

Sunday 10th January

Welcome to our home worship sheets. Today we are starting a new series based on the book "Breathing under water" by Richard Rohr. We'll be looking at 12 steps to greater wholeness, seeking transformation and a deepening of our relationship with God.

Let us start with a prayer together.

Loving God we come to you this morning trusting in your love and your goodness. Help us to hear your voice this morning, help us to learn more of you and help us to come to you with all that we are.

In the precious name of Jesus we pray. Amen

Psalm 95:1-6:

O come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!¹

Our first song this morning invites the whole world to hear the call of the God who loves us. We're going to sing/read/listen to "Far and near hear the call" (Source 90) [Click here to find the song on YouTube.](#)

Thanksgiving:

We're going to take a moment to give thanks and praise to God for all the ways He looks after us, and for all the blessings we've received.

Take a moment now to remember some of the things you are particularly grateful for.

Father God, we thank you for all the ways you bless us and look after us. We thank you for all that we've thought about and so much more. Mostly we thank you for giving us your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through Jesus we can know you more and find life in all its fulness. Thank you for your love. Amen

A part of giving thanks and praise and worship to God is remembering the money that we offer towards the work of the kingdom. Let's take a moment to thank God and to pray for his will to be done with this money.

Generous God, we thank you for the resources you have blessed us with. Help us to know that all comes from you and all belongs to you. And help us to use wisely all that we commit to your work so that your love may be declared and your kingdom come here in Wendover and in the wider world. In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Reading: Romans 7:14-25

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. ¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷ But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. ²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. ²² For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, ²³ but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.¹

Reflection: Elly

I don't know about you, but I don't make New Year's resolutions anymore, and the reason is very simple, I don't want to face the failure when my good intentions come to nothing before the end of the month! Why is it that good habits are hard to develop and easy to get out of, and bad habits are easy to develop and hard to get out of? Our passage today certainly seems true to so much of what we see in the way the world works and, if we are honest with ourselves, the way we really are.

I suppose that the first thing to say about this passage is that when Paul talks of the "flesh" he is not saying that everything to do with our bodies is bad. When Paul talks about the "flesh" here, he means our ego, our self-centred, me-first self, the old self that "was crucified with Christ" (Rom6:6). That old self doesn't disappear the instant we say "Jesus is Lord", rather we are transformed and renewed bit by bit as we follow Jesus and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives.

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Reading this passage could make us feel completely hopeless, we can't do the good that we want to and know is right, and what we do is the wrong things that we don't want to! So what is the point in even trying?! Well I think this is precisely the reason why the first of the 12 steps starts right here, there is no point in us trying to do better, and be better. We need to start from knowing that we can't save ourselves. We need to start from admitting we are not independent and self-sufficient. Only then can we start to look for the grace, mercy, love and strength that God is longing to pour out on us. We cannot and shouldn't even try to climb the ladder to get up to where God is, what we need to do is put out our bucket to receive from him.

I think that this concept of being powerless to change ourselves, just reliant on God, can be even more difficult to grasp when we have been disciples for a long time. It's so easy to feel ashamed because we STILL have thoughts and reactions that we know are wrong. It's easy as well to feel "I'm never going to get this right" and give up hope and stop even wanting to change! But actually, coming to God as we are, and accepting his mercy and grace day by day, knowing that we can't do this abundant life of joy and peace in our own strength, that is the key that sets us free! Jesus' promise is "if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36) so let's invite him to do that transforming work in our lives day by day.

Questions:

- 1. What is your reaction to this passage?**
- 2. How does this passage help us to understand God's love?**
- 3. What can we do practically to help us to depend on God?**

As we think about God's transforming work in our lives let's use this next song to help us to come to him. We are going to sing/read/listen to "Just as I am" (Source 306) [Click here to find the song on YouTube.](#)

Prayers for others:

Father God as we think about this world today we see so much difficulty and despair. We see the terrible situation in Israel where Palestinians are being denied the coronavirus vaccine, we see the unrest in the USA and Hong Kong, continued conflicts in Ethiopia, Mali, Central African Republic and rising tensions with Iran as they re-start their nuclear programme. And we know these things are just the tip of the iceberg. Precious children starve and the tools of war increase, leaders care more about

personal gain than about the countries they lead and the people that they are supposed to serve. Father we can't take it all in but you know each adult and child that is hurting, you see injustice, you care. Father we ask you to move, to help, to inspire leaders and those in power. Lord where we your people should be part of the solution, please show us, nudge us, help us to see and to do what is needed.

God of life and hope bring your love and light to our world today

Father God, here in the UK the lockdown is causing extra problems for so many of our most vulnerable people, some children are struggling to learn at home, some are going hungry, some are not safe. Many people are worried about their jobs and businesses, there are many people who are lonely, and some are struggling with mental health. Our government needs help and wisdom to make good choices for our land. Father you know each adult and child that is hurting, you see injustice, you care. Father we ask you to move, to help, to inspire leaders and those in power. Lord where we your people should be part of the solution, please show us, nudge us, help us to see and to do what is needed.

God of life and hope bring your love and light to our Land today

Father God we also want to bring to you our friends and families, our neighbours and those we know about who need your love and your light in their lives today. Please take a moment now to remember either quietly or out loud those you know who are in need of God's touch today.....

God of life and hope bring your love and light to our families and our communities today.

Loving Father, Son who gave up his life for us, Life-giving Holy Spirit, we bring all our prayers to you today trusting in your love and your goodness.

Amen

Let us pray together by sharing 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.

To finish let us sing/read/listen to a song that reminds us that our lives depend on God and his goodness "My hope is built" (Source 365)

[Click here to find the song.](#)

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore, Amen