

The things that bring life.

Opening

In the name of our God

The merciful, the loving, the liberator

Thank you for allowing me to join you wherever you are

Today, we are looking at a part of a warm heartfelt letter that Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica.

You see the church was doing well, but the folk were getting tired and weary of a situation they had no control over. Paul knew that they were a church of strong faith and he wanted to build on that, he wanted to enliven them and encourage them to continue to build each other up even as they were growing more and more weary.

Let us come into this time bringing all of who we are and all of who we want to be ... knowing that we all long for the things that bring life

Gathering

What are the tools we use

to build each other up?

What can we use in our own way

with the skill we need to help each other along?

How do we build each other up?

Do we use our faith
Do we use our care
Do we use our hands
Our heads our hearts?
What can we use in our own way
with the skill we need to help each other along?

What are the things we dare to claim
to help us stand amidst difficulties?

In a world that's constantly changing
we see the example of one
who has lifted us through the mist of ages
with a Love and Grace that continually builds us up.
One who used the tools of justice, peace, relationship
and yes
faith
and care
and hands
and head and heart.

The very things we can use
with our own skill, in our own way, to help each other
along.

Approaching God in Prayer

Loving God

May we be held in faith and care

And recognise that these are but parts
Of the many gifts we can use
To encourage, to enliven, to build each other up
And bring us to renewed life.
ready to face a new day, a new week, and new challenges.

May we remember that we are Your children of the day, so
that we remain fully awake and aware.
From generation to generation, you call us from chaos to
life,
Even as we confine ourselves with the trappings of this
world,
You move us to the things that bring life even in the face of
death.

May we know your love and hope as it fills every aspect of
our lives even the times of sorrow and trouble
and give us the strength to carry-on
even in the sight of those who would try to pull us down.

Forgive us for the times when we have turned our backs
on you
In your forgiveness and Grace
Fill us with renewed vigour and life giving enthusiasm.
Help us to encourage one another and live as true children
of a loving God. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

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 this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Hymn 543 :

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us - tune : Mannheim

Introduction

"You are all children of the light and children of the day."
Paul tells his sisters and brothers of the church at
Thessalonica "So then" he goes on ... "be awake and be
sober". You see many at the church expected Jesus to
return in their lifetime, so for them it was a time of advent,
Jesus could return at any moment.

We are just about on the verge of the advent season, when we watch and wait for Christmas. But this was different, they were watching for the second coming of Christ, as we should be too.

However, there was a problem, because, many of the believers in Thessalonica were growing tired of waiting and some were becoming uncertain. Members were passing away and yet Jesus had not yet returned. So Paul wrote an encouraging and reassuring letter to what was a thriving and missional church. He told them to be awake because Christ will come "like a thief in the night" and he encouraged them further when he told them in the letter, that of course as a church they will be prepared, because they already know all of what he is saying.

How do they already know it? because they live in the light, they live in the faith and life of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He told them to continue therefore exactly what they are accustomed to doing, encouraging one another and building each other up. Doing the things that bring life.

Scripture Reading : 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Address : The things that bring life

A new hymn

During one of our group zoom after church sessions we were talking about the things we are doing that help bring us life and thinking of these difficult times, we looked at the verse, "how shall we sing a new song" and we set the church a number of challenges one was to write a new song to reflect our Christian challenges for today.

Heather Dibbs has written a new song and we sing it today to a familiar tune.

Hymn : Troubled Times - 2020

Heather Dibbs

Music: Beauty for Brokenness.....

God, we cry out to you - in our despair,
Our Nations are, suf-fering - hear now our prayer -
Comfort the dy-ing, alone in their need -
for ill folk, and lonely ones, we now intercede-

**"My People, I hear - Come now, draw near,
Place all your cares upon Me,
I'll give you My Peace, which never will cease,
Just Trust in me, and from fear..... you'll be free"**

God, we cry out to you - for those full of care,
The hungry and, jo-bless, great burdens to bear,
Problems with Mental Health; treatment still due,
those, waiting, for their tests, caught, in the queue-

**"My People I hear - I say - Do not Fear,
I am your God - don't dismay,
I'll make you strong, the wh-ole day long,
I'll hold you close, with my hand... all the way."**

God we cry out to you - for Family and Friend,
those needing, to stay home - on others' depend,
victims of vio-lence, unable to hide,
For fears, for the fu..ture, with no-one to guide

**"My people, I hear - to Me you are dear,
In me, you'll find refuge and strength,
I'll give you re-lief, and through your belief,
you will find courage today... and at length."**

**"My People, I cry for you - I died for you all,
Not-one is exclu..ded, who answers My call,
Come to Me, with your need, and you will be blest,
Be-lieve, and I will give....eter..nal rest.**

**Come to Me now - do not.. delay,
give Me your heart and your soul,
I'll lighten your load, lead you, on life's road,
My Holy Spirit will ma...ke you whole."**

Used with permission

Prayers of intercession

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.
2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

In these times and this season,
May we find within us the things we need
To encourage and share with the people around us
May we stand firm for the things that bring life
For truth, justice, equity and peace.

We pray for the things that bring life
to those who are struggling to cope physically and
mentally
For those struggling with illness and sorrow
For those with difficulties in the home
and in their neighbourhoods
May we stand firm for the things that bring life
For truth, justice, equity and peace.

We pray for those struggling to feed themselves and their
families
Those who find it difficult to cope with continued
restrictions
May we stand firm and use our Gods given tools
To bring life, to stand for truth, justice, equity and peace
for all people.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.
2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you
had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to
everlasting you are God.

Amen

Hymn 523 :

**Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising, - tune : Sing
hosanna**

give me joy in my heart, I pray;
give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
keep me praising till the break of day.

*Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna!
Sing hosanna to the King of kings!
Sing hosanna! Sing hosanna!
Sing hosanna to the King!*

Give me peace in my heart, keep me loving ...

Give me love in my heart, keep me serving ...

Traditional

Blessing

Let us go with Jesus, the light who guides us on our way.
May our hope be that the Sun of Justice will rise one
morning on all humankind.

May the God of Peace, our constant companion,
lead us along paths of solidarity and hope,
and give us the joy of being united in God's love.
Amen.

Hymn 21 : Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise God, all creatures here below,
praise God above, ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Thomas Ken