

Worship at Home – 10th August 2025 (19th in Ordinary Time)
A short act of worship for use in people's homes prepared by Karen Frost.

Introduction

Hello everyone and welcome to this week's Worship at Home. As always, it is good to share worship with you. We sing God's praises, pray and reflect upon his word together, wherever we are in the world today.

Call to worship (Psalm 33)

Happy are the people whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen. As God's chosen and beloved people, let us come to him in worship and receive from God whatever God wishes to bless us with this day.

Hymn – STF 18 – Be still and know that I am God Anonymous

- 1 Be still and know that I am God.
 Be still and know that I am God.
 Be still and know that I am God.
- 2 I am the Lord who saves and heals.
 I am the Lord who saves and heals.
 I am the Lord who saves and heals.
- 3 In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
 In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
 In you, O Lord, I put my trust.

Prayers

Steadfast God, we praise you for the precious gift of faith, which gives substance to our hopes, draws us on towards your kingdom and unites us as we journey together through all the ups-and-downs of life. In you we trust, faithful Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

God of all ages, we praise you for all those who have gone before us and shown us the way of faith. We praise you for all the ways you have honoured their faith. In faith we trust you for now, for tomorrow and for all that is to come. In Jesus' name. **Amen**

We are sorry, gracious God, for the fragility of our faith, which waivers when things get tough, wobbles when confidence gets low, gives up when the road gets steep, loses sight of how far you have brought us and forgets that you are there by our side. Please forgive us, bolster us, empower us and use us to build up the faith of others. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen**

Eternal God, your faith in us doesn't waiver, your love for us doesn't wane; your trust never flickers; your grace never fails. And so, with thankful hearts, we receive your forgiveness and go forward in faith, in your strength and with your blessing. **Amen**

Hymn – STF 51 – Great is thy faithfulness Thomas O Chisholm (1866-1960)

- 1 Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not,
as thou hast been thou for ever wilt be.
Great is thy faithfulness!
Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -
great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!
- 2 Summer and winter, and spring-time and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.
Chorus
- 3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
Chorus

Bible reading – Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16

Faith That Produces Action

¹ Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see. ² That is what the people of long ago were praised for.

³ We have faith. So, we understand that everything was made when God commanded it. That's why we believe that what we see was not made out of what could be seen.

⁸ Abraham had faith. So, he obeyed God. God called him to go to a place he would later receive as his own. So, he went. He did it even though he didn't know where he was going. ⁹ Because of his faith he made his home in the land God had promised him. Abraham was like an outsider in a strange country. He lived there in tents. So did Isaac and Jacob. They received the same promise he did. ¹⁰ Abraham was looking forward to the city that has foundations. He was waiting for the city that God planned and built. ¹¹ And Sarah had faith. So, God made it possible for her to become a mother. She became a mother even though she was too old to have children. But Sarah believed that the God who made the promise was faithful. ¹² Abraham was past the time when he could have children. But many children came from that one man. They were as many as the stars in the sky. They were as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. No one could count them.

¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They didn't receive the things God had promised. They only saw them and welcomed them from a long way off. They openly said that they were outsiders and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ People who say things like that show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ What if they had been thinking of the country they had left? Then they could have returned to it. ¹⁶ Instead, they longed for a better country. They wanted a heavenly one. So God is pleased when they call him their God. In fact, he has prepared a city for them.

Reflection on the reading

The book of Hebrews was written for people who were in danger of starting to lose interest in Jesus. It is possible that some were becoming disillusioned with faith because of personal issues. Most of the previous chapters deliberately remind people of how wonderful Jesus is – in particular, that he is the real high priest.

Chapter 11, from which our bible reading came, is an encouragement to keep on believing and to keep on going in faith. Abraham and Sarah are held up as exemplars of people who kept going in faith when the odds seemed to be stacked against them. The writer draws on Genesis 15:1-6 and the promise of an heir for Abram and Sarai (as they were then called), from whom descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky will come.

It is an inspiring story and has been an encouragement to many who have struggled, not least with the acute pain of childlessness, to keep on going in faith. There are many people who can testify to the joy of having their prayers answered against the odds, often having walked very painful pathways. Michelle Obama in her book *Becoming* tells of the struggles she and Barack had in conceiving and the pain they went through before their two daughters were born – daughters that brought them untold joy.

Such stories should be rightly celebrated but, alongside that, there is an ever-present need to be sensitive to and supportive of those whose stories do not have the hoped-for ending, for their broken dreams. The Australian Christian broadcaster, Sheridan Voysey, in his book *Resurrection Year* helpfully shares how he and his wife Merryn coped with this. The writer to the Hebrews is refreshingly honest about this. In verse 13, he speaks of those who died in faith without having received the promises.

Why some prayers are apparently answered and others are not will always be a mystery on this earth. But, as the writer of Hebrews reminds us, this earth is not the only reality, for there is also a better place – a heavenly one; a place where every tear will be wiped away and all will be made whole. This vision is offered as an encouragement to keep on going both to those who struggle and to those who don't. One day all things will be made new but in the meantime the need for a better country, a heavenly one, here on earth is all too apparent. We keep on going in faith not just for our own blessing and benefit but on behalf of others who long for peace, for justice, for freedom; on behalf of those clinging on to their faith and needing to know that God has not abandoned them.

Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer we pray for God's kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. Where might that prayer be particularly urgent today? How might we be part of the answer to that prayer?

Hymn – STF 645 – Will your anchor hold Priscilla Jane Owens (1829-1907)

- 1 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?
*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*
- 2 Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?
While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow,
shall the angry waves then your barque o'erflow?
Chorus.
- 3 Will your anchor hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill your latest breath?
On the rising tide you can never fail,
while your anchor holds within the veil.
Chorus.
- 4 Will your eyes behold through the morning light
the city of gold and the harbour bright?
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,
when life's storms are past for evermore?
Chorus.

Prayers for the world, others and ourselves

Creator God, we bring to you the needs of your world as we pray together.

We pray for peace in the world: in the Middle East, Ukraine, Russia and many other countries that don't ever reach the news headlines. May the leaders of those lands negotiate peace with words rather than fighting and bombing.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own country: for our national and local government leaders. May wisdom and justice prevail in the difficult decisions they have to take.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our local community wherever we live: for those we care for and those who care for us, for voluntary organisations and all faith communities. May we work together to show Christ's love to those around us and may we be willing to accept care for ourselves.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for ourselves: may each of us know we are loved by you, as a child of God, that we are precious to you and that we recognise you will always be alongside us on life's journey.

Lord, we bring all our prayers to you, our risen Saviour. **Amen**

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Hymn – STF 476 – One more step along the world I go Sydney Carter (1915-2004)

- 1 One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go.
From the old things to the new
Keep me travelling along with you.
And it's from the old I travel to the new.
Keep me travelling along with you.
- 2 Round the corners of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn.
All the new things that I see
You'll be looking at along with me.
Chorus
- 3 As I travel through the bad and good
Keep me travelling the way I should.
Where I see no way to go
You'll be telling me the way, I know.
Chorus
- 4 Give me courage when the world is rough,
Keep me loving though the world is tough.
Leap and sing in all I do,
Keep me travelling along with you.
Chorus
- 5 You are older than the world can be,
You are younger than the life in me.
Ever old and ever new,
Keep me travelling along with you.
Chorus

Blessing

As you go, may the God of Abraham and Sarah go with you. May you be ready to meet Jesus whenever he comes to you, and may you know yourself held within the love of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Bible readings from [New International Reader's Version \(NIRV\)](#)

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