

# Service Transcript

## Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020

**Service Leader: Ian Battiste**

**Preacher: Mark Reid**

### **Prayer 1**

Heavenly Father, God of grace and God of glory, you are our Light and our Protector—and our God in whom we trust. We come before you this morning in humility, before such a Forgiving God, and acknowledge that it is only in your presence that we can find life's balance and perspective and protection; and that only in your holy presence, we can know true acceptance and our true home. So, as we come together today, we pray you would grant us strength, hope and encouragement for life's journey from the Source of all power and strength that is you our almighty God and may we indeed worship you this morning with all our heart - Amen"

### **Matthew 7: 7-8**

*"In Matthew 7:7-8 it says this: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened".*

The most powerful thing we can do as a Christian is to pray especially during these times of COVID and of course we can use prayer during our own MRBC missions month, a little later in the service we will hear more about the BMS world mission and how we can pray for Operation Chad, But returning to the verse in Matthew; I wonder how many of us are guilty of making prayer our last resort or giving up on prayer if we don't get an immediate answer, we can sometimes be impatient but that's human nature right? And who knows but perhaps it was this very same human nature that prompted Jesus to remind us to persevere when speaking with our Father in Heaven. Discovering God's will is the very purpose of perseverance. Through steadfastness prayer, we learn to focus on the Lord's faithfulness. When we pray we build our trust in God and at the same time it teaches us to depend on him too; instead of rushing ahead to get what we want. God promises that in time we will be given an answer, find what we seek, and walk through an open door. That's when we discover our heavenly Father always gives us what is good, even if it doesn't look exactly like the way we expect.

### **Response for call to Worship**

"May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble and may the name of the Lord protect you. May the Lord remember all our offerings and regard with favour our sacrifices of praise".

*“Our pride is in the name of the Lord who hears us when we pray and answers our needs. Let us Worship God !”*

## **Prayer 2**

Heavenly Father your word is not just a one-way conversation, talk with us today and hear us as we pray. Free us, that we might listen for Your voice, and empower us to speak to You. For in Christ Jesus, You have called us into a friendship which influences all other relationships. Help us to see beauty where we might be tempted to see ugliness — in ourselves as well as in others. Help us to hear You speak to us, in our heart of hearts, may your voice give us direction, peace, and hope. We pray in Jesus' name.” - Amen

## **Prayer Lets Blessings Flow (Tap and running water)**

Well this morning I have a picture of a tap and running water. I think sometimes we take our running water for granted; it's quite amazing really, we simply go up to it, turn it on and out comes the water. I'm sure you don't think there's much to get excited about here, but people have not always had such an easy way to get water. A long time ago our ancestors would have to walk to a well where they would pump out the water by hand and carry the water back to the house. The only way they had running water back in the day was if they ran with the bucket 😊

Now all have to do is turn on the tap and water comes out. And I think that Prayer is also like a tap. When we pray, we open up the flow of God's goodness into our lives. When we don't pray some of that goodness stays stored up.

God has so much he wants to give to people and do for them; he is the richest and most powerful being in the whole universe! But God has set things up in such a way that he wants us to have a part in unleashing his powerful help and goodness, and simply put he wants us to pray, pray and pray!

Of course, God is not exactly like tap, God can think about whether or not something we pray for is really the best thing or not. Yet the fact is we miss out on a great deal more of God's goodness and help in life if we don't ask for it.

We can pray and ask God to help us in different ways, we can pray for our family, friends, the church, for healing, for his spirit to touch others' lives like the BMS world mission and so much more. Jesus tells us to be **persistent in our prayers**. In every situation that we come across we should be asking and seeking God's guidance. We should not give up if God doesn't answer our prayers right away. We should keep on asking, keep on seeking God, and keep on knocking at the door, knowing that God will respond. Amen

## **Prayers for Fellowship / Community & World**

Heavenly Father thank you that you are our God, our refuge and our strength, and a very present help in trouble; in these challenging and uncertain times of global pandemic, we come before you offering our prayers on behalf of those in need, our Church and the world. For our Church, help us to not grow weary of proclaiming your good news but give us the strength to continue to serve as beacon of hope to a suffering world. Continue to protect us and keep us safe as we begin on a new journey or a new normal returning to Church again.

Lord we pray for all those affected by coronavirus around the world. For the leaders of the nations that they may work together for the common good as the outbreak continues to spread. May barriers that divide be brought down that bonds of trust may be strengthened to benefit the entire human family. We pray you would grant public health and government officials in our nation the strength and will to continue to act swiftly and decisively, with wisdom and compassion in service to all. Continue to bless scientists and researchers around the world as they combat the virus and come close to a vaccine may their work yield knowledge to further develop treatments, and improved measures to reduce its spread.

We pray you would comfort and heal all those who are poorly in body, mind and spirit may they regain their strength and health and grant them your healing grace. Give strength to all who are caring for loved ones. Remove the presence of fear and anxiety from our hearts, help us to remain steadfast in your love. As a church help us to reflect your love, as we minister to the most vulnerable among us; fill us with your Holy Spirit as we seek to be your healing hands and feet to all in need. Lord you remain our refuge and strength and may we find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Amen**

**Reading: Luke 10:1-12 and 17**

### **Sermon - Operation Chad**

One of the characteristics of the church from the early centuries of the Christian faith has been its involvement in health care. That's no surprise if you think about the reading we had this morning because a central part of the mission of the disciples was the healing of the sick:

VERSE

( Jesus said:) When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal those there who are ill and tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." Luke 10:8-9.

One of the problems that the church has created for itself down the years is the way in which we have created a separation between preaching Good News and being Good News. The disciples were good news when they visited villages and homes, because by the Holy Spirit, they transformed the lives of people where they were, physically, socially, mentally as well as spiritually.

That was formalised from an early stage into the provision of hospitals as places of healing, although hospitals were not merely medical facilities. It was most formalised by the Middle Ages, where a hospital where guests – usually pilgrims - were received by the Church or a religious order, where they were given food and shelter and where the poorest and weakest in the community were given shelter. As part of that, the sick were cared for, especially the poor who could not afford expensive physicians.

This is Eastbridge Hospital of St Thomas the Martyr, Canterbury, which was built to house pilgrims to Canterbury although after the Reformation it survived as a hospital for the city. It cared for every aspect of the poor of Canterbury, with a refectory, almshouses, medical treatment and a school. The function of medieval hospitals was first to worship God – a chapel was always central to the premises. Secondly it existed to give charity to the poor, sick, and travellers. Charity provided by hospitals surfaced in different ways, including long-term maintenance of the infirm, medium-term care of the sick, short-term hospitality to travellers, and regular distribution of alms to the poor. Finally hospitals was to support education and learning, particularly in relation to the church, religious orders and the clergy. All these were seen as outworkings of the call to discipleship such as in Luke 10.

Down the centuries, all these functions became separated and secularised, particularly in the 20th century with the coming of the NHS and we now only find relics of this setup in names of hospitals – St Bartholemew, St Thomas’s, words like hospitality, hostel and hotel and schools like the Royal Hospital School.

#### PARISH NURSING

One of the encouraging things we’ve been involved in as a church in the last 15 years has been Parish Nursing, which seeks to redress this imbalance by dealing with the health of the whole person. I see that as part of a process of recovery of our mission as the disciples of Jesus of bringing Him to them by welcoming all, bringing peace, being hospitable, healing the sick and proclaiming the Kingdom. It’s no surprise that Jesus commanded that – they were all things He did Himself.

#### GUINEBOR 11

Central to mission societies, including the BMS has been to bring Good News through the establishment of hospitals in many of the countries in which they work. I visited a church centre in Burundi in the 70s based around a hospital but the Church centre had a church, school and a centre for agricultural development. Typically Christian hospitals cater for the poorest, who can not afford healthcare. This year’s BMS appeal is for Guinebor II Hospital in the country of Chad. MAPS OF CHAD ETC. Here’s what it does for the citizens of Chad, right here, right now.

#### VIDEO

Guinebor II is a typical mission hospital in a country that has a low level of development, armed terrorist groups lurking (Boko Haram operated here), the grinding poverty of many and a huge difference between rich and poor.

#### A NEW PERSPECTIVE

The country of Chad brings us to a different perspective of hospitals and health. It’s a country where treatment in hospital reflects that.

#### QUOTE

Here’s what BMS Mission Worker Bethan Shrubsole says of Guinebor II Hospital “We deliver babies, we remove cancers, we stitch up gunshots. We bind up wounds and perform surgeries...”

How different that is to the NHS. In the past months we have applauded the dedication of our British medical staff and how the NHS was mobilised to deal with the pandemic. We built 4000 bed hospitals in weeks and businesses got together to supply equipment and PPE. Of course there were still people who complained, but the weekly applause was well earned and appreciated.

Going back to Chad, perspective is often very humbling. Guinebor II is desperately under-resourced as we saw in the video. They treat all who come for help and they are mostly the poor.

As Covid-19 spreads across Africa these limited resources are going to be tested in an unimaginable way. If we think it was tough for our medical staff, think of what it must be like for those at Guinebor II, although the video did give an insight, but that was filmed back in February.

What drives these medical staff to joyfully dedicate their lives to looking after sick and destitute strangers?

#### A NEW PURPOSE

As a Christian hospital, the faith of the staff reflects greatly on their attitude to others and their willingness to care despite all the difficulties and limitations.. Let me give you a few verses from Genesis 1.

#### VERSE

Genesis 1: 26-27 reads: “God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

Being made in the image of God means that every human has incredible value because they are in some way like God; the created reflecting the creator. This value is not something we earn and is not a capacity we can lose. It is bestowed on the rich and on the poor, on the healthy and on the sick. It is a gift; all from a loving and gracious God.

This is the case despite our image having been tainted – physically and spiritually – after sin came into the world. We see its effects all around us, in broken relationships and broken bodies. This brokenness brings us to the core of the Christian faith: God loved us so much that he sent Jesus into the world. He lived without sin amongst us, died on the cross in our place and rose again to bring us back into a relationship with God. In his ministry, Jesus gave hope to those with broken bodies by healing the sick, but he also used this to point to healing from an even greater sickness:

VERSE

“Which is easier: to say to this paralysed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ So he said to the man, ‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.’ He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all.” Mark 2: 9-12

A NEW PROMISE

It was in Jesus’ resurrection that we most clearly see the value of humans – including the physical human body – as being part of the image of God. We see in Genesis 1: 31 that God looked at his creation, of which the human race was the pinnacle, and saw that it was ‘very good’.

This is why the healthcare workers at the Guinebor II hospital in Chad are so passionate in their care for the physical, psychological and – ultimately – spiritual needs of their patients. Let’s complete the quote we read at the start from Bethan Shrubsole

QUOTE

“We deliver babies, we remove cancers, we stitch up gunshots. We bind up wounds and perform surgeries. We pray for the broken hearted, we show poor people a Christian welcome and we see them come to faith in Jesus. We do all of this every day. We do it through the heat and the long hours and the tears. We do it because people here need us and because Jesus commands it.”

Despite limited resources and constant demands, they are compelled to follow Jesus’ example in loving their fellow image-bearers in Chad, attending to broken bodies and sharing the gospel, bringing temporary healing and eternal hope.

“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true:

‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’

‘Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?’”

1 Corinthians 15: 54-55

HOSPITAL STAFF

We praise God for the staff at Guinebor II, but their life and witness are also a challenge to us. At this time of pandemic, how important are others to us? This challenge has been a theme for a few weeks now. Our action or inaction has consequences on others. Being careless about Covid may not only impact on us if we catch it: others we circulate with will also be affected. A recent Covid spike in a Northern town was caused by one man who returned from abroad and didn’t self-isolate, instead going out with his mates.

But it works the other way too, when we obey Jesus as His disciples, when we bring peace, when we serve others, pray for others, act for others, support others and declare the Good News, what starts with us, by the Holy Spirit, spreads to others. In fact the Christian faith, when lived and spread by those who walk in obedience to Jesus and in the power of the Spirit, find their faith is highly infectious, it spreads everywhere and changes lives.

And the glory goes to Jesus. Whether our service is in a hospital in Chad or is in a neighbourhood in Felixstowe, whether to strangers or friends and family, Jesus calls us to bring the healing and wholeness that only comes through Him. Lets rise to the challenge today!

Let's pray for the work and people of Guinebor II hospital

GUINEBOR REFLECTION VIDEO

PRAYER

Father, thank you for the challenge and encouragement we have received from the example of those who have followed you and serve in the most difficult of places. May we find the strength by your Spirit to see how you can use us in our situation, to bring healing and hope to others who need to find and follow Jesus for themselves. We ask this in His name. Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

Heavenly Father thankyou that we can come to you in prayer; we give thanks for the BMS World Mission as they seek to bring people to faith by helping them to experience the abundant life that only you alone can provide, we also ask that you will provide for each of us in your way, our own special gift to be used for your glory, and for the good of our neighbours, show us each day what these gifts are, and how they may be used, help us to step forward into your gracious presence, knowing that we are each and all blessed with something special to share. Help us to remain focused on your faithfulness building our trust in you alone, help us to be patient and to persevere with our prayers. Lord, stir us up, so that we don't become too self-satisfied, and forget to keep asking, seeking, and knocking. Thank you that you are a God of promise and that in time we will be given answers to our prayers – Amen

### **Final Blessing**

As we take our worship, praise, and prayer from this place and into our daily lives, may we be sustained through the word, prayer, and love of our Heavenly Father. May we feel the presence of our Saviour walking beside us, and know the power of the Spirit in both our actions and our words and finally may we be surrounded by Gods love, peace and protection as we go into a new week.

### **Credits**

Many thanks to BMS World Mission for providing the Operation Chad resources for this morning's service, particularly Dr Monty Lyman for his sermon resources.

## **For Discussion & Reflection**

Read Luke 10:1-12 and 17

1. List the various things that Jesus called on the 72 disciples to do when they went out to proclaim the kingdom, What do we think these can teach us about the things we need to do as we proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom?
2. Why is ministering to the well-being of people such an important part of bringing the Good News to others?
3. What does this passage tell us about the trust and dependence disciples should have in God as they proclaim Good News to others?
4. Why do you think it is so important that when Christians minister to the physical health needs of others that they must also address the welfare, relationships, mental state, and most of all spiritual needs of others too?