



**Worship at Home – 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity**  
*Prepared by Rev Gareth Erlandson, Curate*

***Prayer to start***

Creator God  
You made us all in your image:  
May we discern you in all that we see,  
And serve you in all that we do;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

***Bible Reading (Psalm 85)***

- <sup>1</sup> You, LORD, showed favour to your land;  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.  
<sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of your people  
and covered all their sins.  
<sup>3</sup> You set aside all your wrath  
and turned from your fierce anger.
- <sup>4</sup> Restore us again, God our Saviour,  
and put away your displeasure toward us.  
<sup>5</sup> Will you be angry with us forever?  
Will you prolong your anger through all generations?  
<sup>6</sup> Will you not revive us again,  
that your people may rejoice in you?  
<sup>7</sup> Show us your unfailing love, LORD,  
and grant us your salvation.
- <sup>8</sup> I will listen to what God the LORD says;  
he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants—  
but let them not turn to folly.  
<sup>9</sup> Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,  
that his glory may dwell in our land.  
<sup>10</sup> Love and faithfulness meet together;  
righteousness and peace kiss each other.  
<sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,  
and righteousness looks down from heaven.  
<sup>12</sup> The LORD will indeed give what is good,  
and our land will yield its harvest.  
<sup>13</sup> Righteousness goes before him  
and prepares the way for his steps.

***Thought***

As unseasonable as it might be to mention the “C word” in July, I’m sure many of you are familiar with at least the premise of Charles Dickens’ classic “A Christmas Carol”. Through the visitation of three ghosts, the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is reminded of his rather joyous past, made aware of his somewhat lonely present, and shown his totally bleak and desolate future. Bleak and desolate that is, until he makes changes which improve his outlook beyond measure, restoring him to that same sense of joy he had experienced in the past.

Psalm 85 might be seen as taking us through a similar process to that of Scrooge on that life-changing Christmas Eve.

The first section of the song, verses 1-3, takes place in the past and recollects a time when the psalmist felt secure in their relationship with God. The land yielded harvest and in an agricultural community that meant the livelihood of the people was ensured. The people also rested secure in the love and mercy of God – they knew they were forgiven for their wrongdoings and had nothing to fear from the Lord's anger.

Then the second section of the song, verses 4-7, takes place in the present and the picture is not so rosy. The psalmist and the community know the Lord's anger only too well. We are not told the exact circumstances, but could it be that this was written at time when the land did not yield much – a time of famine which is interpreted as abandonment by God, perhaps? Whatever the circumstances, the people now feel estranged from God. The security and joy of the past is no more.

But into this picture, the psalmist injects a message of hope. The third section of the song, verses 8-13, looks forward to the future; a future in which the people's relationship with God is restored. They will know themselves loved and what it means to be joyously fulfilled once more. They will live in harmony with each other (vv. 8 and 10), the land will again yield harvest (vv. 11 and 12). They will walk with the Lord as they have before.

I don't know where you are with your relationship with God at this time, but I am fairly certain we all have times when he just doesn't seem to be present at all. Maybe we interpret this as his wrath, as the psalmist does. But we are assured in this song that when we listen out for the voice of God, when we cry out to experience his love breaking into our pain, he will hear us. He will also heal us and restore our relationship with him. This so often just needs us to make the smallest step in prayer, to be honest about how things are going wrong and trust in God to draw us back to himself. May you be encouraged by this psalm to make such a small step and may you consequently know God's love and mercy in your life.

### ***Prayers to end***

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

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.

*Please do get in touch if you want to talk about anything.*

*Services on 11<sup>th</sup> July:*

*Morning Worship at Emmanuel 9:30am and Hope 11am*

*Holy Communion at St John's 11am.*

*God bless – Adam (01978 760439) and Gareth (07731 827988)*