

## WCRKB Words of Hope 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020 Trinity 14

Tim Intro:-

In a time when many of us may be struggling to see where God is and where He is leading us during this pandemic, our OT reading this morning reminds us of the power and presence of God in times of danger and our NT reading reminds us that God is in ultimate control and that we are all accountable to Him.

...so Welcome to our Words of Hope for this Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September, the fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

*Cue opening music*

Opening Hymn:-

**At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,  
Every tongue confess Him, King of glory now:  
'Tis the Father's pleasure - we should call Him Lord,  
Who from the beginning was the Mighty Word.**

**At His voice creation sprang at once to sight,  
All the angels faces, all the hosts of light,  
Thrones and Dominations, stars upon their way,  
All the heavenly orders, in their great array.**

**Humbled for a season, to receive a Name  
From the lips of sinners unto whom He came,  
Faithfully He bore it - spotless to the last,  
Brought it back victorious, when from death He passed:**

**In your hearts enthrone Him; there let Him subdue  
All that is not holy, all that is not true:  
Crown Him as your captain in temptation's hour;  
Let His will enfold you in its light and power.**

**Truly, this Lord Jesus shall return again,  
With His Father's glory, with His angel train;  
For all wreaths of empire meet upon His brow,  
And our hearts confess Him - King of Glory now.**

*Caroline Maria Noel 1817-1877*

St John writes 'if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from every kind of wrong. So, let us confess our sins to Almighty God as we say together the words on the screen

**O Lord our God, enthroned on high,  
filling the whole earth with Your glory:  
holy, holy, holy is Your Name.**

**Our eyes have seen the King,  
the Lord Almighty; but our lips are unclean.**

**We cry to You in our sinfulness to take our guilt away,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

We say together the words of 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 for ever, AMEN.**

And the collect for this fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into Your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship You in spirit and in truth; 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.

Exodus 14.19–31 read by Jane Bass

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them.

<sup>20.</sup> It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

<sup>21.</sup> Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided.

<sup>22.</sup> The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

<sup>23.</sup> The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers.

- <sup>24.</sup> At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic.
- <sup>25.</sup> He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.'
- <sup>26.</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.'
- <sup>27.</sup> So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea.
- <sup>28.</sup> The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained.
- <sup>29.</sup> But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.
- <sup>30.</sup> Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.
- <sup>31.</sup> Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

Psalm 114 read by Tim

1. When Israel came out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of a strange tongue,
2. Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion.
3. The sea saw that, and fled; Jordan was driven back.
4. The mountains skipped like rams, the little hills like young sheep.
5. What ailed you, O sea, that you fled? O Jordan, that you were driven back?
6. You mountains, that you skipped like rams, you little hills like young sheep?
7. Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob,
8. Who turns the hard rock into a pool of water, the flint-stone into a springing well.

Hymn/song

**As the deer pants for the water,  
so my soul longs after You.  
You alone are my heart's desire  
and I long to worship You.  
*You alone are my strength, my shield,  
to You alone may my spirit yield.  
You alone are my heart's desire  
and I long to worship You.***

**I want you more than gold or silver,  
only You can satisfy.  
You alone are the real joy-giver  
and the apple of my eye.  
*You alone...***

**You're my Friend and You are my Brother,  
even though You are a King.  
I love You more than any other,  
so much more than anything.  
You alone...**

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Sung by the Benefice Choir

Read by TIM

Some words from Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 14 reading verses 1–12:-

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions.

<sup>2.</sup> Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables.

<sup>3.</sup> Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them.

<sup>4.</sup> Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

<sup>5.</sup> Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

<sup>6.</sup> Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God.

<sup>7.</sup> We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves.

<sup>8.</sup> If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

<sup>9.</sup> For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

<sup>10.</sup> Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God.

<sup>11.</sup> For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.'

<sup>12.</sup> So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Sermon from David

Just as we thought that perhaps we were progressing towards some kind of normality we hear on the news that the government has brought back restrictions limiting the number of people that can meet together. It makes us feel that we are wandering around in a kind of exile from our family, our friends and our church fellowships and can see no way of getting back to how we used to live pre-pandemic.

Our reading from the Old Testament book of Exodus records for us the account of the people of Israel wandering around in exile in the desert as they moved slowly towards the promised land, and today's reading finds them at an impasse, for their way is blocked by an expanse of water, the Red sea. With the Egyptian army hotly pursuing them to bring them back into slavery in Egypt their position looked hazardous.

It is a story that speaks into our situation and there are several things that might help us as we face our continuing exile.

### **1: God is with us.**

The angel of God that had been leading the camp of Israel through the desert now shifted and got behind them. And the Pillar of Cloud that had been in front also shifted to the rear. The Cloud was now between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. The Cloud enshrouded one camp in darkness and flooded the other with light. The two camps didn't come near each other all night.

NO matter what problems we might be facing in life we must hold onto the promise of God that he will never leave us. Jesus' parting words before his ascension into heaven was " I'll be with you, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."

Sometmes when life is hard we don't FEEL the presence of God, it is then that faith is tested and we must continue to TRUST in the promises of God.

### **2: God will protect us.**

It is interesting to note that the angel of the Lord that had been leading them throughout their wanderings in the desert now together with the Pillar of Cloud that God has sent them, moved to the rear. He may have moved out of their line of sight but he was still with them to protect them.

God was now stranding between the people of God and their enemies. I find that a helpful picture to reassure me that God is with us and on our side standing between that which might harm us. Do I mean that he will always protect me from this virus or indeed any other calamity that may come my way, certainly not. The protection that God gives us in Christ is protection from the power of the evil one who seeks to draw us away from loving and serving God.

### **3: God's will make a way.**

A popular modern worship song says *"God will make a way when there seems no other way. He works in ways we cannot see. He will make a way for me . he will be my guide, hold me closely by his side, he will make a way."*

For the people of Israel he opened up the way in a most dramatic way. <sup>21</sup> Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and GOD, with a terrific east wind all night long, made the sea go back. He made the sea dry ground. The seawaters split.

<sup>22-25</sup> The Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground.

For Israel God's rescue was dynamic and their exit strategy was obvious, and lay before them, for the riverbed became dry and their path ahead was clear. But in my experience very often the way ahead is much less clear, at times like that we may need to look harder for God's solution to our problems.

We can search his word, seek the advice of other Christians, pray and be open to God speaking to us by His Holy Spirit, use our God given intellects and use common sense, but above all we must hold to the promise that God will make a way, and that when we modify our actions we may well be part of the solution.

### **4: God's judgment is real.**

Amidst this story of hope and rescue for the people is the account of God's judgment that fell upon the pursuing Egyptian army.

GOD threw them into a panic. The wheels lietrly fell off their plan to destroy the popele of Israle when their chariots got stuck in the mud

The Egyptians said, "Run from Israel! GOD is fighting on their side and against Egypt!"

<sup>26</sup> GOD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea and the waters will come back over the Egyptians, over their chariots, over their horsemen.” ..... The waters returned, drowning the chariots and riders of Pharaoh’s army that had chased after Israel into the sea. Not one of them survived.

God's Judgment over evil, of sin, his punishment of the enemies of God's is not a popular concept in today's society, but the Bible clearly teaches about a coming judgment. Our Credal statements that we recite most Sundays says "He (Christ) will come to judge the living and the dead). Our Reading from Romans this morning reminds us again of this fact.

The apostle Paul is addressing the issue of disagreements in the church, disagreements about minor religious practice and observance. He begins by saying **14** Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently. He challenges arguments about eating certain foods, or thinking that some days should be set aside as holy whilst others think that each day is pretty much like any other. And I am sure there are many other minor issues that cause disharmony in church fellowships.

But Paul rightly sums it up by saying it " It's *God* we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not each other. ....We're all going to end up kneeling side by side in the place of judgment, facing God.

As scripture says “As I live and breathe,” God says, “every knee will bow before me; Every tongue will tell the honest truth that I and only I am God.”

So don't be unnecessarily critical of others You've got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God.

So as we enter into a further lock down let us hold on to God's promises that he is with us, that he will protect us and make a way for us, and that we could use this time of exile to re-evaluate our relationship with God to whom we are ultimately answerable to.

Song by David

**God will make a way  
Where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see  
He will make a way for me  
He will be my guide  
Hold me closely to His side  
With love and strength for each new day  
He will make a way, He will make a way  
(repeat)**

**By a roadway in the wilderness, He'll lead me  
And rivers in the desert will I see  
Heaven and Earth will fade  
but His word will still remain  
He will do something new today**

**God will make a way  
Where there seems to be no way  
He works in ways we cannot see  
He will make a way for me  
He will be my guide  
Hold me closely to His side  
With love and strength for each new day  
He will make a way, He will make a way**

*Don Moen*

We say together the words of the Creed:-

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day He rose again; He ascended into Heaven,  
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and He will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Geraldine lead prayers

Thank you for joining us for this Words of Hope

Next Sunday's Words of Hope will be on the Church Website from early next Sunday morning, so we look forward to you joining us then.

But our service of Public Worship in person next Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September will be at St Nicholas Wilden at 10am for a service of Morning Prayer. As ever you are very welcome to join us then but please let us know if you're coming to give us some idea of numbers to prepare for

We also value your generosity to support the church financially in our work serving our communities. If you are able to give via your bank please email us via the website for details, and you can also give online via our website as each of our 5 churches are going through the process of setting up online giving.

Blessing – The Peace of God