

WELCOME AND NOTICES

BANNS OF MARRIAGE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things' (Colossians 3:1-2).

SONG: Jesus, God's righteousness revealed

<https://youtu.be/FInBsbSCnWk>

Jesus, God's righteousness revealed,
The Son of Man, the Son of God,
His kingdom comes.
Jesus, redemption's sacrifice,
Now glorified, now justified,
His kingdom comes.

*And His kingdom will know no end,
And its glory shall know no bounds,
For the majesty and power
of this kingdom's King has come.
And this kingdom's reign,
and this kingdom's rule,
And this kingdom's power and authority,
Jesus, God's righteousness revealed.*

Jesus, the expression of God's love,
The grace of God, the Word of God,
revealed to us;
Jesus, God's holiness displayed,
Now glorified, now justified,
His kingdom comes

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, as we rejoice in the gift of this new day and in the gift of your salvation, may the light of your presence set our hearts on fire with love for you, now and for ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

CONFESSION

Holy God, we confess to you that we have rebelled against you and broken your law of love; we have not loved our neighbours nor

heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray, and free us for joyful obedience; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In Christ we are forgiven.

In Christ we are set free.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S TALK: A good appetite

What's your favourite food? Roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, vegetable lasagne, sausage and chips or a veggie curry, or maybe you have a sweet tooth and would rather have a trifle or a fruit salad or maybe a rice pudding. Have I got your taste buds tingling? How much do you want to eat when you're not feeling well? Not much if anything.

It's normal to feel hungry and thirsty. It tells us that we're well. As a child I remember saying to my mum that I didn't feel well and couldn't go to school. Have you ever tried that one? Was your mum fooled? No, neither was mine. My mum responded, "Then you won't be able to eat your breakfast. Off you go to bed." I knew my mum had my number. If I had said I was hungry then she would have said "Well, there's not much wrong with you. Get dressed and get to school." My mum knew, as any good parent, that usually hunger is a sign of good health. If I had been genuinely unwell, I wouldn't have wanted to eat. We know that when we lose our appetite something is wrong. A good appetite is a sign of health. This morning we're thinking about a good appetite, so I hope you're feeling hungry this morning.

READINGS: Psalm 63:1-5

A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.

¹ You, God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.

² I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

³ Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

⁴ I will praise you as long as I live,

and in your name I will lift up my hands.

⁵ I will be satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

Matthew 5:1-6

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them. He said:

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION: A BETTER LIFE (4) A Good Appetite

Just as hunger is a sign of physical health, so an appetite for righteousness is a sign of spiritual health. King David wrote these words, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for the living God" (Psalm 42:1-2). And "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water" (Psalm 63:1). David had a good appetite. He had a great thirst for God and longed to be close to the LORD. Is that your deep desire this morning?

Jesus says in this beatitude that you are blessed if you have such an appetite. The word used here for thirst means something you can't live without. You've got to have it or life isn't worth living. What can't you live without? Most of us would say our loved ones. I could live without sport or books or even music but I wouldn't want to live without my family. Could you live without righteousness? Here Jesus isn't talking about feeling a bit peckish for righteousness but it being something you cannot

live without. Jesus is speaking about a craving for something that defies a natural explanation. Our natural body needs food and drink and craves it when it is starved of them. When we crave righteousness it is having the desire for the things that please God, the things that honour him.

Paul writes in his letter to the Colossians, 'Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things' (Colossians 3:1-2). Now the unspiritual person will say that you're not living for the here and now and you're being too heavenly minded but no earthly good. I disagree. The spiritual person will be concerned with what pleases God, what brings God glory and honour. The more you hunger and thirst for being right with God, the more you will want it. That's what the psalmist was speaking about. It was Jackie Pullinger who once said, "To the spiritual person, the supernatural seems natural." To have this kind of hunger and thirst is God's desire for us.

When you live utterly for God and desire to live in his ways, you may not be appreciated by anyone else but you'll be appreciated by God. Jesus blesses those who are hungry for such a righteousness. If you live totally for the Lord, don't expect people to applaud you. After all the most righteous person who ever lived was hated and condemned to death. Jesus said, "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first" (John 15:18).

This hunger for righteousness comes out of a heart that is meek towards God, a heart that is humble before him. Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi, 'I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death' (Phil. 3:10). Jesus promised that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled. What with? Presumably with the righteousness we hunger for.

Have you heard of Arthur Blessitt? He is a man who lived in Sunset Strip, Hollywood, when in

1968 God told him to take the cross he had made for his mission hall and carry it around the world sharing the good news of Jesus. Since then he has visited every country and island group on earth (324) and walked over 43,000 miles. A lady once asked him, "How is it that God seems to speak to you but doesn't speak to me?" Arthur Blessitt replied, "Have you ever had an impulse to talk to someone you don't know about Jesus?" She responded, "As a matter of fact I have." Arthur simply said, "Start obeying those impulses, and his voice will become clearer and clearer." In other words, walk in the light that God has given you and you will find even more light. Walk in the righteousness God has made known to you and your hunger will be satisfied. And yet there is a paradox here. The more we eat the hungrier we get, and so it is with righteousness. Being filled with the righteousness of Christ will result in greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and a greater awareness of how we may grieve the Holy Spirit.

How often do you get hungry and thirsty? Every day. Pray for this longing for God and his righteousness not just as a one-off but as an everyday experience that results in a never-ending pursuit of God. 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.' Amen.

SONG: AS THE DEER

<https://youtu.be/FBppKZ0eJlQ>

**As the deer pants for the water
so my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship you.**

***You alone are my strength and shield
To you alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship you***

**You're my friend and you are my brother
Even though you are a king
I love you more than any other
So much more than anything**

***You alone are my strength and shield
To you alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship you***

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:

Let us pray for all people everywhere according to their need.

Loving God, we pray for the Church throughout the world, for unity in Christ, for the fulfilment of Christ's mission, and for all who share the gospel in so many ways. We pray for the Church here in Norwich, that we also may walk in unity. We pray that we may be strengthened to serve you from a heart that loves you. May we be united in truth, active in service, and hopeful in affliction.

Loving God, we pray for the world in which we live. We ask that you would give wisdom to all in authority, that every nation may walk in the ways of justice and peace, that countries would honour one another and seek the common good.

Loving God, we pray for our community and thank you for all that is good in it, for our neighbours and friends, our schools and community centres and shopping area, for groups like Society Alive and Connecting Bowthorpe, plus our councillors and representatives. Bless this neighbourhood with an openness to you and your ways.

Finally, Lord, we pray that you would comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. Grant them courage and hope in their difficulties, and bring to them the joy of your salvation. And we remember before you all who have died, especially those who have died in the faith of Christ.

And so we commend all people to your unfailing love and mercy, and rejoice in the faithful witness of all your people in every age, praying that we may be counted among them in your eternal kingdom.

All these things we pray 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 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.**

SONG: HERE I AM (I SURRENDER)

<https://youtu.be/jgsqfjRslzA>

Here I am, down on my knees again
Surrendering all, surrendering all.
Find me here, Lord, as you draw me near
Desperate for you, desperate for you.
I surrender.

Drench my soul, as mercy and grace unfold
I hunger and thirst, I hunger and thirst
With arms stretched wide
I know you hear my cry
Speak to me now, speak to me now.

I surrender. I surrender.
I want to know you more.
I want to know you more.
I surrender. I surrender.
I want to know you more.
I want to know you more.

Like a rushing wind Jesus breathe within
Lord have your way
Lord have your way in me.
Like a mighty storm stir within my soul
Lord have your way
Lord have your way in me
(repeat)
Lord have your way,
Lord have your way in me

I surrender. I surrender.
I want to know you more.
I want to know you more.
I surrender. I surrender.
I want to know you more.
I want to know you more.

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING

Lord, as we go into the world as your
representatives, have your way in us that we may
walk in your light and truth. May we rejoice in your
love and reflect your glory. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the
Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you and with all
whom you love, now and for evermore. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.