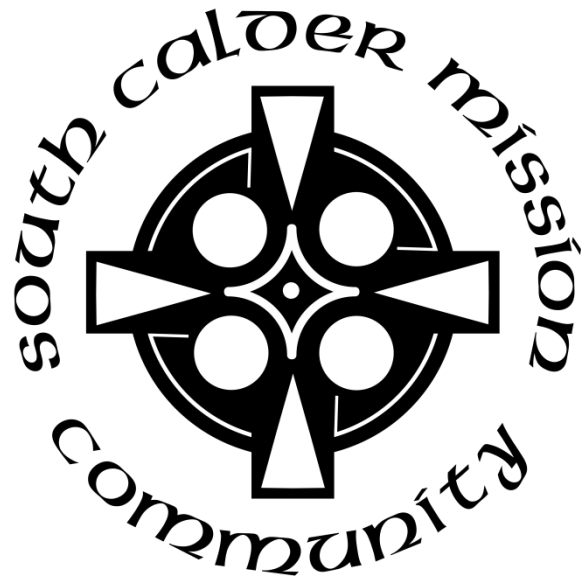


*into his courts
with praise...*



A Service of the Word

Sunday 24 August 2025
Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

A Service of the Word for Sunday morning

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INTRODUCTION

*“ In you, O Lord, do I seek refuge; ♦ let me never be put to
shame.”*

Psalms 71:1



THE CONFESSION

The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.
Though we have grieved him, yet he will heal us if we confess our
sins in penitence and faith.

**Almighty God,
I confess that I have sinned against you
in thought, word and deed;
I have not loved you with all my heart;
I have not loved my neighbours as myself.
Have mercy upon me,
cleanse me from my sins,
and help me to overcome my faults,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Receive God's forgiveness

May the Father forgive us
By the death of His Son
And strengthen us
To live in the power of the Spirit
All our days. **Amen.**

PRAISE

O Lord, open my lips...
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
Give me the joy of your saving help...
and sustain me with your life-giving Spirit.

THE COLLECT

Lord of heaven and earth, as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer, give us patience and courage never to lose hope, but always to bring our prayers before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Suggested hymn to sing or read ***Just as I am, without one plea.***

THE WORD OF GOD.

Psalms 71:1-6.

In you, O Lord, do I seek refuge; ♦
let me never be put to shame.
In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free; ♦
incline your ear to me and save me.
Be for me a stronghold to which I may ever resort; ♦
send out to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.
Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, ♦
from the grasp of the evildoer and the oppressor.
For you are my hope, O Lord God, ♦
my confidence, even from my youth.
Upon you have I leaned from my birth,
when you drew me from my mother's womb; ♦
my praise shall be always of you.

Jeremiah 1:4-10.

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,
'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.'
Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.' But the Lord said to me,
'Do not say, "I am only a boy";
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.'

Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me,
'Now I have put my words in your mouth.
See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to pull down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.'

Hebrews 12:18-end.

You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. (For they could not endure the order that was given, 'If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death.') Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, 'I tremble with fear.') But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, 'Yet once more I

will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.’ This phrase ‘Yet once more’ indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

*Suggested hymn to sing or read **Forgive our sins as we forgive.***

GOSPEL

Luke 13:10-17.

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, ‘Woman, you are set free from your ailment.’ When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, ‘There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.’ But the Lord answered him and said, ‘You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?’ When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

REFLECTION – Re-invent the Sabbath.

In our reading from Luke this morning Jesus chooses to heal a woman in the congregation who has a terrible spinal condition, of ‘*eighteen years*’ it says, bent double and unable to straighten up – a crippling disease. ‘*Woman*’, he says, ‘*you are set free from your infirmity*’. The woman stands upright and praises God. The synagogue ruler is indignant because Jesus has chosen to perform this transformational miracle on the Sabbath rather than on an ordinary weekday. Jesus is clearly angry with the synagogue ruler and uses the analogy that it was normal to untether an ox, a beast of burden in those times, on the Sabbath. This would have been easily understood by most of the congregation.

By the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry Israel appears to be stuck in a rut. The Jewish faith seems to have become a matter of following laws and practices to the absolute letter, a sort of orthopraxy, rather than right thinking, teaching and faith. And, whereas Abraham had listened to God’s call and obeyed - ‘*and it was credited to him as righteousness*’ (Romans 4: 2), the religious authorities had become, in the words of Stephen, before he was dragged off to be stoned for blasphemy ‘*a stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears...always resisting the Holy Spirit*’ (Acts 7: 51).

Of course, this was not the first occasion on which Jesus had come into conflict with the Pharisees concerning allowable practices on the Sabbath; in another account, in Matthew, Jesus had been criticised for allowing his hungry disciples to eat the ears of corn as they crossed a field on the Sabbath: ‘*it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath*’ he says (Matthew 12: 12) and he reminds them of how even the great King David himself had stolen the consecrated bread from the Holy Place in order to feed his men. A practical response to an immediate problem.

In complete contrast, in an earlier account (Lk 8: 40) a different synagogue ruler comes to Jesus in desperation and falls at his feet. His only daughter is dying but he believes Jesus can save her. For a parent such priorities over-rule religious dogma.

In our reading today Jesus is trying to illustrate how this woman was, effectively, shackled or ‘imprisoned’ by her affliction and likens her condition to a tethered ox which needs to be released from its stall on the Sabbath and be refreshed from its labours. Perhaps a woman in her condition might have been tolerated but, probably, marginalised. Jesus, in contrast, affords her instant **status** by calling her a ‘*daughter of Abraham*’ and likens her affliction to a subtle form of imprisonment which, indeed it was. The ordinary people recognise the hand of God in all of this, and ‘*were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing*’.

So, has this short episode in Luke’s Gospel any relevance to our world today? I believe yes, most certainly. Indeed, all of our Lord’s teaching and encounters with the people of his earthly time are as relevant to our world today as they were 2000 years ago. So, let’s consider some of the elements that make up this passage.

It seems the synagogue ruler was concerned to ensure the traditions and observances of the Sabbath were strictly followed – because they always had been. Tradition plays an important part in our own worship and our

liturgy helps enormously to re-engage with God when our minds have been distracted by work and other commitments. And it's worth saying that those in our community 'outside the church' who only attend for traditional services such as weddings, funerals and perhaps the Christmas Carol Concert may experience some comfort and reassurance, and, perhaps, even a connection, from these brief encounters with the Living God. But I think those of us who are more committed in our worship must always be wary of becoming slaves to tradition and be open to the work of the Spirit.

Had this lady perhaps become marginalised? After all it was, at the time, a commonly held belief that disease was, in some way connected to sin, and our Lord would often commenced his healing of a person with '*your sins are forgiven*' or, in this particular example, '*bound up by Satan for eighteen years*'. These ideas were still common in our own society until not so long ago, and probably lie just beneath our veneer of civilisation even today. It reminds us that, as human beings we can easily be tempted to label people as unfortunate (but thank goodness we're not like that) or worse, to think: what lifestyle or excesses have lead to that condition?

And of course there's the Sabbath: what's all that about?

Our Lord reminded us that '*the Sabbath was made for man, not, not man for the Sabbath*' (Mark 2:27). It was ordained all those thousands of years ago to ensure everyone was allowed a day for rest and reflection. In former times, not so long ago, Sunday was the only day of rest for much of the population, even if it meant having to attend church in one's 'Sunday Best' at least twice a day.

But more recently Sunday, sadly, has become just another 'day off' like Saturday or, for busy young families, a time for catching up on the shopping, visiting the DIY store or ferrying children to extra curricula activities. And, increasingly, for many in our society, especially those on low pay, it may mean just another shift working in a restaurant, bar or supermarket to make ends meet.

So, perhaps the idea of the Sabbath and its potential benefits needs to be shared more widely within our communities, or maybe re-invented? Now there's a good idea!

Malcolm Richardson.

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.**

THE CREED

**All I believe in God the Father,
 whose loving care is the pattern for family life.
 I believe in Jesus, the Son of God,
 who lives in my heart through faith,
 and fills me with his love.
 I believe in God the Holy Spirit,
 who strengthens me with power from on high.
 I believe in one God;
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**



A time of quiet prayer for

- *The universal Church - Bishops, synods and all leaders church*
- *The leaders of the nations*
- *The natural world and the resources of the earth*

Loving God I see the news and I am afraid. Violence is spiralling out of control. I don't know what to think or feel. The temptation to fall into hatred, or despair feels very close at hand.

Help me to remember that nothing in all creation can separate me from your love that I know in Jesus. May your perfect love for me cast out my fear and free me to discern what is mine to do amidst the chaos of this suffering world.

Amen.

Finishing with the South Calder Mission Community prayer...

**Heavenly Father we thank you for the life of your Church
in this place, and in all the villages of the South Calder
Mission Community;
for all who have served and worshipped you in years gone by,
for all who make up your family in our churches today, for the
faith we have in common, and for the people and traditions
which make each church unique.
By your Spirit, guide and equip us, that together we might find
new ways to reach out to our local community, to show your
love to our neighbours, and to encourage them to follow the
Lord Jesus in their lives. Father, we offer ourselves to your
service. In the unity of the Holy Spirit, And in the name of
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

and the Lord's prayer...

**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.**

THE CONCLUSION

Suggested hymn to sing or read **Lord of the dance.**

The following prayer is said

**Be with me, Lord, as I finish my prayer today.
May my lips always speak the truth;
may my eyes which have read your word
see only what is good;
and may my life as well as my worship
be always pleasing in your sight,
for the glory of your name. Amen.**

And now may the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit,
strengthen us for the Christian life.

May the Lord who provides for all our needs
sustain us day by day.

May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care,
send us out to live and work for others.

And the blessing of God Almighty.
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with us and remain with us always.

Amen.

So now may I go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Links for the hymns

Just as I am, without one plea.

https://youtu.be/enJ8JzW_A48

Forgive our sins as we forgive.

https://youtu.be/3AL_HKTo5V8

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.

<https://youtu.be/APVxKnENCjo>

Lord of the dance.

<https://youtu.be/fR2tkQJFEB8>