

ST STEPHEN'S HOME SERVICE

18th July 2021

INTRODUCTION



THE REPAIR SHOP has been a huge BBC TV hit. People bring all sorts of objects, many of which have great sentimental value for them, but which have become badly damaged: and the clever Repair Shop team somehow manage to restore them to

something like their former glory – always doing so sympathetically. It's wonderful seeing things which had got to the point where it looks unlikely they could ever be repaired, being handed back to their grateful owners.

It's a powerful metaphor for healing, both spiritual and physical. Today we will see how God restored his people who had been scattered, bringing them back to safety and freedom from fear, and through David, into a time of justice and righteousness. We will hear how Jesus, despite hoping for a time of rest, had compassion on the crowds who followed him, and healed those who were sick. We will think of ways in which this healing is taking place for individuals and communities today.

Pause for a moment now to reflect on what feels broken in your life, or what brokenness in the world is weighing heavily on you. Offer it to God, and then come to worship with trust and expectancy.

[Silence.]

CALL TO WORSHIP

We meet in the presence of God

Who knows our needs,

Hears our cries,

Feels our pain,

And heals our wounds.

Be with us, Spirit of God;
Nothing can separate us from your love.
Breathe on us, breath of God;
Fill us with your saving power.
Speak in us, wisdom of God;
Bring strength, healing and peace.

The Lord is here
His Spirit is with us.

TURNING TO GOD

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings.
Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
Like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement;
Bind up our wounds and revive us;
In Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Friend of sinners, you bring hope in our despair.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Healer of the sick, you give strength in our weakness
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Destroyer of evil, you bring life in our dying.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

**May the God of love and power
Forgive us and free us from your sins,
Heal and strengthen us by his Spirit
And raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

RESPONSE OF PRAISE

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised,
there is no end to his greatness.

One generation shall praise your works to another
and shall declare your power.

All your works praise you, Lord,
and your faithful servants bless you.

They make known the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your power.

My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord:
let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Ephesians 2:11-22 (New Living Translation)

Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

Thanks be to God

Pause for Reflection (1)

(May be set to the familiar tune: Ar Hyd Y Nos – "All through the night")

Lord we come to ask your healing,
Teach us of love;
All unspoken shame revealing,
Teach us of love
Take our selfish thoughts and actions
Petty feuds , divisive factions,
Hear us now to you appealing
Teach us of love.

Soothe away our pain and sorrow
Hold us in love;
Grace we cannot buy or borrow,
Hold us in love.
Though we see but dark and danger,
Though we spurn both friend and stranger,
Though we often dread tomorrow,
Hold us in love.

When the bread is raised and broken,
Fill us with love;
Words of consecration spoken,



Fill us with love.
As our grateful prayers continue,
Make the faith that we have in you
More than just an empty token,
Fill us with love.

Help us live for one another,
Bind us in love;
Stranger, neighbour, father, mother –
Bind us in love.
All are equal at your table,
Through your Spirit make us able
To embrace as sister, brother,
Bind us in love.

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GOSPEL READING

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 (New Revised Standard Version)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by



themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and

rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

REFLECTION (by Margaret Mandrell)

Jeremiah tells us that God will gather his people together, bringing them back to their fold, where they will live and prosper. They will be restored and brought to a situation of justice and righteousness, where fear will cease. The imagery of shepherds, sheep and the safety of the sheepfold are familiar throughout the Bible and can still bring comfort to us in our urban environment. We have here a picture of God as a loving shepherd, echoed in the familiar words of Psalm 23, where we are assured of his care and protection, even when we are faced with the most difficult situations.

The Yorkshire shepherdess, Amanda Owens, has received a great deal of media attention recently, and we see her striding across the bleak moors in search of missing sheep, rescuing lambs, and ensuring the flock's safety. Sometimes the weather is extreme, but she shows her total dedication to preserving her flock and does not rest until they are secure from harm. She portrays to many city dwellers a glimpse of a different way of life, grounded in the reality of communities for thousands of years. As she cares for her animals and their welfare, we can relate that the Scriptures and their portrayal of our loving heavenly Father.

One of my long - time heroes is Trevor Huddleston, an Anglican priest and missionary, who was one of the founders of the anti-apartheid movement. He prayed and was led to reach out to the weak, the vulnerable and voiceless. He combined gentle compassion for the victims of injustice with uncompromising



hostility to the oppressors. He touched the hearts of millions in South Africa and made apartheid a world issue. He spoke up against oppression with wisdom, humility and sacrifice. Desmond Tutu, who he befriended and invested time in, went on to become a respected bishop, active in humanitarian projects, and a campaigner for peace. He has a commitment to create a society that nurtures tolerance and understanding among all peoples. He says that the building blocks for sustainable peace are love, hope, tolerance and courage. He believes that "Peace involves inevitable righteousness, justice, fulness of life, participation in decision making, goodness, laughter, joy, compassion, sharing and reconciliation." Nelson Mandela also had a message of forgiveness and reconciliation, rather than revenge and vindictiveness, thus avoiding civil war and bloodshed.

As I have been thinking of the work of these men of God, there have been news stories of desperate, hungry people in South Africa committing acts of looting and violence in a situation of mass unemployment and covid restrictions. There is a great need for those in authority to act for justice in this hurting society and to work for the welfare and safety of its people. The current situation is tragic but should not detract from the impact of those who had a vision for a society based on the principles of love, justice and reconciliation.

Jesus reached out generously to people in need, healing those who were sick, enabling the paralysed to walk, cleansing and restoring the lepers. He was willing to step aside and take time to relate directly to those who were not considered to be of any worth. He entered into the reality of individuals' situations and brought restoration and wholeness. Jesus showed compassion, empathy, warmth and care, and he was willing to take the time to heal all those who sought him out, whether they were suffering physically or emotionally. The healing ministry of Jesus continues today as individuals are ministered to through his body, the church. We can support this healing ministry through prayer, by encouragement and by showing love and compassion. We can reach out to the lost, the lonely and the vulnerable, recognising that situations and challenges may affect those who previously seemed strong and resilient. We can live out our faith through our actions as well as our words and show empathy. We can engage with individuals and really listen, by not interrupting, by having no agenda, just seeking to show God's love.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

In response to what we have heard, we affirm our trust and faith in God:

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

PRAYERS

Knowing God's love and concern for us all,
let us settle in to his presence
and pray to him now.

Recognising our brokenness and disunity
as your church
we pray for your leading
to draw us closer to one another
as we draw closer to you;
we pray for all our Christian brothers and sisters
in this neighbourhood,
and for all who are searching
for meaning in their lives.

Silence

The Lord is my shepherd:
There is nothing I shall want.

With the noise of global conflicts
and human deprivation
thundering in our ears,
with the questions and doubts clamouring,
we pray for your shepherding of our humanness
and your leading in the secret places of the heart.
Silence

The Lord is my shepherd:
There is nothing I shall want.

With the statistics of family life
challenging our values,
and with the pressures to conform to norms
in conflict with God's will,
we pray for your sound and centred wisdom
in all our daily living and life choices.
Silence

The Lord is my shepherd:
There is nothing I shall want.

With the stressed and overburdened,
the overworked and the unemployed,
we pray for balanced lives;
for physical, mental and spiritual health;
for patience in times of trouble,
and direction in times of confusion.
We pray especially this morning for Bryan Plester, Brenda Hulland, Paul
Burston, David New, Anna Clements, and Adrina and Alan Price.

And in a moment of silence we hold before you those known only to us and to
you, who are in need of prayer.
Silence

The Lord is my shepherd:
There is nothing I shall want.

We remember the recently departed, Geoff Hulland.
and we remember with love and gratitude
the lives of those who have died in faith, especially:
Freda Keightley, Reg Pritchard, Stanley & Elvina Kennett, Mary Pritchard, Alan
Dugdale, and Gordon Neal, Joy Cox, David Cooper and Sheila King.
We commend them to your eternal rest
and unchanging affection.

Silence

The Lord is my shepherd:
There is nothing I shall want.

With the crowds of Galilee
our hearts are lifted with joy
at your presence among us,
for we know that you have the words of eternal life.

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

We pray the Lord's Prayer together as Jesus taught us, saying:

**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.**

**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.**

Pause again for Reflection

We cannot measure how you heal
or answer every sufferer's prayer,
yet we believe your grace responds
where faith and doubt unite to care.
Your hands, though bloodied on the cross,
survive to hold and heal and warn,
to carry all through death to life
and cradle children yet unborn.

The pain that will not go away,
the guilt that clings from things long past,
the fear of what the future holds,
are present as if meant to last.
But present too is love which tends
the hurt we never hoped to find,
the private agonies inside,
the memories that haunt the mind.

So some have come who need your help
and some have come to make amends,
as hands which shaped and saved the world
are present in the touch of friends.
Lord, let your Spirit meet us here
to mend the body, mind and soul,
to disentangle peace from pain,
and make your broken people whole.

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SENDING

(To tune Morning has Broken)

God to enfold you, Christ to uphold you,
Spirit to keep you in heaven's sight;
So may God grace you, heal and embrace you,
Lead you through darkness into the light.

From where we are
to where you need us,
Jesus, now lead on.

From the security of what we know
to the adventure of what you will reveal,
Jesus, now lead on.

To refashion this world
until it resembles the shape of your kingdom,
Jesus, now lead on.

Because good things have been prepared
for those who love God,
Jesus now lead on.

**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.**



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