

Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit

Service at Home Sheet 14 June 2026

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

prepared by Pat Fry

Welcome to this time of worship.

Approach

Wherever you are as you read this service, whenever you join in this service, however you are feeling, whatever the weather, you are choosing to make space to be aware of the presence of the Living God who is waiting for you, ready to share his presence with you, and remind you that you are not alone.

So keep a moment of quiet, then join in the prayer:

Loving God Father , Son and Spirit,
you are not distant or alone.

You are a God of relationship and shared life.

I can come to you, tired of loud voices
weary of noisy dominance.

I can come looking for a better way to live.
Draw me closer to you.

Root me in your love.
Shape me by your Spirit,
so that my worship, and my life may reflect
something of who you truly are. Amen.*

Now for a beautiful hymn written by Revd.
Gareth Hill who some of you will have
known, he was minister at Romsey before
he retired.

Hymn 512 Speak in the stillness God

we pray

<https://youtu.be/VMNz9xZ5j2l?si=P00JTikht5QBDong>

Speak in the stillness God we pray,
come to our hearts and meet us here.
Bring us your peace for each new day
-the gift of grace to earth from heaven.

We speak as though we have not heard
and live as if we do not know
your love in Christ the living Word
-the gift of grace to earth from heaven.

When in the anxious rush of days
we lose our hold on faith and you
reclaim us with your calm embrace
- the gift of grace to earth from heaven.

Lift us to see with heaven's eyes.
We long to soar on eagle's wings
as we press on to claim your prize
-the gift of grace to earth from heaven.

So may we be renewed in love
held and sustained by you alone
strengthened by you that we may prove
a gift of grace to earth from heaven.

Gareth Hill born 1956

Introduction to topic

I am going to begin with the most amazing
sermon opening I have ever heard.** It
happened some years ago at the 200th
anniversary of the opening of my home
church. The preacher was a very elderly
Welshman. He had been a minister at that
London church when he was first ordained,
had gone on to be a Professor of Old
Testament theology and then principal of a
theological college; when he gave this
sermon he was in his late eighties, but just
as spellbinding. He had long bushy white
hair, a long beard, and people said he
looked like the Old Testament prophets he
so much admired.

He began with a question: "What do you
think God the Father says to God the Son
every morning at breakfast? "

There was a stunned silence. He waited for
an answer.

Eventually a down to earth elderly lady plucked up the courage to offer “Hallo, Dad?” That was not the answer he wanted. “No, no, no, I mean when they really start to talk about the day ahead?”

Silence. He held that silence... and finally answered his own question: “Son, they need more grace.... They need more grace..”

And we know we certainly do need God’s grace.

Reflection: So what is Grace?

Grace is a word used in many different ways. I encountered three of them walking around the centre of Salisbury. Salisbury Cathedral has a slender spire, a graceful spire, much as we might speak of a graceful dancer.

Nearby we visited Mompesson House, an example of eighteenth century “gracious living”, with its spacious rooms and fine furniture; here “gracious” means the tasteful, luxurious surroundings, the leisured life of the affluent residents then. We walked a little further and came to the Mill, and a memorial to a young woman, a student who had jumped in to save someone’s life, and lost her own. That’s an act of grace, of sacrificial self-giving love to help someone else, sacrificial, overwhelming love.

That’s getting closed to the New Testament meaning of the word Grace. God’s total costly sacrificial forgiving love for the people he created in spite of all our failures.

Our Gospel reading today talks of Jesus compassion, and how he sent and

equipped his disciples to show the same compassion- grace in action.

Gospel reading Matthew 9:35-10:2,

So we come to God in Prayer

O God of life, we praise You.

Eternity cannot hold you, nor our little words catch the magnificence of your kindness.

We praise you as we recall your amazing grace shown to us through Jesus life of compassion, his teaching, his death and resurrection.

Eternity cannot hold you, nor our little words catch the magnificence of your kindness.

Yet in the space of our small hearts and in silence you can come close to us and repair us,

O God of Life, I come to make confession, as I think back over the past few days, seeking your forgiveness

O loving Christ, who died for us, and rose again,

clear the sin from my soul,
as mist clears from the hills.

May your light inform what I think and say, redeem who I am.

For you are our Hope, our living hope this and every day.. Amen***

Hymn 248 I heard the voice of Jesus say
<https://youtu.be/74kyfROS4q8?si=ESDVYfUpbg-U5z3fl>

I heard the voice of Jesus say
“Come unto me and rest:
lay down O weary one lay down
your head upon my breast.”

I came to Jesus as I was
weary and worn and sad,
I found in Him a resting place
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:
“Behold I freely give.

the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink and live.”
I came to Jesus and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived
and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say
“I am this dark world’s light;
look unto me your morn shall rise
and all your day be bright
I looked to Jesus and I found
in Him my star my sun,
And in that light of life I’ll walk
till travelling days are done.

Horatius Bonar 1808-1889

A common misunderstanding*

The URC service on line for Trinity Sunday spoke of some of the common misunderstandings people have about God, and how to address them. The message we have just explored does not seem to have got through for many people. There’s still a mistaken idea of God as “Big Brother watching you, *Always watching. Always judging. Usually disappointed.*”

As if somewhere in heaven there’s a red light that comes on whenever you do something that feels even the tiniest bit dodgy, lose your temper, fail to help, enjoy yourself too much..... and I can recall getting the idea as a young child that God was watching if I was naughty, so I better watch out....and that is totally contrary to the Gospel

This mistaken view is subtly damaging. It turns God’s attention into a threat., and it’s so unpleasant leads people to reject the idea of God completely.

And it is completely wrong. God looks at us the way love looks, not the way authority

watches; wants us to live as he intends, yes, but He does not compel nor does He punish our failures, instead he offers encouragement and support.

Paul spends much of his letter to the Romans explaining this. Here’s a brief extract from that letter.

Part of Romans 5 from The Message

All that passing laws against sin did was produce more lawbreakers. But sin didn’t, and doesn’t, have a chance in competition with the aggressive forgiveness we call grace.

When its sin versus grace, grace wins hands down.

All sin can do is threaten us with death, and that’s the end of it.

Grace, because God is putting everything together again through the Messiah, invites us into life, a life that goes on and on, world without end.

What next?

In our Gospel reading Jesus told his disciples, “You have received without paying, so give without being paid”. For us that means our response to God’s grace must be to seek to follow in his way, showing love and compassion where we can, and reaching out in prayer when we can do nothing practical

Prayer for others and ourselves

Gracious God, in a world where there is so much need it is hard to know how to focus our prayers, we could go on listing the needs of the world for hours, and lose sight of the signs of hope that are there even in some of the darkest places.

So let us hold before God some of the people who are trying to show God's compassion in troubled situations.

We pray for those bringing medical aid in war torn countries, particularly remembering Ukraine after the latest attacks, and Gaza where the suffering is beyond even our worst nightmares.

We pray for those bringing relief where there is hunger either as a result of war or climate change.

Coming closer to home we think of the carers in this city;
care workers who support people coping with disability in their own homes;
those who work in hospitals, especially those behind the scenes or in menial tasks whose work is often taken for granted,
those who work in counselling centres, or support troubled children and young people in schools and colleges.

In quiet take time to pray for people you know in particular need.

As you hold them in mind, use the words of an Iona prayer:***

God to enfold you,
Christ to uphold you,
Spirit to keep you in heaven's care.
So may God grace you,
heal and embrace you,
Lead you through darkness into the light.

And now claim that prayer for yourself replacing "you" with "me".

And then bring your prayers together with the Lord's prayer in whatever form you use.

Hymn 440 Amazing Grace

<https://youtu.be/HHx05uZHj1I?si=OTiPuilB6SUA9-wSn>

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost but now am found
was blind but now I see.

God's grace has taught my heart to fear,
His grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers toils and snares
I have already come;
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,
His grace shall lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

And when this heart and flesh shall fail
and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
a life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand year
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.

John Newton 1725-1807attd.

The Grace

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and evermore. Amen

Acknowledgements

*Prayer and talk adapted from URC online service for Trinity Sunday, led by Revd. Phil Nevard.

** Revd. Prof. G.Henton Davies, at West End Baptist Church Hammersmith.

*** adapted from The Wee Worship Book WGRG 1991edition

CCLI: 30794