

3rd August, 2025

The paper-version Service



St Andrew's
Church



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks
Responding to God's Love



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the
King of creation!

O my soul, praise him, for he is your
health and salvation!

Come, all who hear; now to his
temple draw near,
join me in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, above all things
so wondrously reigning;
sheltering you under his wings, and
so gently sustaining!

Have you not seen all that is
needful has been
sent by his gracious ordaining?

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper
your work and defend you;
surely his goodness and mercy shall
daily attend you.

Ponder anew what the Almighty can
do,
if with his love he befriends you.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in
me adore him!

All that has life and breath, come
now with praises before him.

Let the Amen sound from his
people again;
gladly forever adore him.

The Sermon by Virginia, Youth and Children's worker at the Good Shepherd.

Read Psalm 98 and Luke 1:67-79 – Sing a New Song

Psalm 98 is a psalm filled with joy. The psalmist is inviting the whole earth/creation to sing a new song unto the Lord for His right hand, and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

This psalm though written years before Jesus was born, it prophesies what God would do through the messiah, the psalmist doesn't see this something in the future but in his prophesy he is in the future and sees that it is done. And that's why he is filled with Joy and wants to sing a new song.

1. Now, first of all let us consider what this salvation is and how God's right hand has achieved it-

It all started in the garden of Eden where Adam and Eve the first human beings sinned against God. So, God sent them away from his presence because of sin, but his heart was for them. That is why God Introduced in Lev 4 and 5 the system of offering animal sacrifice for sins a way for the people back to relationship with God.

So, people sinned, sacrificed animals to get rid of their sins, but they actually never got rid of their sins, they went back to committing sins over and over. The sins of the Israelites went on increasing to the point, where God would have destroyed them in his wrath, but he didn't because of his love for them. Therefore, he wanted a sacrifice who would take upon itself the sin of these people once for all and would free them from the slavery of sin and death. Just as Adam (one man) sinned and made all humanity slave of sin and death God now needed another one human being who would lead a sinless life, defeat the power of sin and death in his life and would achieve victory for all. But there was no one (Isaiah 63:5).

Therefore, God himself had to do it. He left heavens and came down in the form of Jesus, limited himself in a human body, time and space. Led a sinless life and defeated the power of sin and death through his life, death and resurrection, for all.

That is why the psalmist is overjoyed realising the great love and sacrifice of God for human beings.

Do we rejoice in our daily lives for what God has done for us? In spite of all our difficulties and challenges, can we live our lives in the light of this greater joy of salvation and eternal life that God has achieved for us.

2. Secondly we see that the psalmist wants to say that this Salvation is for the whole world (verse 2-3)

This has been God's desire from the beginning. Though Jesus was born in Israel, preached in Israel and sacrificed himself in Israel. His heart and his sacrifice was for all.

Just as in verse 1 the psalmist sees that the work of salvation is done, in verse 2-3 he says all the nations have already seen salvation of our God. In today's context we can say yes the nations have seen, but also yet to see. There are still people in the world who don't know about this salvation that is available by just believing in Jesus. But how can they believe if they have not heard about him? And how will they hear about him unless someone told them about him? (Rom 10)

In the second reading from Luke, we read Zechariah's song. Zechariah prophesies about his son, John the Baptist, that he will make people known about this salvation of God. And John did it. When he baptised people he would say, I baptise you with water, but there is one coming- who will baptise you with Holy Spirit and fire. In the John 1:29 we see that when John saw Jesus he publicly declared, "Behold the lamb of the Lord that takes away the sin of the world".

Not only John, but Jesus also told his disciples, in Acts 2- that they will receive power from above and they will be his witnesses, in Jerusalem, Judea and the ends of the earth.

We as the disciples of Jesus, do we carry the responsibility of pointing people to Jesus? It doesn't have to be words always, it could be our behaviour our lifestyle, our testimony or just starting with prayer for those people, for the opportunities to come their way to know the Lord.

3. Thirdly, in the midst of rejoicing in this great salvation of God for all, psalmist also want to remind us that God is coming as a judge (v9). We who already believe in Jesus not only have the responsibility to make this salvation known to others, but also for us to walk in that salvation.

God has given us his Holy spirit who helps us to live a holy life. But because we live in this world we have temptations to fall into sin. Bible also says that God will help us in those temptations and show us the way out (1 Corinthians 10:13). So, God doesn't judge us by the mistakes we make but he wants to help us through it. All God wants from us is a desire/intentions to live a holy life.

if we read the beginning part of Luke 1, we read that Elizabeth and Zechariah lived a righteous and blameless life. Jesus told Nathaniel when he first met him (whom he called to be one of his 12 disciples), "here is a jew in whom there is no deceit". Does that mean they never sinned. Because it is also written that everyone has sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. So, they must have made mistakes too, but even if they made mistakes they must have been quick to repent and maintained a clear conscience before God.

David would always examine his heart, he says in psalm 139:23- Search me God and know my heart, test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me and lead me into the way everlasting. Similarly in order to live a holy life, we need to examine our lives daily, so that we stand in front of God faultless.

Conclusion- So let us rejoice with psalmist singing a new song for God's great love and his sacrifice for us. Let us make this salvation know to the people around us. And with all that in mind, let us not forget to walk in this salvation, in the freedom from all sin, maintaining a clear conscience before God.

7th Sunday after Trinity: *Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever, Amen.*

The Lord's 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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: August 20th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: August 27th at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>