



# The Sunday Supplement

## Call to Worship

**Shout to the Lord, all the earth.**

**Serve the Lord with joy.**

Come before him with singing.

Know that the Lord is God.

**He made us, and we belong to him.**

We are his people, the sheep he tends.

**Come into his city with songs of thanksgiving.**

Come into his courtyards with songs of praise.

**Thank him, and praise his name.**

The Lord is good. His love continues forever.

Amen

### Highams Park Baptist Church Text for 2020

Romans 10:13-14

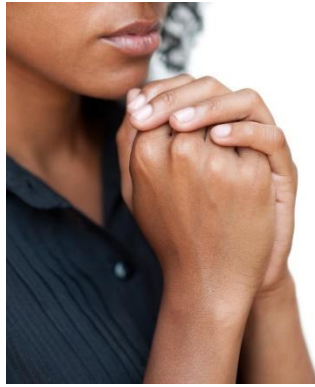
**Everyone who calls  
on the name of the  
Lord shall be saved.**

**And how are they  
to believe in one of  
whom they have  
never heard?**

**But how are they  
to call on one in  
whom they have  
not believed ?**

**And how are  
they to hear  
without  
someone to  
proclaim him?**





## Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

We pray for our neighbours, the houses and flats in the streets where we live. Everyone is affected by this virus and has had their lives changed. Be with those who are struggling, isolated in their homes and those whose normal support networks have disappeared. Make your presence known to those who are suffering with Covid or post Covid symptoms and use your healing power to it full.

We pray for our community, help us to support each other wherever there is need in practical or emotional ways. We pray for the children as more of them start going back to school, we pray that they are not scared but can understand why things are different so they can protect each other and everyone they come into contact with. We pray for all those working in our local community, teachers and school staff, shop workers and delivery drivers, medical staff and other emergency service staff help them to feel safe, minimise risk and remain healthy as they work to keep things going.

We pray for everyone who has experienced hate crime or prejudice, comfort them and give them strength as is their need. Please Lord, work through those who have the power to make decisions to ensure equality for all, as all live matter. Draw close to those who perpetrate injustice and violence, enter their hearts, show them your love and change their lives so that they can be like Paul. Let them walk their own road to Damascus so they can recognise their own failings and work to put things right.

Lastly Lord we pray for ourselves, our families and our friends. We all have different and complex needs but you know every one, shower blessings on each of us and help us spread the word of your love and salvation. We especially bring to you Joan, Jhana and Dorothy, surround them with your love and the people that can support them and fill them with your healing power.

Amen



## **Blessings** *by Mandy Edwards*



What do people often say when someone sneezes? Well I hope some of you know the answer, it's "Bless you". Probably, that is the only time most of us actually bless someone else. But do you know where it comes from and why we say it? Well I always thought that it came from the time in history during the plague. Apparently sneezing was a symptom of

the plague and Pope Gregory started saying bless you as a way of trying to protect people from catching the plague if they sneezed, but there are quite a few other suggestions of where it came from too like people thinking you could sneeze out your soul and so it was said to protect you from losing your soul. Some funny ideas people had in the past, but, Blessing someone when they sneeze has just sort of hung on in our traditions anyway. And you don't even have to know someone to bless them when they sneeze. Try blessing people when they sneeze out in the street, its quite amusing the reaction you sometimes get but you do get a lot of thank yous in my experience.

But what is a blessing? Something good that happens to someone or is wished for someone usually, we say children are a blessing, but I'm not sure parents would agree with that all the time. There is an old hymn about counting your blessings and numbering them to remind you what God has done for you. Frequently a blessing is thought of to be something given by God but it doesn't have to be a physical thing. God's love for us is a blessing, his healing is a blessing and his protection is a blessing and this is what we are usually talking about when we bless someone we are asking God to protect them.



We say a blessing at the end of our Sunday service as a way of asking God's protection on us all for the coming week, a very common one that you will be familiar with is: The Lord Bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. This one comes directly from the bible from the book of Numbers chapter 6 v24-26 Where God is talking to Moses and tells him how to bless the Israelites.

You can bless someone by doing something nice for them too. Why not try and do something each day this week to bless someone. You could phone someone who is on their own and feeling especially lonely because they are having to stay home at the moment; you could write someone a letter or draw them a picture. You could do some chores for someone or pray for someone. There are lots of things you could do. And don't forget to think too about all the things God has blessed you with and say thank you to him when you next talk to him.

# Reading – The bible as a collection of blessings

The bible tells us of Gods blessings from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations

Todays bible reading is not one section of the bible but are verses detailing the first and last of these blessings



## **Genesis 1 v21-23**

<sup>21</sup> So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.' <sup>23</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning – the fifth day.

## **Genesis 5 v1&2**

When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup> He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them 'Mankind'<sup>[a]</sup> when they were created.

## **Gen 8 21& 22, Gen 9 v1**

<sup>21</sup> The LORD said in his heart: 'Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though<sup>[a]</sup> every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

<sup>22</sup> 'As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.'

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.

## **Revelations 22 v12-14**

'Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

<sup>14</sup> 'Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.

This is the word of the LORD, Thanks be to God.

## Thought for the week



*by Mandy Edwards*

Looking for inspiration I turned to my online bible and the verse of the day was 1 Thessalonians 5 v11 'So comfort each other and give each other strength, just as you are doing now. It made me think about the strength and protection that we get from God. The Bible talks in many places about the protection of God, for example: Isaiah 41 v10 'So do not fear because I am with you, do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.' But our lives and this world are not perfect just because we have God's protection. Sickness, war, natural disasters, poverty all happen to people regardless of their belief in God.

We do know that God is all powerful and could offer the full protection we desire for our family, friends and ourselves but we don't know why he doesn't do this. God works in ways we do not understand and not having answers can be upsetting and hard to live with at times. It is important to remember to have faith that God wants the best for us and to have a fear of him, fear as in respect and trust, not being afraid.

Some years ago I came across a song called Blessings, written by Laura Story which talks about how we view God's blessings, and being a God of love and wanting the best for us maybe he was blessing us in ways we were not looking for. Such as protecting us from worse situations when we were dealing with tough things. A bit like Job in the bible, God allowed him to be tested, but he put limits on each stage. Laura had some tough things to deal with and it made her rethink how she had been taught about God's blessings as she grew up. In short, be good and be showered with God's blessings and she wrestled with the age old question of how can a good and powerful God allow such suffering in the world. It led her to think 'What if God's protection was stopping things from being worse than they were?' 'What if suffering brings us understanding? or brings us closer to him?' 'What if blessings come through raindrops or the storms in our lives?'

The trouble is we don't know God's plans, we don't know why he allows painful things to happen. We do know he is all powerful and all love and he can do anything that he wills, but we don't know why does he not always answer our prayers in the way or in the time that we want him to. We have to accept that so much of God is a mystery and we cannot expect to know the answers.

If God loves us as we believe, then God continues to shower us with blessings at all times and we need to look for them and trust in him. Maybe that bad thing that happened is a blessing because without God's intervention it would have been something worse, maybe it helped us grow, maybe it enabled us to help someone else or bring them to discover Christ for themselves. Maybe it deepened our faith or trust, or maybe we will never know why because we do not have the capacity to understand because we are not equal to God or, quite simply, the same as with Job, God chooses to not explain himself to us.

No matter what we are going through we still need to be thankful for our blessings and be a blessing to others, sharing God's light and love. Be reassured that the God of love has promised to strengthen us and help us, he says do not be afraid I am with you, do not be dismayed for I am your God.

Pray with me. Father God, I want to live in your shadow. When life is hard, and I don't know what to do, help me remember that You are with me and that I am never alone. I cannot face tomorrow without the promise of Your constant presence. Today I choose to walk and live under your protection. Fill me with your strength to face whatever lies ahead, draw me close, shower me with blessings and remind me to be thankful. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## **Blessings** *by Laura Story*

We pray for blessings  
We pray for peace  
Comfort for family, protection while we sleep  
We pray for healing, for prosperity  
We pray for Your mighty hand to ease our suffering  
And all the while, You hear each spoken need  
Yet love us way too much to give us lesser things

### **CHORUS**

***'Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops  
What if Your healing comes through tears  
What if a thousand sleepless nights  
Are what it takes to know You're near  
What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise***

We pray for wisdom  
Your voice to hear  
And we cry in anger when we cannot feel You near  
We doubt Your goodness, we doubt Your love  
As if every promise from Your Word is not enough  
And all the while, You hear each desperate plea  
And long that we'd have faith to believe

## CHORUS

When friends betray us  
When darkness seems to win  
We know that pain reminds this heart  
That this is not, this is not our home  
It's not our home

'Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops  
What if Your healing comes through tears  
And what if a thousand sleepless nights  
Are what it takes to know You're near  
What if my greatest disappointments  
Or the aching of this life  
Is the revealing of a greater thirst this world can't satisfy  
And what if trials of this life  
The rain, the storms, the hardest nights  
Are Your mercies in disguise



## **Blessing**

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 toward you  
And give you peace.