



Leura Uniting Church
24 October 2021
Ross Neville

Theme

Prayer for the land and its people

As we look upon the hills and valleys, we see the love poured out upon this land by those who have cared for this Land since time beyond measure.

This land is God's land and God's Spirit dwells here.

We honour those who have gone before and those who are yet to come.

We acknowledge traditional custodians of this land under God.

We acknowledge that the Darug and Gundaugura First People had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers;

the Spirit was already in the land, revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony.

We acknowledge that the same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and gave them particular insights into God's ways; and so we rejoice in the reconciling purpose of God found in the good news about Jesus Christ.

Psalm 34

1 I will extol the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.

2 I will glory in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.

3 Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.

5 Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

6 This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.

Hymn 276 There's a light upon the mountain

There's a light upon the mountains, and the day is at the spring when our eyes shall see the beauty and the glory of the King;

Weary was our hearts with waiting, and the night watch seemed so long, but his triumph day is breaking, and we hail it with a song

There's a hush of expectation, and a quiet in the air, and the breath of God is moving in the fervent breath of prayer:

For the suffering, dying Jesus is the Christ upon the throne. And the travail of our spirit is the travail of his own.

He is breaking down the barriers, he is casting up the way, he is calling for his angels to build up the gates of day: but his angels here are human, not the shining hosts above;

For the drumbeats of his army are the heartbeats of our love.

Hark we hear a distant music, and it comes with fuller swell- the great triumph song of Jesus, of our King Immanuel:

Zion go you forth to meet him; and my soul, be swift to bring, all your finest and your dearest for the triumph of our King

CCLI Song # 2846240

Henry Burton

• Public Domain

For use solely with the SongSelect® [Terms of Use](https://www.ccli.com/terms-of-use). All rights reserved. www.ccli.com

CCLI Licence # 300742

Bible reading Jeremiah 31:7-9

For thus says the LORD:

^k“Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give
praise, and say,

‘O LORD, save Your people, The remnant of Israel!’

⁸ Behold, I will bring them ^lfrom the north country,

And ^mgather them from the ends of the earth,

Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child And the one who labors with
child, together;

A great throng shall return there.

⁹ ⁿThey shall come with weeping, And with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to
walk ^oby the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I
am a Father to Israel,

Hymn 670 Jesus put a song in our heart

Jesus put this song in our hearts
Jesus put this song in our hearts
It's a song of joy no one can take away
Jesus put this song in our hearts

Jesus taught us how to live in harmony
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony
Different faces, different races, he made us one:
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony

Jesus taught us how to be a family
Jesus taught us how to be a family
Loving one another with the love that gives
Jesus taught us how to be a family

CCLI Song # 48119
Graham Kendrick

• © 1986 Thankyou Music (Admin. by SHOUT! Music Publishing Australia)
For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com
CCLI Licence # 300742

Mark 10:46 FF

⁴⁶ Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

⁵¹ “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

⁵² “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Thoughts from this reading

Questions for reflection Break into groups ????

Message 24th October 2021

When I began farming the wisdom was that certain practices had to be followed. These practices came from centuries of farming in the UK. Turn the soil over, break up the soil by recultivating, also remove weeds by cultivating. Make the soil fine enough to allow seeding to germinate in the fine soil.

After 30 years of dust blowing the soil away, soil structures breaking down, a build up of sodium, worms and all soil biota disappearing.

I began to explore and change my practices.

I had to see the light to make changes I did this over many years.

Jesus according to Mark has been teaching and correcting the disciples understanding of who /what the Messiah the Christ would be: and what he would do.

Instead of a warrior anointed King who would establish an earthly kingdom.

Their understanding of what the messiah would be like became:

In Mark he lists 8:31 a suffering servant, 34 a selfless person, the fighting or wars would occur in 9:2 a spiritual dimension.

The kingdom he establishes would be spiritual, v 5 Power and authority over spirits would be given to the followers. A message that Universal God has joined himself to humankind. The Christ will serve all mankind

Mark begins the story of Jesus’ re-educating the disciples and Jews in between two stories about healings of blindness.

I believe this is significant because there are so many styles of blindness.

There is hereditary natural blindness. With the loss of sight

This Physical can occur by:

Accidental; degenerative; genetic

There is also Social blindness when changes would indicate something new needs to be done, changes made to avert serious consequences. These can be sudden changes or Gradual long term changes.

We can see this happening now. A new environment is happening, Global warming is happening and it is becoming irreversible. Many are blind to the reality of the developing outcomes and the changes that need to be made.

Among Christians, The Christian church over history has shown a slow reluctance to change. Pre 20th century we had: Churches change the way they used. Penance; the role of the priest; the use of the scriptures; the role of the Holy Spirit; the structure of the church.

I have been able to see some radical changes happening.

At the beginning of the UCA in 1977 the church was the 3rd largest Christian church in Australia. Today only 6% of the people who were Uniting are attending church regularly. The number of young people (under 60) in most congregations has changed dramatically. The number of congregations who can viably support a stipended minister has dropped drastically.

The education system changed styles in the 1970's.

Learning at schools occurs with group discussion multimedia and individual learning goals. There has been 4 generations who have not been comfortable with the preaching, lecturing, teaching way of learning.

I spent ten years with the NSW Synod Board of Mission trying to help Synods, Presbyteries and Congregations adjust to the changes and to see there is a need to change. God has been prompting us to change our way of being church.

Many have been blind and have not seen God in the changes.

Bartimaeus had some serious new learning to undertake after he was healed.

How to cope, how to earn a living, but also how to understand more correctly what Jesus was proposing a Christian life would be like.

Jesus was not going to be the Son of David he had expected him to be.

Mark tells us Bartimaeus - followed Jesus.

This is all encouraging news for us all because it indicates Jesus will accept us as followers, even if we don't understand 'correctly' everything about him or belong to the correct group.

Hymn 579 The blind man sat by the road

The blind man sat by the road and he cried:

(Clap, Clap) Sing 3 times

O show me the way,
show me the way,
show me the way,
the way to go home

We all sat by the road and we cried

Sing 3 times

O show us the way,
show us the way,
show us the way,
the way to go home.

Jesus stood by the road and he cried....

(Sing 3 times)

*O I am the way,
I am the truth,
I am the life,
the way to go home.*

Offering

Notices

Prayers

Let us pray.

Loving God,

We come to you because we know you hear our prayers.

We come to you because you call us to be close to you.

We come to you because you love and care for us.

We ask that you will increase in us the love we have for one another, so that we might be better at recognising and responding to the needs of those around us.

We pray for people with disabilities. We hear stories of the difficulties many have in accessing the NDIS, trying to get the right help for their needs. We ask that government agencies show compassion and care and a willingness to really listen and act so that people may retain their dignity and self-esteem.

We think of those with sight impairment in our community and the challenges they face daily. We are thankful for the technology that is available and for the organisations that provide help. We are grateful for the people who raise and train guide dogs for those who need them. We pray for those who advocate and educate the public and businesses about guide dogs. We feel the frustration of those who experience discrimination from shops and services. May we become more aware ourselves and support those who live with visual loss and limitation.

Loving God, you offer to us your healing power: through gifts of patience and understanding; through sharing our time and care; through offering welcome touch and readiness to advocate for others as needed.

When grief and pain, poverty and persecution leave people blind to grace and compassion, we pray for the courage to carry the light of comfort and consolation, love and forgiveness.

Where the quest to 'even the score' has left our world angry and wounded, we pray for courage to release our grievances and seek wholeness for all.

In the midst of grief, we can experience your hope and feel your comfort for broken hearts.
In the midst of conflict, your healing hand can turn us to peace and restore angry hearts.
In the midst of suffering, your healing power can lighten our darkness and inspire strength in fragile hearts.
In the midst of injustice, your healing hand can defy evil and renew determination in compassionate hearts.

We pray for our country's leaders that they will see common sense and exercise humility and virtue. Teach them that power, wealth and fame matter less than wisdom, justice, mercy and integrity.

We ask for leaders of nations around the world to have the courage to walk in peace, hear the cries of those in need and act with mercy.

We pray for our church here in the mountains. We ask for your blessing on the work of Junction 142, our Church Council and leadership teams, and the various groups of our Church. We ask for your Spirit's guidance as we plan our way forward to opening up in a more physical way. We are thankful that we can begin to meet up again in small groups and be a little more active.

We pause now as we pray for those mentioned in the bulletin and those around us. We pray for situations that are close to our hearts. We offer them to God now.....

Taking comfort from our prayers, may we encourage one another through your love and the sharing of our experiences.

God of wholeness, we celebrate the healing you offer us and our world, and we are thankful.

Hear our prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours now and forever. Amen

Hymn 636 Lord we are blind

*God has spoken to his people, hallelujah!
And his words are words of wisdom, hallelujah!*

Open your ears, O Christian people,
Open your ears and hear good news;
Open your hearts O royal priesthood,
God has come to you
God has come to you

God has spoken.....

They who have ears to hear his message,
They who have ears let them hear;
They who would learn the way of wisdom,
Let them hear God's word,
Let them hear God's word.

God has spoken to his people...

CCLI Song # 2792789
Willard F. Jabusch

- © 1966, 1982 Jabusch, Willard F. (Admin. by The Society for the Propagation of the Faith)
For use solely with the SongSelect® [Terms of Use](http://www.ccli.com). All rights reserved. www.ccli.com
CCLI Licence # 300742

Blessing