

# HAEBEA Home Worship: No.71

4<sup>th</sup> July 2021 – Revd John Buxton

We come to no. 71 of the Area services, and the end may be in sight; but for the moment we still face the restrictions of lockdown. We come with mixed feelings – some frustrated that the vaccination programme has successfully reduced hospitalisation and death from Covid to a very low level, but restrictions were extended – some reluctant after 15 months of isolation to venture out and mix with other people – some cautious and insisting on obeying rules, even if they were designed for a pre-vaccination era. But wherever we are on the spectrum, today's lessons have something important to say to us. So, let us pause to worship and listen for God's word to us.

## Opening Prayer

O Lord our God, we recognise your presence with us wherever we are,  
our Creator and our Sustainer.

We thank you above all for your love shown to us in the life,  
death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

May your Holy Spirit guide us as we reflect on your word this day.

In the name of Christ we pray. Amen

“Son of God, if your free grace  
again has raised me up,  
called me still to seek your face  
and given me back my hope.”

## Gospel - Mark 6.1-13

Mark chapter 6 begins with Jesus in the synagogue at Nazareth, and Mark tells Jesus' rejection there from a personal aspect -- that of the family and friends who think they know who Jesus is and cannot accept his role as Messiah. Luke's account (4 vv16-30) of the rejection in the synagogue at Nazareth sets it in the universal context where Jesus portrays his ministry in a quotation from the prophet Isaiah (61 vv1-2). Both accounts set rejection against the positive affirmation of the good news - Luke by ending the quotation “ announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people” and Mark by following up the story with the sending out of the disciples to proclaim his message. Rejection is followed by grace.

## Epistle - 2 Corinthians 12.2-10

In the last four chapters of our second letter to the church in Corinth Paul vigorously defends himself from people who were challenging his ministry as an apostle. In chapter 11 he had listed all the sufferings he had endured as an apostle from the authorities, both Jewish and Roman, and the physical and mental stress of his role. In the lesson for today which follows he speaks of God's assurance to him in dealing with his “thorn in the flesh”. 12.8 “My grace is all you need; for my power is strongest, when you are weak”. Words which I am sure were in Charles Wesley's mind when he wrote the following hymn (StF 336).

1. Son of God, if your free grace  
again has raised me up,  
called me still to seek your face  
and given me back my hope.  
Still your timely help afford  
and all your loving-kindness show;  
*keep me, keep me, gracious Lord,  
and never let me go!*

2. By me , O my Saviour, stand  
in sore temptation's hour;  
save me with your outstretched hand  
and show forth all your power;  
O be mindful of your word,  
your all-sufficient grace bestow:  
*keep me, keep me, gracious Lord,  
and never let me go!*

3. Never let me leave your breast,  
from you, my Saviour, stray.  
You are my support and rest,  
my true and living way;  
my exceeding great reward,  
in heaven above and earth below:  
*keep me, keep me, gracious Lord,  
and never let me go!*

Jesus knew the cost of rejection but continued to offer the promise of grace. Paul had suffered much in his ministry of proclaiming Christ but had the assurance of grace. After fifteen months of lockdown with its stress and the isolation of shielding for all generations, the offer of the grace of God to each one of us remains true.

## Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we come to you as we are with all the stress of the lockdown,  
with all our weaknesses and failures...

O be mindful of your word,  
your all-sufficient grace bestow:  
*keep me, keep me, gracious Lord, and never let me go!*

Lord, we thank you that in you we have our hope,  
and the promise of eternal life in your presence...

You are my support and rest,  
my true and living way;  
my exceeding great reward,  
in heaven above and earth below:  
*keep me, keep me, gracious Lord, and never let me go!*

Lord, for your world and its peace, we pray...

Lord, for medical and mental health services, we pray...

Lord, for your church around the world we pray...

Lord, for our Area and my church, I pray...

Lord, for my friends and family I pray...

Lord, for all in need we pray...

In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.



## The Lord's Prayer

**Benediction** The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessing of God the Father,  
and the Fellowship of The Holy Spirit be with us all this day and for evermore. Amen.