

**'Dorset South & West Written Service, Sunday October 17th 2022.  
Prepared by Revd Jean Quick**



**Let's go 'Off-Piste'.**

**Call to Worship:** The Lord said 'And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night?'" (Luke 18:7).

**Hymn StF 186**

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;  
tender to me the promise of his word;  
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!  
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has  
done;  
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;  
his holy name - the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;  
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,  
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!  
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.  
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
to children's children and for evermore!

**Prayers of Adoration and Confession**

Tell out my soul, the Greatness of the Lord!

Lord when we ponder your greatness we are amazed at your infinite love for us.

You never grow weary of us, we can turn to you day or night with our concerns and you never turn us away.

When we consider the previous week or even the past day or two we cannot begin to number all the blessings you have given to us. Your greatness is a bounty that you endlessly shower upon us. We bring to you our heartfelt thanks and adoration for all your goodness to us.

And yet we sing too easily, 'tell out my..' knowing that for reasons we don't understand and wish we could dispel. All too frequently we don't tell or share about your greatness. We hold in, what we should share with others. Whether it be about our faith, your gifts to us; or just our greed and desires to hold onto everything for our own use. Forgive us and make us bold so that we might by our word and our deeds tell out the greatness of our Lord. **Amen.**

**Bible Reading:** 1 Peter 5. To the Elders and the Flock

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

"God opposes the proud  
but shows favour to the humble."

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

With the help of Silas, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

## Reflection:

Today I am going 'off-piste', and using one of my all time favourite scripture's.

1 Peter 5:7 'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.'

I loved this verse so much that in the good old days of letter writing I had an embossing machine and I would stamp this text onto all my envelopes and writing paper.

As I began writing this reflection we had just appointed a new Prime Minister and she was to be announcing her plans for the energy crisis and the economic recovery. Also I received an email today, with my energy bill and a warning to be careful not to get scammed by fraudsters claiming to be from ofgem. Hmmmm unfortunately someone has got into my online banking recently and twice tried to set themselves up for a monthly payment, cheeky or what! So I need this verse more than ever today.

Also while writing this service, there was a BBC announcement about concerns for the Queen's health. Later that day we would hear that she had passed away. We entered a period of national mourning. Rejoicing about her wonderful reign and yet grieving over, as a nation our loss. Seventy years of loyal service. Now Charles is king a new era is unfolding. These certainly are very different and difficult times. We are in many ways living, in challenging, changing, concerning times. The economy, wars in the Ukraine and so many other places around the world. Flooding in Pakistan that might take six months to recede, another sign of the global warming issues. Are we living in a time of crisis?

I looked up what **the opposite** of crisis might be and I liked the first definition given - peace or tranquility.

In our scripture the writer says, 'you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.'

We know we are constantly facing suffering of various degrees, as is the whole world and yet many in our world suffer in ways that we will never have to endure.

We can at least moan about the rising price of bread. For too many there isn't the luxury of bread to be had. Through the three sabbaticals I was privileged to have, I travelled to three different countries where bread and water are not readily available. I experienced what it was like when the rains hadn't come for four years in Botswana and when using water you had to make it do multiple tasks. An inch of bath water washed you, your clothes, the car windscreen and any left went on the vegetable patch. I still find it hard to run a tap for any length of time, even thirty years later.

In the little island of Yap in Micronesia, the excitement going around the church at the close of service was that the supply ship was docking in the bay. We rushed out of church to the only store which was little more than a shack. As others revelled in the 'fresh produce', imported from the USA. My eyes nearly popped out not just at the equivalent £6 price of a loaf of bread but also the out of date tag. At least a month old and amazingly not moulding but certainly very dry.

In a recent television program Simon Reeves was in South America with families who because of years of drought often went to bed having not eaten for days. A very beautiful and serene lady was holding her child and showing him what was just a small basket of rotten shrivelled up sweetcorn and said this is all we have left and we might be able to make it last for eight days. Simon asked, 'what will happen when it's all gone?' She didn't answer, just that same haunting serene smile. I do hope that the film crew left them something to help.

'Off-Piste' is the title of this service. It's a skiing term used as a catchphrase, even for those of us not brave enough to propel our selves down a slippery snowy mountainside. It means to leave the safe and known ways. Let's go 'off-piste', in this crisis of rising costs and uncertain, changing times. Let's leave the safe and known ways. "What are they", we might ask?

There are lots of clues in the Bible passage and there's a warning of how the Devil uses them, these worldly ways, to 'devour us'. Pride, greed, self interest, etc.

I like that phrase. We talk about being 'eaten up with .....'. Always the negative things in life! Don't let the Devil devour you. To use the epistle writers words "not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be;"

It's so easy and almost safe and known to join in the round of worry mongering about how difficult life is. It's so much harder to smile serenely and cast our cares on God. To let go of the worrying, to find that place of tranquility that doesn't ignore the problems, but doesn't keep fretting and letting the problems rob us of the peace that is ours in Christ Jesus.

One of life's conundrums, is how we can easily sing about our faith in Jesus, quote words from the creed 'he descended into hell and on the third day' .... defeated all our enemies etc. Then as if in the next breath share in conversation about how awful life is. We glibly say "where will it all end?"

Let's go 'off Piste', do you remember the old chorus, 'with Christ in the vessel we will smile at the storm'.

What of our letter writer St Peter? What do you recall of his story? This apostle was no stranger to suffering, both witnessing Christ's death and suffering and facing much hardship and suffering of his own. He knew all about how easy it is to lose sight of your faith. However if we come to Christ he will restore us and build us up. So we can be assured that this letter writer knows what he is talking about and commending to us.

One of my favourite hymns is by George Matheson. 'O love that wilt not let me go'.

At the age of twenty he was engaged to be married but began going blind. When he broke the news to his fiancée she broke off their engagement, she decided she could not go through life with a blind husband. She left him. Out of the grief George penned this beautiful hymn. 'O joy that seekest me through pain, I trace the rainbow through the rain and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be.'

Let's go 'off piste' this week and when we are tempted to worry let us cast our cares on Him, knowing that He, God cares for us. There was that wonderful image when the Queen's death was announced of a double rainbow over Buckingham palace. Do you recall the meaning of the rainbow in biblical terms? That God will provide, we trace the rainbow through the rains and the promises are not vain. Thanks be to God.

### **Hymn StF 636**

O love that wilt not let me go,  
I rest my weary soul in thee:  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
that in thine ocean depths its flow  
may richer, fuller be.

O joy that seekest me through pain,  
I cannot close my heart to thee:  
I trace the rainbow through the rain,  
and feel the promise is not vain,  
that morn shall tearless be.

O light that followest all my way,  
I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
my heart restores its borrowed ray,  
that in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
may brighter, fairer be.

O cross that liftest up my head,  
I dare not ask to fly from thee:  
I lay in dust life's glory dead,  
and from the ground there blossoms red  
life that shall endless be.

### **Prayers for others and the Lord's Prayer**

(taken and adapted from, 'The Wideness of God's Mercy': Litanies to Enlarge Our Prayer. edited by Jeffery W. Rowthorn)

Lord we often fold our hands in prayer,  
When we should really jump for joy,  
Because you come to us as rescuer and Saviour  
cleaning up the mess We make of our lives  
Putting together what we pull apart.

***Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
Rejoice, my spirit in, God my Saviour.***

We pray for our Country and for all who Govern  
We pray for our new King and Prime Minister  
You have called us to have a part in our nations life  
and despite our failures you have not cast us off.  
Help us so to support those who seek to serve us

***Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
Rejoice, my spirit in, God my Saviour.***

We pray for our church and Circuit  
For the churches in our neighbourhood.  
We know that much of the church's life and witness,  
looks silly and weak in the eyes of the world at large.  
But you still use it's foolishness to shame worldly wisdom  
And it's weakness to witness against the abuse of power.

***Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
Rejoice, my spirit in, God my Saviour.***

We pray for those who cry desperately for salvation  
for tyranny to be overthrown

for the despised be given dignity  
for the poor to receive a proper share of the earth's resources.  
You are the source of hope and inspiration to Action.

***Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
Rejoice, my spirit in, God my Saviour.***

We bring you the particular needs on our minds.....  
with confidence we share these with you  
for you are the God who lives among us

***Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
Rejoice, my spirit in, God my Saviour.***

We pray for our families .....

Your human life brought both pain and joy to your earthly relatives.  
Help us to know you in both the joys and pains of life.

***Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
Rejoice, my spirit in, God my Saviour.***

We remember those who have died.....

Through our sorrow and sense of loss;  
we are glad for the promise that there shall be an end to death,  
and to mourning and crying and pain.  
for the old order has passed away.

***Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
Rejoice, my spirit in, God my Saviour. Amen***

**We say the Lord's Prayer.....Our Father....**

#### **Hymn StF 254**

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God  
and his righteousness,  
and all these things shall be added unto you;  
Allelu-, alleluia:

*Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,  
allelu-, alleluia!*

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;  
seek and ye shall find;  
knock, and the door shall be opened unto to you;  
Allelu-, alleluia:

We shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word  
that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord;  
Allelu-, alleluia:

#### **The Blessing**

May God, grant us peace of mind  
and calm our troubled hearts.  
Our souls are like a turbulent sea.  
We can't seem to find our balance  
so we stumble and worry constantly.  
Give us the strength and clarity of mind  
to find our purpose and walk the path you've laid  
out for us.

May the blessing of God the Father,  
God the Son  
and God the Holy Spirit  
be our strength and guide. **Amen.**