



Sunday 14th March 2021
Shelter –
Finding Security



Welcome

Greeting

Leader Praise God who loves us.
All Praise God who cares.

Hymn Tell out my soul

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of His word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name!
Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of His word!
Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore!

Mother's Day Greetings

'I'm the mom' video

Confession

Leader Your love gives us life from the moment of conception.
But we fail to live as your children.
Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy

You call us to do good. But we seek our own good.
Christ, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy

You hear us when we cry for help.
But we ignore the cries of others.
Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy

Absolution *(we are reminded that God forgives all who repent)*

Leader 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

All Amen.

Collect *(Prayer for the day)*

Leader God of love, passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

Hymn Purify my heart

Purify my heart,
let me be as gold and precious silver;
purify my heart,
let me be as gold, pure gold.

Refiner's fire, my heart's one desire

*is to be holy, set apart for You, Lord;
I choose to be holy,
set apart for You, my Master,
ready to do Your will.*

Purify my heart,
cleanse me from within and make me holy;
purify my heart,
cleanse me from my sin, deep within.
Refiner's fire . . .

Words and music by Brian Doerksen

Opening activity Finding security video

Bible readings

Ezekiel 34:11-16 – Mark Lemprière, St Mark's

¹¹" For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. ¹²As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. ¹³I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. ¹⁴I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. ¹⁶I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

John 10:7-17 – Clive Boyle, All Souls'

⁷Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- ¹⁵just as the



Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again.

Sermon – Rev Sam Waako - Security and Joy

This week I'm continuing with our sermon series this Lent looking at 'Spiritual essentials for real life', and the focus this week is on 'Finding security', ultimately in Jesus, who promises and invites us to a life of both permanent and solid security and joy.

Various dictionaries have different definitions for security, but the one that caught my attention especially for the purpose of this talk, is the one that defined security as, *"a state of being or feeling secure; freedom from fear, anxiety, danger, doubt etc; a state or sense of safety or certainty."*

With this definition in mind, I immediately began to reflect on things on me that speak of my earthly securities; I looked at my wedding ring and thought of my relationships, my wife who perhaps without her, I highly doubt I would have turned out to be the person I have become if it was not for the support and the security, I have in her. And as it's mothering Sunday, I also thought about my Mum who up to this day finds it difficult to believe that I am grown up but whose prayers and support I continue to value tremendously. On mothering Sunday as well, we also reflect on the 'Mother Church', this was the original tradition from the 16th century, when people on every fourth Sunday of Lent would return to their Mother Church for a special service. The 'Mother -Church' offered and continues to offer a sense of belonging and security that many people have missed during this lockdown.

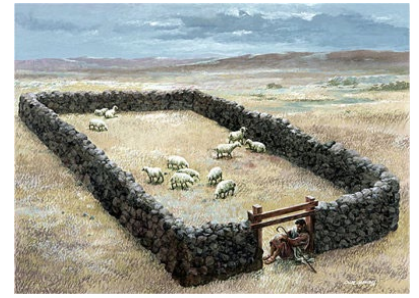
I then looked in my wallet and was surprisingly amazed by how many cards (some of which were useless) I had. But two stood out for me; one was my bank card and the other a 'Bio metric card. The latter simply means I have the security to live in this country, work, have all the privileges any national would have. I only managed to get this card in 2017 after 8 years of living in this country. Prior to this, among other things, I had to pay for the NHS, I only had right to stay in this country if I had a job (if I didn't have a job I had 14/28 days to leave), I had to renew my visa, sometimes every year costing me lots of money, and I couldn't even be ordained without this card...and I can guarantee you, that's not the way to live.

But the thing with all these securities, great as some of these might be, all these things are sure we all agree are fragile, they can be attained and lost in just a moment.

Our Bible readings this week once again remind us that only Jesus offers us the security and stability that we need, not just in this life, but for eternal life as well.

Jesus is the source of our permanent, solid security and ultimately our deepest joy. Why? Because He loves us completely, and joy comes ultimately from being loved. And the love of Jesus is love that is perfect and eternal.

So far in this series we have heard Jesus refer to himself as; 'The way the truth and the life', 'the bread of life', the light of the world', and in our gospel reading in John 10.7-17, Jesus refers to Himself as both the gate (door in other translations) and the good shepherd to the sheep (His followers).



And I found the setting of this passage really helpful to understand what Jesus was trying to communicate to His audience. Jesus was in a village setting, in the open country, where shepherds led the sheep for grazing. Overnight, the sheep were placed in a roughly constructed round stone walled enclosure. Inside the closure, the sheep were safe as long as the entrance was secured by the shepherd ~ who especially in small sheep pens, slept across the entrance as there was no door and no door keeper.

In this type of sheep pen, the shepherd also functioned as the gate, letting the sheep in and protecting them. Jesus is the gate to God's salvation for us. He offers us access to safety and security. Christ is our protector. In John 14.6 Jesus says, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me."*

And I speak from experience when I say Jesus truly gives life. The life He gives now is abundantly richer and fuller, and not just that, it's eternal and yet begins immediately. And this is because of His overflowing forgiveness, love, guidance, security and so on

In the Ezekiel reading, the verbs that demonstrate what the good shepherd does include searching, seeking, deliver, gather, feed, strengthen and so on... God promises to look after His sheep (that is you and me), providing for them with good pasture, caring for the injured and weak, and shepherding the flock with Justice.

And our response to all of this is to recognise the two characteristics mentioned in both these passages about the sheep.

- 1) They realize that a full life, both now and eternally can only be found in Jesus. Everything else is a bonus. In fact, Matthew 6.33, one of my favourite Bible passages, Jesus says, "...seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things (our other securities) will be given to you as well."

All the things I mentioned at the start, great as some of them can be, they will never be enough. We have all heard of the story of Shamim Begum, who I suppose had a Bio metric card like mine at some point, but now no longer has the security of citizenship it offers. Only Jesus can offer us permanent residence in the Kingdom and security and joy.

- 2) His sheep know His voice and follow Him.

I've never looked after sheep but I grew up looking after cattle during my school holidays staying with my grandparents, some herds had over 200 cows, with just two of us taking them sometimes for miles looking for green pastures. But these cows, however far they would wonder off, one single sound of what I would say is equivalent to whistling but a bit

louder, they would all gather to wherever the sound came from. Because they had been accustomed and tuned in to this sound.

And Jesus says, His sheep know His voice, and not just that, they follow Him. When these cows heard this sound, they followed... we just have to pray for a spirit of obedience to the voice of God, and to give us the boldness to do all He has called us to do.

The good news is that Jesus has already laid down His life for His sheep, he has conquered death, and now we are invited and offered this security balanced with Joy. Let our hope and trust ultimately be in the one that is truly solid and truly permanent.

Hymn **King of love and grace (Guardian)**

King of love and grace
My guardian
All my hopes and fears
Are in Your hands
I'm in Your hands

Where You go I'll go
Show me the way
Every step I take
Be now my guide
God on my side

*You go before me,
You're there beside me
And if I wander Love will find me
Goodness and mercy
Will always follow
You go before me My Guardian*

When I hear You say
Trust and obey
I will walk by faith
And not by sight
God of my life
So let Your kingdom come
Your will be done
All Your promises will stand
Forever
You're my defender
You go before me . . .

You are God our great defender
Strong in love forever faithful
We are Yours
and we will trust in You

Creed *(We stand to declare our faith)*

**All We believe in God the Father, from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Everyday Faith – *Steve Green, placement student*

Prayers ~ *Rev Jonathan Thomas*

Let us pray. The response to
of ages is **Hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, you know well the blessing an earthly home can
bring: Thank you for all the love and security we have received in our homes, especially
from our mothers and those who have nurtured us from our earliest years. We pray that



Rock

mothers may never lose heart nor ever be taken for granted, but receive from their children the honour and love you showed to your mother, Mary, even as you were suffering on the Cross. Bless and keep them all, for your love's sake.

Rock of ages Hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we ask you to bless all who live alone, those who have lost their partner in marriage, those who have never married, those unable to have children, those whose families are grown up and away from home and those who have outlived other members of their families and many of their friends and all who find this day difficult: Be with them to assure them of your love and of their value to you every moment of their lives, and enable them to rejoice in the fellowship of your Church on earth and in heaven.

Rock of ages Hear our prayer

Lord of the church, we thank you for our Mother church, whether here in the parish or elsewhere, where we have grown and been nurtured in our faith. We pray for all who lead our churches remembering especially our archbishops Justin and Stephen, our Diocesan Bishops Andrew and Jo and Pope Francis. Bless them in their leadership and nurturing roles, give them wisdom in the decisions they make and fill them with your Holy Spirit that they may walk the way of truth and peace.

Rock of ages Hear our prayer

Creator God, we thank you for this beautiful world you have made us, yet which is full of danger. We pray for all those seeking security at the moment. For refugees with nowhere to call home and an uncertain future; for those who are persecuted for their faith especially in Nigeria, China, North Korea and Pakistan; for those longing for peace in their land, especially in Yemen, Ethiopia and Myanmar; For those in nations where COVID is still rapidly spreading, especially Brazil, India and Eastern Europe. Grant them protection and their leaders courage and wisdom.

Rock of ages Hear our prayer

Caring Lord, you shepherd us as your beloved flock, watching over us and protecting us. We pray for all we know who need your love and protection at this time remembering especially Eileen & Peter Bliss, Patrick Chapman, Enid Hardman, John Hunter, Lynda Kirk, Trevor Lloyd, Catherine Mc Cormack, Olive Park, Joy Storkey and Malcolm Pritchard. And in a moment's silence we bring others to you that are especially on our heart... Bring healing and peace to them in body, mind and spirit and may they know your saving grace.

Rock of ages Hear our prayer

And let us say together the family prayer that Jesus taught us:

The Lord's prayer

Leader As our Saviour has taught us so we pray.

All **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.**

Notices – see *N&N*

Hymn **Rock of ages**

Rock of ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in Thee;
let the water and the blood,
from Thy riven side which flowed,
be of sin the double cure,
cleansing me from its guilt and power.

Not the labour of my hands
can fulfil Thy law's demands;
could my zeal no respite know,
could my tears for ever flow,
all for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
simply to Thy cross I cling;
naked, come to Thee for dress,
helpless, look to Thee for grace;
foul, I to the fountain fly;
wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
when mine eyes shall close in death,
when I soar through tracts unknown,
see Thee on Thy judgement throne;
Rock of ages, cleft for me,
let me hide myself in Thee.

Words by Augustus Montague Toplady

Closing Prayer & Blessing

All Thank you God for the love of our mothers:
thank you God for their care and concern;
thank you God for the joys they have shared with us;
thank you God for the pains they have borne for us;
thank you God for all that they give us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Leader May God, who gave birth to all creation, bless us:
may God, who became incarnate by an earthly mother, bless us:

may God, who broods as a mother over her children, bless us.
May almighty God bless us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

All Amen.

The Dismissal

Leader Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

Worshipping ▶ Loving ▶ Sharing ▶ Growing

