

February 28th 2021

Through the psalmist, God says, 'Be still, and know that I am God!'

Let us come into God's presence and still our hearts.

Let us come together to listen to God. Let us be still, and know that God is indeed God.

Sing or Read:

- 1 Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.
- 2 I am the Lord who saves and heals.
I am the Lord who saves and heals.
I am the Lord who saves and heals.
- 3 In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.

Anonymous Based on Psalm 46:10-11 Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 18 Words: ©

Introduction to the reading.

There is often uncertainty about nicknames, are they a positive or negative thing to have. Some perhaps are affectionate words of acceptance but others are possibly ironic labels of ridicule. In Mark, when Jesus appoints twelve apostles, he gives Simon, first on the list, the nickname Peter. This seems ambivalent, perhaps as much 'rocky' as 'rock', as his faltering journey on the way of the cross later confirms. It seems extraordinary that Peter believes that Jesus is God's Messiah yet takes him aside to put him right! But by being open with Jesus, finding their relationship survives this rockiness of mutual rebuking, Peter will learn that God fulfils the promise inherent in Jesus' naming him as 'rock'.

Mark 8: 31-38

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

On the second Sunday in Lent we place a purple cloth over the Lenten Cross as we remember that the call upon Jesus and upon us is not an easy one – it is costly and often counter cultural.



Prayer: Most holy God give us the desire to reject evil no matter how beneficial or popular it appears. Help us to seek to do the right thing even though it costs us dearly. Amen

A prayer of confession

We recognise that we have failed God and our neighbours.

We confess that we have fallen from the life that is offered to us through the death of Jesus Christ.

We acknowledge that the love of God is rescuing us from sin and restoring us to grace.

In testing, hardship and suffering, may we be willing

to offer all that we are and all that we have to be followers in the way of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Thought for the week:

How do you cope with disagreement? For lots of reasons, each of us reacts differently when people disagree with us or one another. Some can become quite aggressive and enjoy the argument; others can become silent and withdrawn.

What is the way that Christians should respond? Is the best way to be peaceful and calm, never to disagree? Maybe when the things we are disagreeing about are not especially important. But what if the thing we are disagreeing about is important or about truth and justice?

Jesus and Peter are an example of how open disagreement can lead to a place of understanding one another and God's way better. Jesus is trying to teach the disciples that the kind of Messiah that they have in mind is not quite right. They still seem to think that Jesus is going to be powerful and conquer the world. Jesus wants to show them that he is going to appear to do the opposite: he will be rejected, suffer and die.

But think carefully about the scene. Perhaps you know people, especially leaders, who you would be frightened to disagree with because they might reject you! Jesus seems to have created an atmosphere among his friends where they were not afraid. Peter is quite confident in his contradiction of Jesus. And Jesus is comfortable to disagree with Peter – very strongly. But is Peter kicked out of the group? Is Peter rejected? Far from it – in fact, just a few verses further in chapter 9, we read that Jesus chooses Peter with James and John for a special experience.

If we are to grow as people of faith, we need to be able to create an environment where we feel safe enough to disagree but know we will not be rejected. Can we do that?

Sing or Read:

- 1 Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee ;
take my moments and my days,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.
- 2 Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love ;
take my feet, and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.
- 3 Take my voice, and let me sing
always, only, for my King ;
take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee.

- 4 Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold ;
take my intellect, and use
every power as thou shalt choose.
- 5 Take my will, and make it thine ;
it shall be no longer mine ;
take my heart — it is thine own ;
it shall be thy royal throne.
- 6 Take my love ; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure-store ;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836–1879) Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 566

Prayers of intercession

We pray for followers of Jesus Christ; for those who are imprisoned for their faith,
for those who serve as missionaries, for teachers of the faith...

We pray for those who deny themselves to serve others;
for those who work in hospitals and prisons,
for those who are carers, for those who serve their communities as volunteers...

We pray for those who carry the weight of a cross;
for the homeless and unemployed, for those who are ill or bereaved,
for those who struggle with mental health...

We pray for ourselves, as we follow Christ;
for strength to overcome our struggles and failures, for our fears and worries,
for those we love, and those who love us... **Amen.**

**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.**

Sing or Read:

- 1 There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.
*Thank you, O my Father,
for giving us your Son,
and leaving your Spirit
till the work on earth is done.*

- 2 Jesus my Redeemer,
name above all names,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
O for sinners slain.
- 3 When I stand in glory
I will see his face,
and there I'll serve my King for ever
in that holy place.

vv. 1-2 Melody Green (b. 1946)

v. 3 Keith Green (1953–1982)

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**Be strong.
Trust God.
Do not weaken.
Walk in God's way.
Sit in his presence.
Stand against evil.
Go in the name of God
who sees you as righteous
because Jesus died for you.
Amen.**

The Blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with you, with those you love and with those you ought to love this day and forever more. Amen

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pauline". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.