**Morning Praise @ Home 25th August 2024**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Reading Luke 13: 10 – 17

### Reflection from Ruth

At first glance our reading this morning doesn’t feel that relevant to our lives. We might have a general feeling that we should keep the Sabbath quiet, but modern lives don’t allow for that. People work shifts, lots of children's activities are on a Sunday, some people only have time to do their shopping and housework on a Sunday, so it’s just not possible.
To find the deeper meaning, I went back to an old favourite of mine, NT Wright.
Wright’s take on this is that this woman was probably a well-known local character. In a village where everyone’s life was public, people would know who she was and how long she’d been like this. Luke says she had ‘a spirit of weakness’, which probably means simply that nobody could explain medically why she had become bent double. Some today think that her disability had psychological causes; some people probably thought so then as well, though they might have said it differently. Maybe somebody had persistently abused her, verbally or physically, when she was smaller, until her twisted-up emotions communicated themselves to her body, and she found she couldn’t get straight. Even after all the medical advances of the last few hundred years, we are very much aware that such things happen without any other apparent cause.

Even though there is a power struggle Jesus doesn’t hesitate.

Now, we can get the point about untying the animal and untying the woman. But what is he saying about her? First, she’s a daughter of Abraham; second, she has been tied up for 18 years by Satan, the one who has Israel as a whole in his grip, the one against whom Jesus has won an initial victory!

What Jesus is doing for this poor woman is what he is longing to do for Israel as a whole. The enemy, the accuser, has had Israel in his power these many years, and Jesus’ kingdom-message is the one thing that can free her. But Israel’s insistence on tight boundaries, including the rigid application of the Sabbath law, is preventing it happening. Unless the kingdom-message heals her, there is no hope. Jesus is still hoping that there is time; that Israel, bent double and unable to stand upright, will be untied from her bondage in a great Sabbath celebration, a great act of liberation. Jesus intends that by going to Jerusalem this will all come to pass. And then there are the little sayings, which Luke at least regards as explanations of what has just happened. The kingdom is like a tiny seed producing a huge tree – which can then accommodate all the birds in the sky. One action in one synagogue on one Sabbath; what can this achieve? But when Jesus sows the seed of the kingdom, nobody knows what will result. Or the kingdom as a small helping of leaven, hidden apparently in the flour. It seems insignificant and ineffectual; but before long the whole mixture is leavened. One healing of one woman – but every time you break the satanic chains that have tied people up, another victory is won which will go on having repercussions.

And this applies to us today- if our politics allow for another person to live in fear or with less dignity than we have, *we* are binding the kingdom of God.
If our attitude prevents people from coming into the church to hear the good news, *we* are binding the kingdom of God.
Like the Pharisees, we may see ourselves as holy by keeping God’s laws, but if anything we do or say prevents another person having wholeness and healing, we are binding the kingdom of God.
But of course, this good news is for us as well. Whatever ails us in our lives, spiritual, physical, emotional, we will all eventually receive the healing we are promised.

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Ron**

Father God, we gather here today under your care and protection. Thank you for your loving kindness that never fails us. We thank you for those who are with us, that you would guide our thoughts and actions to bring you glory. Strengthen us and fill us with your peace and grant, we pray, that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error but always be seen to stand in the bright light of Your truth.

God we cry out to you on behalf of the people seriously affected by the conflict in Gaza and Israel. Our hearts break at the devastation and suffering that we see, and we know it breaks yours, too. We pray for an immediate ceasefire, an end to the violence, and the release of all hostages. We pray for world leaders with influence in the region to make wise decisions that lead to a lasting peace, and we pray that you will stretch out your mighty hand to bring an end to this war.

We cry out for people who have been injured or traumatised, who have lost loved ones or their homes. Please provide everything they need and be their comfort, their hope, their healer, and their safe refuge.

We pray also that Your peace will fill the hearts and minds of all who are suffering.

Father God, we thank you for all those who help our community to run smoothly because of their jobs, voluntary work or neighbourliness. Help us to be supportive and encouraging and to step in to situations where we can also serve. Bless our neighbours and strengthen those who are working in your name to bring healing and comfort to those in need.

Merciful God, we raise before you this morning all those who are sick, sad or lonely and those who are brave and patient when things are going wrong. We pray that they may be aware of your comforting presence and know that in your hands they are safe and loved.  We especially pray for friends, relatives and those from our Parish as we name them in our hearts so let them feel your love in their lives.

Father God, we also remember those who have departed this life. Be with the bereaved in their loneliness and give them the faith to look beyond their present troubles to your Son Jesus Christ who died and rose again and who lives forevermore.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**