

**At Home Service**  
**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2025**  
***Prepared by Kit Harbottle, Tavistock Methodist Circuit***

**Hymn: 87 StF**

1] Praise to the living God, all praised be his name,  
Who was, and is, and is to be, for e'er the same.  
The one eternal God, ere aught that now appears:  
the First, the Last, beyond all thought his timeless years!

2] Formless, all lovely forms declare his loveliness;  
holy, no holiness of earth can his express.  
Lo, he is Lord of all! Creation speaks his praise,  
and everywhere, above, below, his will obeys.

3] His Spirit flowing free, high surging where it will;  
in prophet's word he spoke of old, is speaking still.  
Established is his law, and changeless it will stand,  
deep write upon the human heart, on sea, on land.

4] Eternal life has he implanted in the soul;  
his love shall be our strength and stay, while ages roll.  
Praise to the living God! All praised be his name,  
who was, and is, and is to be, for e'er the same.

*(Mediaeval Jewish Doxology translated by Max Landsberg (1845-1928) & Newton Mann (1836-1926))*

**Prayer**

Lord our God, eternal and wonderful, wholly to be trusted: you give life to all; you help those who come to you and give hope to those who call on you.

Set our hearts and minds at peace,

that we may bring our prayers to you with confidence and joy;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*(Methodist Worship Book)*

**Reading: Jeremiah 2 v 4-5, 13**

Hear the word of the Lord, you descendants of Jacob, all you clans of Israel.

This is what the Lord says:

“What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me?

They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.

<sup>13</sup> “My people have committed two sins:

They have forsaken me, the spring of living water,

and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

**Reflection**

Our later readings feature hospitality. Jeremiah probably wasn't invited out. He's a prophet God used to challenge people who felt entitled to His favour because of their heritage, despite their devotion to “worthless idols”. Straying far from the life of fruitfulness they had been called to, they no longer drank of the “living water”.

Jesus, you may recall, offered such “living water” to the Samaritan woman, someone others had

excluded. (John 4) Read v13 again, picturing someone, hot and tired, scooping up brackish dregs of water from a cracked, clay-lined, hollow in the ground. Behind them – known but ignored – there is a pure bubbling spring.

### Prayer

Take a few moments to be thankful for the sources of refreshment and fruitfulness in your life, and for God's presence with you. Then take time to reflect on:

- any failing or wrongdoing that is on your conscience
- ways in which you are drawn to what is "worthless" rather than divine
- or seek refreshment from a broken cistern rather than living spring.

Admit them to God, who is merciful. Say aloud "Here is good news for all who put their trust in Christ. Jesus says: 'Your sins are forgiven.'"

### The Lord's Prayer

**Hymn - 718 StF** [*Alternative tunes: "Blest are the pure in heart" or "Breathe on me breath of God"*]

1] We lay our broken world in sorrow at your feet,  
haunted by hunger, war and fear, oppressed by power and hate.  
Here human life seems less than profit, might and pride,  
though to unite us all in you, you lived and loved and died.

2] We bring our broken towns, our neighbours hurt and bruised:  
you show us how old pain and wounds for new life can be used.  
We bring our broken loves, friends parted, families torn:  
then in your life and death we see that love must be reborn.

3] We bring our broken selves, confused and closed and tired;  
then through your gift of healing grace new purpose is inspired.

O Spirit, on us breathe, with life and strength anew:

find in us love, and hope, and trust, and lift us up to you.

*Anna Briggs (b.1947)*

### Reading: Luke 14 v1-14

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. There in front of him was a man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body. Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way.

Then he asked them, "If one of you has a child or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?"<sup>6</sup> And they had nothing to say.

When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable: "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honoured in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbours; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

**Reading: Hebrews 13v1-8, 15-16**

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”

Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

**Reflection**

All sorts of people asked Jesus round for a meal. The gospels don't record him turning any invitation down. The host in Luke's story, a “prominent” religious leader, expected controversy, staging a challenge to heal on the Sabbath. Jesus not only did that, adding a clever counter-question for the legalists, but exposed, with pointed humour, the status games other guests were playing. He then challenged the host to open his hospitality to those unable to return it.

A problem for preachers preparing this service is that we don't know who will use it. These readings touch on two age-old forces that shape, and corrupt – every society – desire for status and love of money. In a local church, I could guess, though not know, the context in which the congregation have to handle those in the light of faith. But you may bear the responsibility of wealth and fame, or the strain of limited funds and being on the margins of society, or anything in between. You may be away from church due to ill health, work schedules, a time of rest, or the behaviour of others. So, I won't give examples of how to respond, but encourage you to prayerfully, and wisely, identify a way in your own context in which to, as urged in Hebrews, avoid love of money, show hospitality, do good and share with others.

*The next hymn draws on other gospel stories about wealth. Alternative tunes are “Hail to the Lord's Anointed” or “All glory, laud and honour”. Or it works well read aloud as a poem.*

**Hymn – 243 StF**

1] A rich young man came seeking  
God's kingdom was his aim.  
The law had been his guidebook.  
His life was free from blame.  
But Jesus asked the courage  
to give his wealth away.  
The young man turned in sorrow,  
that price he would not pay.

2] The rich men's gifts were lavish  
and made for public show.  
The widow's gift was humble  
and only God would know,  
in giving to the Temple,  
although her coins were small,  
her gift had so much meaning,  
because she gave her all.

3] One boy brought loaves and fishes,  
no other food was there,  
but Jesus fed the thousands  
and still had bread to spare.  
The miracle of plenty  
soon spread beyond that place.  
That simple gift was offered,  
then multiplied by grace.

4] Lord, keep our care for money  
from turning into greed.  
Help us to use it wisely  
to meet each other's need.  
For whether poor or wealthy,  
we have so much to share  
and open-hearted giving  
will show your loving care.

*Marjorie Dobson (b.1940)*

### **Prayers**

*Spend some time in praying for your own concerns, challenges and choices. Then move outward – praying for those closest to you, for your local community, for your country, and for the whole world. You may find it helpful to structure this – perhaps jotting a few words, or making a sketch, as you move through the themes, or using a repeated phrase such as:*

Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayer.

*We call for God's presence with and in us in whatever the coming week brings.*

### **Hymn – 504 StF**

1] May the mind of Christ my Saviour  
live in me from day to day,  
by his love and power controlling  
all I do or say.

2] May the word of God dwell richly  
in my heart from hour to hour,  
so that all may see I triumph  
only through his power.

3] May the peace of God my Father  
rule my life in everything,  
that I may be calm to comfort  
sick and sorrowing.

4] May the love of Jesus fill me,  
as the waters fill the sea;  
him exalting, self forgetting –  
this is victory.

5] May I run the race before me,  
strong and brave to face the foe,  
looking only unto Jesus  
as I onward go.

*Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)*

### **Blessing**

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