



Morning Worship

June 2021

**Not a day goes by without His
unfolding grace**

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERVICE

In our service today our theme is God's grace which, as Paul tells us, reaches all people. There are many examples of God's grace working in our lives and in our world.

OPENING PRAYER:

**God of all the world,
we praise you for calling us into your family,
for choosing us even though we are imperfect,
for trusting us even though we make mistakes,
for not giving up on us even when we give up on ourselves,
for offering so much more – even when we would settle for less.
God of all the world, we praise you and give thanks,
for drawing us, through your grace, into a deeper relationship with you and with one another,
Amen.**

READING: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 from the New International Version.

¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

5 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

A DIFFERENT VERSION OF THE SAME READING: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5.1 from The Message.

¹³⁻¹⁵ We're not keeping this quiet, not on your life. Just like the psalmist who wrote, "I believed it, so I said it," we say what we believe. And what we believe is that the One who raised up the Master Jesus will just as certainly raise us up with you, alive. Every detail works to your advantage and to God's glory: more and more grace, more and more people, more and more praise!

¹⁶⁻¹⁸ So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.

5 ¹ For instance, we know that when these bodies of ours are taken down like tents and folded away, they will be replaced by resurrection bodies in heaven—God-made, not handmade—and we'll never have to relocate our "tents" again.

REFLECTION

In the reading, Paul is asking the Corinthians to look beyond the difficulties of their current situation and see the positives – the good things – to see God's grace.

We used two versions of the same reading, which are each quite different in style but together they give a deeper understanding of the key message.

Reading through the Message version of the Corinthians reading especially I was struck by verse 16 – "So we are not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace". This sense that we may feel battered and bruised – we might feel lost or lacking in purpose or direction. We might feel that the last year has taken its toll on our lives, our families and friends. But look deeper and there will be examples we can see of God's grace working to renew our lives and our world. There are so many examples of how God's unfolding grace has brought us through if we look.

In verse 18, "So we fix our eyes on not what is seen, but what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" – Paul is reminding the Corinthians, and us, that we do not always appreciate God's grace working to renew our world and our lives. But once we start to look and focus, then we shall see, will appreciate and will give thanks.

On 4th of July it is Thank You Day, which is a national initiative that is being supported by many organisations across the UK. The theme of the reading from Corinthians echoes in Thank You Day – take a look at thankyouday.org.uk. Thank You Day is an opportunity to look back on the

last year and to give thanks. It is an opportunity to consider those things that have brought strength to our community. There have been examples of the grace of God spreading out through the actions of people and communities.

In the passage from Corinthians Paul speaks of fixing our eyes on those things that are unseen – looking for those examples of God’s grace working out in our lives and in our world which are not immediately evident to us. Between now and the 4th July there is an opportunity for us all to reflect on all those examples of God’s grace. And to give thanks.

PRAYERS

We pray for this day and its tasks;
We pray for the world and its needs;
We pray for the Church and her life;
We pray for leaders of the nations and for peace between all nations;
We pray for the natural world and the resources of the earth
We pray for all who are in any kind of need.
We say thank you for God’s constant unfolding grace.

LORDS 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**

PSALM 116 – A PSALM OF THANKFULNESS

¹ I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
² Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.
³ The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.
⁴ Then I called on the name of the Lord:
“Lord, save me!”
⁵ The Lord is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.

⁶ The Lord protects the unwary;
when I was brought low, he saved me.
⁷ Return to your rest, my soul,
for the Lord has been good to you.
⁸ For you, Lord, have delivered me from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling,
⁹ that I may walk before the Lord
in the land of the living.
¹⁰ I trusted in the Lord when I said,
“I am greatly afflicted”;
¹¹ in my alarm I said,
“Everyone is a liar.”
¹² What shall I return to the Lord
for all his goodness to me?
¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the Lord.
¹⁴ I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people.
¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the Lord
is the death of his faithful servants.
¹⁶ Truly I am your servant, Lord;
I serve you just as my mother did;
you have freed me from my chains.
¹⁷ I will sacrifice a thank offering to you
and call on the name of the Lord.
¹⁸ I will fulfill my vows to the Lord
in the presence of all his people,
¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the Lord—
in your midst, Jerusalem.
Praise the Lord.

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, now and evermore.
Amen.**