

Call to service

“The barrier that sin erected between us and God HAS DISTURBED THE DIVINE FOR AGES PAST. The dominance of sin has created a huge problem for God but **the Divine has dedicated themselves to a healing process to restore us. They are fully aware that YOU CANNOT LOVE WITHOUT GIVING PART OF YOURSELF and you cannot love without paying a price. Love comes at a cost. They have loved us not because we are loveable but because** God is love and the object of their love is to restore creation to themselves

We shall sing

stf 51 Great is thy faithfulness

[Great is thy faithfulness - YouTube](#)

<p>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 :</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>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 :</p> <p>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 !</p> <p>Thomas O. Chisholm (1866–1960)</p>
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Alternative Stf 94 To God be the glory

[To God Be The Glory \(Royal Albert Hall, London\) - YouTube](#)

Prayer of Adoration

Our Father, we come before your Holy presence to give you glory and honour, because You are worthy of our praise and worship. You sustain us day to day despite everything that the world is going through and we have so much to be thankful for.

We come before your awesome presence knowing that you are beyond our comprehension. Enlarge our vision to know that you are here with us

This morning, instil in us, your peace where we feel unsettled, your love and strength in place of our day-to-day stress. We do experience deep in our hearts the incredible nature of your grace. As we contemplate the great price you paid for our sins when you sent your Son Jesus to die in our place and then followed it up by sending us your Holy Spirit, Lord continue to support the people of God and continue to sustain us in your peace.

We also confess our sinfulness. Sin is in our nature and we regret for our shortcomings but you are gracious and merciful, and you are always ready to forgive us when we sin against you. Help us to forgive one another and to love one another.

Lord, give us hope in our world, our concerns keep multiplying day by day and we get wearied with challenges that we have to go through but in our weakness let your strength be revealed. Fill us with your Spirit and rise above this worship and make it acceptable in your sight. Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

Bible Reading

Luke 5: 1-11 – The call of Peter

2 Corinth 5:14-21 – God is reconciling the world to Himself

Stf 407 Hear the Call of the Kingdom

[Hear the call of the kingdom. Lyric video \(StF 407\) - YouTube](#)

<p>1 Hear the call of the kingdom, lift your eyes to the King ; let his song rise within you as a fragrant offering of how God, rich in mercy, came in Christ to redeem all who trust in his unfailing grace.</p> <p>2 Hear the call of the kingdom to be children of light with the mercy of heaven, the humility of Christ ; walking justly before him, loving all that is right, that the life of Christ may shine through us.</p>	<p><i>King of heaven, we will answer the call. We will follow, bringing hope to the world, filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim salvation in Jesus' name.</i></p> <p>3 Hear the call of the kingdom to reach out to the lost with the Father's compassion in the wonder of the cross, bringing peace and forgiveness, and a hope yet to come : let the nations put their trust in him.</p> <p><i>King of heaven, we will answer the call ...</i></p> <p>Keith Getty (b. 1974), Kristyn Getty (b. 1980) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963)</p>
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Or Stf 424 God forgave my sin in Jesus' name

[God Forgave My Sin \(Freely, Freely\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

Sermon

DOES THE KINGDOM OF GOD OFFER EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL?

Until the time when our Lord Jesus came to the scene, the opportunities to enter into God's Kingdom were very limited. If you were a gentile or a tax collector, you were labelled a sinner and not qualified to enter the Kingdom of God. The grace through Abraham was limited and the laws were stiff. Gentiles had their own gods and the Kingdom of God was reserved for a few.

At the inaugural address of our Lord Jesus in Nazareth, his emphasis was to open the Kingdom and send the message of good news to include those on the fringes of society and those who had fallen through the cracks and declare the year of favour to encompass all. This statement was unusual and was received with shock. In the sermon of the mount when he elaborated on the Kingdom values, he stressed again and again that equal opportunities have been given to all to come into the Kingdom of God.

What intrigues me most is how he also chose the people who were to be his disciples. His followers felt they were unworthy and many of them were labelled as sinners.

Matthew was chosen, when Jesus was fully aware that he was a tax collector – a group of Jewish people who collected taxes from Jewish people for the occupying Roman authorities. It was not the collection of taxes that made them sinners but the way they inflated the taxes, squeezed poor and the widows of every denarii that they could get in order to enrich themselves. John the Baptist had warned them of such bad practices that could hinder them from the Kingdom of God. The Pharisees labelled every tax collector a sinner. So why did Jesus call Matthew to be his disciple and later called Zacchaeus another tax collector as well? Both Matthew and Zacchaeus and for that matter Mary Magdalene - all knew that they were excluded from God's Kingdom because of their profession but when they were offered the opportunities, Matthew immediately closed his tax booth and followed Jesus. As for Zacchaeus, he decided to refund his exploits to

the exploited. Mary gave the rest of her life to serve our Lord. These people probably realized that the power behind the calling was stronger than the power of sin that held them back and they seized the opportunity.

Jesus was challenged by the Pharisees for mingling with tax collectors and Jesus defended his position that the Kingdom of God is open to all and he has come specifically to seek those who are lost. The Pharisees completely disagreed with Jesus on this issue.

Judas chosen by our Lord was a thief who could not repent for all the opportunities that were given to him. The problem was not the Kingdom, the problem was Judas himself, because another thief in a brief moment on the cross made a dash for it and seized the opportunity to enter the Kingdom of God and he did.

On the contrary, the call of Peter was different. Fishermen were not labelled as sinners in the Jewish society, but why did Peter feel unqualified to respond to the call to become part of the fishers of men? Why did he feel that he was a sinner and did not qualify to work for God's Kingdom? **Sin had made Peter feel unworthy to respond.** Peter did not realize that the power behind the calling was stronger than the force of sin that was holding him back. And this was the principle behind the invitation by Jesus - that Nobody should feel held back by their sins.

The dominance of sin has created a huge problem for God but they love their creation and they have dedicated themselves to a healing process to restore us. They are fully aware that YOU CANNOT LOVE WITHOUT GIVING PART OF YOURSELF and you cannot love without paying a price. Love comes at a cost and there is no exception for God as well. They have loved us not because we are loveable but because love is essential to the nature of God and the object of their love is the world they have created. God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son for us. Jesus demonstrated this love in his sermons, preaching, teaching, his calling and his death on the cross for us.

Paul puts it this way: that God is reconciling the world to himself in Christ by not counting people's sins against them. Jesus is at the crossroad of our lives and calling sinners to turn back from the years of wasted life. We who were once sinners are called to be part of the reconciliation process.

Non-Christians often find sin holding them back, but the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin also seeks to set us free from it. May God make each one of us a channel of his grace and use us to call others in this process of reconciliation. The world has been through a lot recently, but God's love for us will restore us through his son our Lord Jesus.

stf 250 Jesus calls us o'er the tumult

[Jesus Calls Us, o'er the Tumult - YouTube](#)

<p>1 Jesus calls us ! O'er the tumult of our life's wild restless sea, day by day his voice is sounding, saying : 'Christian, follow me.'</p> <p>2 As of old apostles heard it by the Galilean lake, turned from home and toil and kindred, leaving all for his dear sake.</p> <p>3 Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store, from each idol that would keep us, saying : 'Christian, love me more.'</p>	<p>4 In our joys and in our sorrows, days of toil and hours of ease, still he calls, in cares and pleasures : 'Christian, love me more than these.'</p> <p>5 Jesus calls us ! By your mercies, Saviour, may we hear your call, give our hearts to your obedience, serve and love you best of all.</p> <p>Cecil Frances Alexander (1818–1895)</p>
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Let us pray:

O God, our refuge, our strength, our help; You are the bedrock upon which our lives are built, the mighty fortress who sustains and protects us.

Some of us here today need Your strength, for our voices are barely heard above the noise of our problems. Others among us require your leading, in the confusion of life we are losing our sense of direction. There are those seeking quiet amidst the storm and those still learning how to trust. Lord God Lead us, Renew us and Speak to us, to calm the storm around us. Let your Holy Spirit sustain us in our challenges in life.

Lord, we want to offer our prayers for our nation and the nations around the world who are trying to recover from the human and economic toll of this pandemic. We know that by the power of your Holy Spirit, you will restore calmness into our world and assist humanity in our fight against this pandemic.

We lift before you people who are anxious about their jobs, and their businesses, people who are lonely, people who are mourning loved ones and those who are recovering from illnesses. Lord we pray for healing for them.

Lord equip Christian teachers, nurses and doctors and Christian professionals everywhere to work with your Holy spirit in the workplace, in schools and colleges and hospitals

We now pray for ourselves as people of God, we pray that you keep us strong and safe. Lord continuously renew our strength till the time when your church will be able to come together again to offer praises and glory for all that you have done for us. Amen

Final hymn

Stf 248 I heard the voice of Jesus say

[StF248 I heard the voice of Jesus say - YouTube](#)

<p>1 I heard the voice of Jesus say : 'Come unto me and rest ; lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast.' I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad, I found in him a resting-place, and he has made me glad.</p> <p>2 I heard the voice of Jesus say : 'Behold, I freely give the living water ; thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live.' I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream ; my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.</p>	<p>3 I heard the voice of Jesus say : 'I am this dark world's Light ; look unto me, your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright.' I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun ; and in that light of life I'll walk, till travelling days are done.</p> <p>Horatius N. Bonar (1808–1889)</p>
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Blessing

**Eternal God by whose power we are created and by whose love we are redeemed:
guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves to your service,
and live this day in love to one another and to you;
send us out with confidence in your word,
to tell the world of your saving acts,
and bring glory to your name. Amen.**