



Western Fells Methodist Circuit

**7 February 2021**

**Ordinary 5**

**by  
Keith Rushton**

**Our call to worship**

God's grace is lavished upon us and His power is made perfect in our weakness.

Read or sing these words by Stuart Hine & Carl Gustaf Boberg

**Singing the Faith 82**

Music to be found [here](#)

O Lord my God, when I, in awesome wonder  
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to thee:  
How great Thou art, How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my saviour God to thee:  
How great thou art, how great thou art.

When through the woods and forest glades I wander  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,  
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to thee:  
How great Thou art, How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my saviour God to thee:  
How great thou art, how great thou art.

**Let us pray:**

Jesus you are really with us. As we earnestly and silently make our confessions we hear you say “your sins are forgiven”. We are full of gratitude now because even in times of isolation we catch glimpses of your blessings and we know that you are looking after us. In this moment, we are spiritually united with you and our friends. Please be our refreshment now as we worship.

We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen. PAUSE..... THE LORD’S PRAYER

NOW WE CONSIDER A NUMBER OF POINTS FROM THREE SCRIPTURES IN TODAY’S LECTIONARY AND SUMMARISED HERE.

First, we are pointed to Isaiah chapter 40 which was written at a historical turning point. Yes Israel had been through trauma. Yes there was exile in the offing. Yes complaints are made against God. But YES THERE IS HOPE.

God does not grow tired or weary. Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. When you think that Lockdown is a bit like exile REMEMBER there will be a turning point because God never stops caring for His people.

Secondly Psalm No 147 is very much worth a look. Our God is a great God and he heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. He provides the means of growth to meet food needs for the world of nature, even including the little young ravens when they call. So take encouragement especially if you feel insignificant in the big scheme of things because God sustains the humble [verse 6]

Finally, we turn to today's Gospel as found in St Mark chapter 1 verses 29 to 39.

Jesus started his ministry with speed, drive and determination:

- Calling his team of disciples
- Teaching the crowds with authority
- Healing many people.

When he was in Capernaum Mark tells us that the whole town gathered outside the house where he was staying. THE WHOLE TOWN ! Non stop healing was exhausting so he went off to a solitary place and prayed. He needed his mini lockdown!

How do you feel today?

If you are like me, you are not feeling on top of the world. Some of you will feel lonely and each day turns out to be the same as the last one. Some of you may be juggling work at home with home schooling for children or grandchildren.

Mostly we yearn to spend real meaningful time with family. Friends and our church communities.

Watching TV isn't enough. However, over the last couple of weeks or so I have caught at least two flashes of inspiration on TV.

Michael Palin in the Sahara finds a refugee living in a shack constructed out of old oil drums. Palin asks the man "what makes you happy?" The answer was "what ever God gives makes us happy". I think of this as I take my daily exercise walk round the estate where we live. And what does God give in this context? A wonderful view of the Lorton Fells. It is not possible for me to climb to the top nowadays. However, I go with the psalmist and lift up my eyes to the hills, knowing that my help comes from the Lord, come what may. Then I come home and look at the garden and see the green shoots of bulbs breaking through the hard ground regardless of lockdown.

My second flash of inspiration came from Amanda Gorman's poem which she read during President Biden's inauguration ceremony. This is part of what she

has written: There is always light if only we are brave enough to see it, if only we are brave enough TO BE IT.

You may feel stuck at home, there is light and you can be it. Our hope is in the Lord who renews our strength every day. Green shoots are there for us to see.

And please remember the Saharan refugee who said; “whatever God gives makes us happy.”

Now we turn to the lovely hymn written by David Adams

**StF number 624**

Music to be found [here](#)

Calm me Lord, as you calmed the storm:  
Still me, Lord, keep me from harm,  
Let all the tumult within me cease,  
Enfold me, Lord, in your peace.

Let us pray.

Loving God, we seek healing for our nation and the world. We lift up to you, all people laid low by the virus, tired doctors, nurses and carers. We give thanks for the development and delivery of vaccines. We pray for students and teachers. Bless all our loved ones for whom we have concerns. We pray for the many who have worries about employment and income. Give comfort to the lonely and peace to troubled hearts. Give us all confidence for the future.

Touch our lives now O Lord. Empower us to BE the light at the end of the tunnel and have faith beyond the scope of the faith we have had so far in our lives. We pray for the light of the world to shine in our lives as never before.

The Lord Bless you and all your loved ones, keep you safe and give you peace today and always. Amen.

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