own right.

The call-centre operator is a child of God.

The former drug addict might be a preacher of good news.

The school-dropout is a potential deacon or minister.

The little old woman ignored or patronised by her family is a teacher of wisdom.

The shop assistant is a prince in God's kingdom.

Those who are stuck in the world, trapped by their mistakes, written off as talentless, broken by the abuse of childhood - the poor, the disabled, the sick, the ordinary ones - they all become honoured members of the church, and they learn to thrive, to serve and to lead in God's family.

Is our church reflecting Jesus' Nazareth manifesto? Is yours?

And how would we read this story as a comment on **society**? We live in frightening times. In Britain we heard this week that many planned tax cuts will be axed; that help with energy bills after the spring is under question; and that public spending cuts will be announced soon.

Our reading underlines the need to **remember the poor** above all others and not to prioritise the rich. It underscores the need to provide for those who are disabled, those who are unwell, those unable to command a big salary and make their way in life. In these hard times to come, we join with all who remind those in power that plotting our way towards growth cannot be done at the expense of the least well-off.

In conclusion, we can roll all these readings together. As **individuals** we find enrichment, liberation, healing and inclusion in Christ - he is our personal Saviour.

And we love learning how to live that out as a **church family** in the counter-cultural way that we are with one another.

But what of **society**? It promises to be a bleak midwinter. We may feel we have little to offer. Of course, we want to support Christians Against Poverty, food banks and homelessness charities to do whatever they can to show Christ's love. Some of us may be able to train as debt counsellors. Some may be able to help at the food bank. Many of us may be able to support such projects financially or with our time. It may even be that a small church like ours can manage a simple new project of its own to bring fresh hope to people around us.

We may feel small and poor, and if we do, that good news of Jesus applies to us too. What can we give him, poor as we are?

We can give our hearts. We can know the love of God personally, and in our fellowship with others. And we can allow that warmth and love and practical help to flow into every interaction we may have.

We may not be able to rescue people we meet from financial difficulties. But we can offer a warm welcome, friendship, advice and a sense of not being alone. We can offer them the greatest of gifts: we can offer them Jesus.

Finally, a challenge. As you look at the state of our country and the fears of the people you know, what one thing can you do personally in the light of our reading?

We pray together...

### Prayer

Lord, I am poor. I need the riches of your saving power.

Lord, I am imprisoned. I need the liberation of your Spirit.

Lord, I am blind. I need the vision of your love and mercy.

I open my heart to you

and ask you to forgive me for my sins

and to empower me to live life,

the abundant life, that is your gift.

Let me walk in loving fellowship in your church,

knowing that, poor as I am,

I am your child,

called to serve and love within your family,  
and honoured in your sight.

And let that love flow from me  
with a warm heart and with practical help  
into the world around me.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

And we sing that hymn based on the words of Martin Luther King, *I have a dream a man once said.*

**Hymn (BPW 625) I Have a Dream a Man Once Said**

“I have a dream”, a man once said,  
“where all is perfect peace;  
where men and women, black and white,  
stand hand in hand, and all unite  
in freedom and in love.”

But in this world of bitter strife  
the dream can often fade;  
reality seems dark as night,  
we catch but glimpses of the light  
Christ sheds on humankind.

Fierce persecution, war, and hate  
are raging everywhere;  
through struggles and through sacrifice  
God's people pay the costly price  
of standing for the right.

So dream your dreams and sing your songs,  
but never be content:  
for thoughts and words don't ease the pain:  
unless there's action, all is vain;  
faith proves itself in deeds.

Lord, give us vision, make us strong,  
and help us to do your will;

nor let us rest until we see  
your love throughout humanity  
uniting us in peace.

### 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

### Notice

A brief word about our podcast now: from 6th November, we're going to be changing the style of our podcast, so look out for the new version that week. You'll hear a scripture reading and a sermon, followed by a song or a meditation, and then a conversation with a guest about the themes raised in the talk. I hope you'll enjoy the new format.

Have a lovely rest of the day. Thanks for listening.