

THE SERVICE OF THE LORD'S DAY

Sunday 17th January 2021

Acknowledgement of Country

Welcome & CALL TO WORSHIP

HYMN: ATOK 413

Will you come and follow me
If I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
And never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
And never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echo true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

John Bell 1949-, Graham Maule 1958-

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EARLY WORD:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Words of Assurance

HYMN: TIS 597

**Master, speak, thy servant heareth,
waiting for thy gracious word,
longing for thy voice that cheereth;
Master, let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for thee:
what hast thou to say to me?**

**Speak to me by name, O Master,
let me know it is to me;
speak, that I may follow faster,
with a step more firm and free,
where the shepherd leads the flock
in the shadow of the rock.**

**Master, speak: and make me ready,
when thy voice is truly heard,
with obedience glad and steady
still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for thee:
Master, speak, O speak to me!**

Frances Ridley Havergal 1836-79

BIBLE READINGS:

1 Samuel 3:1-10

^{3:1} Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room;

³ the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

⁴ Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!"

⁵ and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

⁶ The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸ The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me."

Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy.

⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

John 1:43-51

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."

⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth."

⁴⁶ Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!"

⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?"

Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you."

⁴⁹ Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

⁵⁰ Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."

⁵¹ And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

MESSAGE: 1 Samuel 3:1-10; John 1:43-51;

It's a beautiful warm summer morning, and we're walking along by the Yarra River in Melbourne watching the rowing teams from the various schools training for their competitions. I note the calls and responses. As the coxswain calls through the megaphone, the rowers respond to the directions, with more or less success, according to the skills of the teams. There are so many different calls in life, and each call requires a response from someone – even something as simple as a call to the children to come inside.

How has God called people throughout history? We read of a call from God in the book of Samuel this morning. God called Samuel in the silence. Samuel was unaware of God, even though he worked in the temple, and so misunderstood, thinking Eli was calling him. However, God persisted, calling Samuel three times until he responded, not giving up on him. God needed Samuel to work for him, and with some help from Eli, Samuel was able to listen, and respond to God's call.

Jesus was beginning to gather his team of disciples, and had found Philip in Galilee. Just as, in our day, news spreads through our various networks, it was happening in those days. Philip excitedly found his friend Nathanael and explained that they had found the one Moses and the prophets had written about. He told Nathanael that this Jesus was from Nazareth, which made Nathanael very sceptical. If Moses and the prophets had written about this man, surely he would be of a royal or at least a high-status family. In addition to this, Nathanael came from Cana, another small town close to Nazareth, and there would have been some rivalry between these towns, as people were fiercely attached to their own places in those times. It's not surprising that he asked Philip if anything good could come out of Nazareth.

Nathanael was able to put his scepticism aside, and at least go with Philip to meet Jesus. Interestingly, Jesus commented on Nathanael as he approached, not waiting for Nathanael to greet him first, as was the custom in that time. He recognised Nathanael as a good and upright man, direct and honest, not deceitful in any way. Surprised at Jesus' comment, Nathanael asked how Jesus knew him.

Nathanael was amazed by Jesus knowing him, and knowing that Philip had found him sitting under the fig tree, without actually sighting him. We note that Jesus knew about his character, as well as where he had been sitting. This caused Nathanael to exclaim in astonishment that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, the King of Israel.

In Jesus' knowing Nathanael before he actually met him, we can see an example of the way God knows each of us. We are known whether we are aware of it or not. God knows what we are capable of, and also what will suit our personalities. He knows our backgrounds and what has caused us to develop in the way we have done.

God continues to call people in our day. It's not often a direct voice from God, as it was for Samuel, and not usually through a friend, as it was for Nathanael. Sometimes the networks, or connections of people, can be helpful in discerning this call, but the response to God's call clearly has to be made by the one being called. No one can decide for another whether they are called by God.

The awareness of a call from God can come very gradually, just a feeling that continues to persist. It's not necessarily about anything large or life changing, but can be a prompting to undertake a certain task, or to make a phone call or pay a visit. It could be a call to join a certain group, either in the community or the church. God knows where people can be helpful in certain ways.

Alternatively, it can be something very life changing, such as being called to ministry. I remember when Gareth was under consideration by Theological Hall to enter the Ministry, great emphasis was placed on whether he felt called by God to take up this work. There have been many who entered ministry later in life, having been involved in other roles into their middle age or beyond. God calls and persists, not just to the young people beginning their careers.

Jesus promised Nathanael that he would see greater things than the minor miracle of the fig tree if he continued to follow Jesus. He tells him of the heavens being opened, and angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man (Jesus himself). We have the benefit of hindsight; which Nathanael did not have at the time. But he was to see more and more evidence of the miracle of Jesus' life and work, culminating in Jesus' death and resurrection, and his ascension to be with God, his Father.

Nathanael could not know or predict the way ahead if he responded to this call by Jesus, and neither can any human being. But we know that Jesus' prediction of even greater things was true, and we can trust in that promise whenever we respond to God's call, in small or life changing events.

Pastor Miriam Darlow

HYMN: TIS 538

**Feed us now, Bread of life,
in this holy meal;
let us know your love anew:
we hunger for you.
Feed us now, Bread of life,
come and live within;
let your peace be ours today,
Lord Jesus, we pray.**

**Piece of bread, cup of wine:
Lord, this food is good:
love and mercy come to us
your promise we trust.
Piece of bread, cup of wine:
who can understand
how his mercy works in these?
Yet, Lord, we believe.**

**God is here, O so near,
nearer than our thoughts.
Stay with us where'er we go;
Lord, help us to grow.
God is here, O so near,
in this heaven's meal.
May we always feed on you -
on the bread that is true.**

Robin Mann 1949-

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Great Prayer of thanksgiving:

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give our thanks and praise

Thanks and praise, glory and honour are rightly yours,
our Lord and God

For you alone are worthy

In time beyond the dreaming you brought forth life
out of darkness, and in the love of Christ your Son
you set man and woman at the heart of creation

And so we praise you with the faithful of every time and place,
joining with the choirs of angels and the whole creation
in the eternal hymn

**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,

Hosanna in the highest

In the fullness of your mercy you became one with us
in Jesus Christ, who gave himself up for us on the cross

By water and the Spirit you open the kingdom
to all who believe, and welcome us to your table:
for by grace we are saved, through faith.

The Institution of the Lord's Supper:

For on the night of his betrayal he took bread;
And when he had given thanks He broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying
"Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me"

After supper, he took the cup,
And again, giving thanks He gave it to his disciples, saying,
"Drink from this, all of you.

This is my blood of the new covenant
Which is shed for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me"

We pray to you God of love, send your Holy Spirit upon us
And what we do here;
That these gifts, touched by your Spirit
May be signs of life and love
To us and all the world. **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 this day our daily bread
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen**

The breaking of the bread:

The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.
The cup we take is a sharing in the blood of Christ.
The gifts of God for the people of God.

Jesus, Lamb of God

Have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins

Have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world

Grant us your peace.

The Communion:

Take and eat this bread in remembrance that Christ died for us
Drink this cup in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for us

Closing Prayer – *let us pray together*

**Father of all, we give thanks and praise
That when we were still far off,
You met us in your Son and brought us home
Dying and living, he declared your love,
Gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
We who drink his cup bring life to others;
We whom the Spirit lights give light to the world
Anchor us in this hope that we have grasped,
So we and all your children shall be free,
And the whole earth live to praise your name;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

OFFERING:

NOTICES:

HYMN: TIS 658

I, the Lord of sea and sky.
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright,
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord; is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night;
I will go. Lord. if you lead me
I will hold your people in my heart*

I, the Lord of snow and rain.
I have borne my people's pain:
I have wept for love of them,
they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame;
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord

*Daniel L. Schutte 1947-
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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

SENDING OUT:

HYMN: TIS 778 "Shalom"