

# CIRCUIT SERVICE 02/05/21

*Thank you friends for allowing us to come into your homes to share the word of God. I pray that the Lord will bless you and give you peace in your homes and pour his Holy Spirit into your homes to protect you and grant you grace.*

Today's service is based around the encounter between Peter and Jesus and the question of "if you love me feed my sheep"

Let us begin by acknowledging what God, our Father, has done for us through his son Jesus Christ. Our call to worship is from Psalm 100.

## **Psalm 100 a Psalm of praise.**

- <sup>1</sup> Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
- <sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.
- <sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD is God.  
It is he who made us, and we are his;  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
- <sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.
- <sup>5</sup> For the LORD is good and his love endures forever;  
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

## **We shall offer our praise**

### **Stf 58 Lord I Come Before Your Throne of Grace (What a Faithful God)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1CJC9qnoQk>

### **(Alternate hymn stf 331 King of Kings )**

Lord, I come before Your throne of grace;  
I find rest in Your presence  
And fulness of joy.  
In worship and wonder  
I behold Your face,

Singing what a faithful God have I.  
*What a faithful God have I,  
What a faithful God.  
What a faithful God have I,  
Faithful in every way.*

Lord of mercy, You have heard my cry;  
Through the storm You're the beacon,  
My song in the night.  
In the shelter of Your wings,  
Hear my heart's reply,  
Singing what a faithful God have I

Lord all sovereign, granting peace from  
heaven,  
Let me comfort those who suffer  
With the comfort You have given.  
I will tell of Your great love for as long as I  
live,  
Singing what a faithful God have I.

**Robert Critchley and Dawn Critchley (1965)**

## **Prayer of Praise, adoration and confession.**

O Lord, our all-powerful and sovereign God, we adore, honour and glorify you. We are privileged to be called your children. We affirm that You our redeeming Lord and God reign supreme.

We thank you for the assurance that you will never leave us. We thank you for the sacrifices on the cross for us. We thank you for the holy spirit that pleads on our behalf when we are weak. We thank you for the church family, our own families and the lives of the young people.

You breathe life into places of deathly fear; you increase our understanding of things hard to comprehend and draw us into your love.

You welcome and accept all your children with open arms of compassion. You give every one of us the strength to carry on.

We thank you for keeping us safe in the last year and getting us ready for the gradual easing of lockdown. We also thank you for the opportunity to use digital technologies to keep our church community together and to continue to fellowship and worship You. As we prepare for more face-to-face worship and life in general, we thank you for hope through Christ Jesus.

We are sorry when we get carried away with our busy lives and never stop to dwell on your love. We are sorry when we allow the challenges in our lives to erode and wear away our hope. We are sorry when we fail to show sufficient compassion to others...

Our heavenly Father, we come to You in the name of Jesus, we ask for forgiveness of sins. Give us the strength to be able to live according to Your will and help us to rely on Your Word so we can be guided away from sin.

Thank you, Lord God, for the opportunity of worship. Thank you that in worship we can put aside, the uncertainties of this world and rest upon the certainties of the Kingdom, for your promises are unchangeable Your promises are immovable and eternal.

Let the holy spirit fill everyone with the power of your grace to make this act of worship acceptable to you. Oh Lord, our God!

## **Our Lord's Prayer: our Father ....**

### **Hymn stf 437**

#### **When The Music Fades (the Heart Of Worship) - Matt Redman**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OD4tB1o6YLw>

When the music fades, all is stripped away,  
And I simply come;  
Longing just to bring something that's of  
worth  
That will bless Your heart.

I'll bring You more than a song,  
For a song in itself  
Is not what You have required.  
You search much deeper within  
Through the way things appear;  
You're looking into my heart.

*I'm coming back to the heart of worship, And it's  
all about You,  
All about You, Jesus.  
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it,  
When it's all about You,  
All about You, Jesus.*

King of endless worth, no one could express  
How much You deserve.  
Though I'm weak and poor, all I have is Yours,  
Every single breath.

## **Bible reading**

### **John 21: 1-14**

### **John 21: 15-19**

#### **There are 2 reflections and thoughts.**

1. Peter restored by our Lord Jesus (by Stephen Appiah)
2. Peter asked to Feed his sheep (by Ellis Osabutey)

#### **Reflection 1**

#### **SERVING A GOD WHO ACCEPTS IMPERFECT “YES” AND PROMISES YOU A PERFECT TOMORROW**

In the past few days, Peter's life had been thrown into a whirlwind of failures and emotions.

Peter gave 3 years of dedicated service to his master and his Lord Jesus but when it was time to take a stand, he failed him

THEY HAD GONE TO JERUSALEM TO CROWN HIM KING but all of their dreams, all their hopes, everything they believed in – died with their master on the cross!

Their future was in tatters, There was nothing left to do but leave Jerusalem, leave their hopes and leave their dreams. They have now returned home (Galilee) to recover their yesterday because their tomorrow had died on the cross.

Is anxious time for Peter and the disciples. Peter brought out his boat and mended it and brought out his fishing net and started to repair it. The disciples and friends asked Peter what he was doing and his reply was “I am going fishing”. I am preparing my boat to go fishing. They decided to join him possibly because they did not see any clear future for themselves either.

After fishing all night, they caught nothing and the sea was dry, then they heard a voice calling ...” have you caught any fish? Put the net on the right side.”

Immediately one of the disciples said: it is the lord standing at the shore. Peter came to the shore to meet Jesus.

It was an uncomfortable scene sitting by a fire with Jesus – a reminder of the time when the Peter was standing by the fire in the court of the high priest and the cock crowed. Sometimes the heart can grieve in silence and there are not many words you can say.

Then Jesus took Peter aside and the disciples who know too well that Peter failed the Lord might have wondered what he was going to say to Peter. Maybe “Get behind me Satan?” *or go back to your boat and leave this place!*

But Jesus asked Peter over and over again, “*Simon, son of John, do you love me?*”

I don't envy Peter? The irony here is that there is no doubt that Peter loves Jesus.

His affection for Jesus was undeniable, but imperfect “YES” is not equivalent to AGAPE Yes

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “*Do you love me?*” He replied, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Then feed my sheep!

The reality is that Peter denied Jesus three times It was a denial that he could, would and should never forget but was that the reason that Peter wept? Was it the guilt? NO; Was it Divine Love? YES

He wept because he was overwhelmed by the divine love that continued to trust him

What kind of love is this? How can somebody express so much trust for you after you have denied him so miserably? Jesus believed and understood Peter more than Peter understood himself. Jesus knew how much Peter loved him but he also knew the limit of his strength. At the Last supper, the Lord said to Peter "... I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail.."

We have a God who accepts imperfect "YES" and promises a perfect tomorrow. Exchanging our weakness for his strength, he heals our broken integrity; and his Grace abounds for us.

Jesus knew that the future for Peter was greater than his past, ... PENTECOST, Building the CHURCH!

Peter was rebuked when he felt strong enough to rebuke Jesus at a time when Jesus spoke about going to the cross, but he was not rebuked this time when he failed Jesus.

Oftentimes, when you fail, people rebuke you and make you irrelevant, but Jesus will not rebuke you when you fail and he will restore you and make a success of you.

Jesus is not worried about people who have failed. You may feel that you are unqualified and inadequate and I feel the same, I feel unqualified to serve Him but I realise that God uses BROKEN PIECES to build his church

In the Bible many broken people - stammers fishermen, people who are guilty of murder like Moses – have been used by God because it is not your might, but his grace and his Spirit that strengthen us for his work.

Peter's advice to the church is "The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, ... will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." (1 Peter 5).

It seems when you feel you are not able– that is when Jesus calls you.

The question of identity and adequacy are not in his criteria. Peter's imperfect YES was what Jesus was waiting but for me it is my it is my chief complaint that my love is weak and faint for my Lord.

LORD, GRANT ME THE GRACE TO FOLLOW YOU AND LOVE YOU MORE **AMEN**

## Hymn

Stf 51 Great is thy faithfulness H&P 66

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eQ1oal44wU>

- 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 springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love :
- 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 !

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866–1960)

## Reflection 2

**Theme: 'Feed my lambs -- Reflection By Ellis Osabutey**

Earlier in John 20, Jesus had risen from the dead, revealed himself to the disciples and then commissions them to continue his mission (John 20:21-23). In John 21 the disciples were on a fishing

trip... The fishing trip was not going well... they were not catching fish (John 21:2-5). Early in the morning Jesus does not only help them with the bumper catch but also serves breakfast.

Jesus was about to discuss a very important issue with the disciples... but he ensured that their basic physical or material needs were met...

Perhaps it is important that we explore how we could help with the physical or material needs of the 'sheep' or 'lamb' before whatever we consider the main issue is dealt with... perhaps we have to feed them before we 'feed' them.

What do sheep signify in the Bible: Sacrificial animals (Numbers 28:4; Exodus 29:39); Primary source of income and livelihood... symbolically God's people – the Church (Matthew 25:32); Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:19)... very complex to me... Sheep and lamb can be meek and mild and yet... they also have lots of flaws...

When I was growing up, my family kept some sheep... and some of us children were on the rota to be shepherds... I'll tell you a bit about what I remember... Sheep have no sense of direction, one sheep takes the wrong turn and the rest follow... when one gets lost they struggle to find a way to either join the rest of the flock or go back home... it was the most frustrating chore for all of us... we got angry a lot of times and they could wear us out... they could get us into trouble by going into places they shouldn't... One trick though... you have to quickly identify the naughty sheep and then try to anticipate their movement... that could make you get into trouble less often... over time we learned that... you cannot be a good shepherd if you are not patient... Also imagine when the lamb gets lost... could be another frustrating day...it's difficult to redirect the lamb to join the rest of the flock... you will need to almost instinctively pick the lamb up in a cuddle... you need to be more gentle... you need to be more compassionate... the life of being a shepherd is not an easy one.

Lambs are usually under a year old. They are young, inexperienced, innocent, tender and often dependent on the older sheep, especially the mother sheep for nourishment, warmth etc. Jesus is the shepherd of the great flock, the church. Thus, he calls the church "my sheep." (John 10:27-30)...

Back to our passage... I do like the part in... John 21:18... 'Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.' ... so, whether talking about feeding the sheep or lamb literally or figuratively it covers a whole range... in terms of new and young Christians as well as young and older individuals... we all need help... and the help we need come in different shapes and sizes.

So, after a rather filling breakfast Jesus pursues the substantive issue:

John 21:15 – "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Who or what Jesus meant by "these" is unclear? What is certain though is the question of Peter's love for the Lord and the service that would be required of him because of this love.

Jesus does not pose the question because he doubted Peter's love for him. But I get the impression that sometimes when we evaluate how far we have come in life or the Christian race... we unintentionally let our own successes cloud our judgement which hinders our level of compassion... love needs to be compassionate...

Do not let your success in any sphere of life hinder your compassion...

You cannot think that because you have succeeded in your career or Christian life by making some sacrifices then everyone should be able to...everybody can make it the way you have done... No! everybody's journey is different... some are impoverished with a broken spirit... some have been

forced into their present circumstances... being indifferent is not an option...make a difference in the life of another person... every one of us can give some broken human being a taste of Jesus Christ...

What really counts?

When we truly love someone, we go to all extremes possible to prove this love to them. Jesus has said, "if you love me, you will keep my commandments (John 14:15). Thus, for Peter, and for us, our love for the Lord Jesus, should prompt us to do something that pleases him - Feed the Lambs... how do you do this? Be nice to that school mate no one wants to be nice to... Share your books or food with someone at school or a neighbour who needs it...Share a word with someone... be nice... help someone walk across the street... run an errand for someone, call an older person in the Church, who lives alone, to see how they are doing? Ask a younger person from a broken home how his or her schoolwork is going... these kinds of 'feeding' are even more necessary in these Covid times... We are all guilty of not checking on each other enough...

What Jesus is asking Peter to do, and by extension us, is the keeping and nurturing of the young in faith. This is the call of Christ...

There are those in the Christian faith who may not be as mature as those in leadership; they are the lambs. They would need to be fed and nurtured to grow... with compassions...But do not forget the older who have served in the Church and are now very old... they too need our love; they too need nurturing... What Jesus is telling Peter, and us today is, "Let your love for me inspire you to take care of these lambs..."

Let us all do our bit to show compassionate love... the love that has no reference point... the reference point of feeding the lamb is 'love'

The bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 13...

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres... (1 Corinthians 13: 4-7)

If we all love with patience and compassion we can do a lot... may God instil in us the spirit of love... Amen!

### **Let Us Enter Into Prayer of Intercession**

Our Lord and our God, we come before your throne of Grace to intercede for others and ourselves. Lord of life, in this time of crisis we pray for our families and communities, our nation and our world that your Holy Spirit will lead the nations out of the pandemic crisis. We pray for the people of India, Myanmar and St Vincent that you will support them in this painful time.

#### **Fill them and restore them in the power of your Holy Spirit.**

We pray for the sick and those whose treatments have been delayed or impacted by the covid situation. May you strengthen and continue to support them.

#### **Fill them and restore them in the power of your Holy Spirit.**

we hold before you those who are living with a great sense of loss at this time:

1. Loss of loved ones
2. Loss of job, home, financial 'security'
3. Loss of opportunities to gather for education, worship and fellowship.

May each one find a sense of renewed purpose and peace in their circumstances.

**Fill them and restore them in the power of your Holy Spirit.**

We pray for all who seek to fulfil Christ's command to love one another through the work of foodbanks and charities and various acts of kindness.

**Fill them and restore them in the power of your Holy Spirit.**

We pray for ourselves, our families and our well-being particularly those who feel lonely and anxious at this time.

**Fill us and restore us in the power of your Holy Spirit.**

We pray for our church communities as we seek to come together for worship. Lord make our churches a safe place to come into your presence.

**Fill us and restore us in the power of your Holy Spirit.**

Strengthen our faith in your Son Jesus, who took on our infirmities and bore our diseases, suffered the cross and rose again triumphant, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. May the power of the risen Christ fill us with hope and joy knowing that nothing in all creation can separate us from your love.

We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus **Amen**

**Stf 436 what shall I do my God to love**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EwLu8gu-ew>

1 What shall I do my God to love,  
my loving God to praise?  
the length, and breadth, and height to prove,  
and depth of sovereign grace?

2 Your sovereign grace to all extends,  
immense and unconfined;  
from age to age it never ends,  
to reach all humankind.

3 Throughout the world its breadth is known,  
wide as infinity;  
so wide it never passed by one,  
or it had passed by me.

4 My trespass was grown up to heav'n;  
but far above the skies,  
in Christ abundantly forgiv'n,  
I see your mercies rise.

5 The depth of all-redeeming love,  
what angel tongue can tell?  
O may I to the utmost prove  
the gift unspeakable.

6 Come quickly, gracious Lord, and take  
possession of your own;  
my longing heart be pleased to make  
your everlasting throne.

**Blessing**

The Lord be gracious unto us and bless us and make us safe.

The Lord makes his face to shine upon us and his peace be with us

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord in the name of Christ **Amen.**