

*Christ Church New  
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

*16 October 2022*

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*Welcome*

Song: Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;  
tender to me the promise of his word –  
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!  
Make known his might, the deeds his arm  
has done;  
his mercy sure, from age to age the same –  
his holy name: the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;  
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to  
flight,  
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!  
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure:  
tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord  
to children's children and for evermore!

Song: 10, 000 reasons  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul  
Worship His holy name  
Sing like never before, O my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

You're rich in love and you're slow to anger  
Your name is great and Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

[Chorus]  
So bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul  
Worship His holy name  
Sing like never before, O my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name  
Bless you, Lord

And on that day when my strength is failing  
The end draws near and my time has come  
Still, my soul will sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years and then forevermore  
Forevermore

*Reading: Jeremiah 31.27-34*

<sup>27</sup> "I, the Lord, say that the time is coming  
when I will fill the land of Israel and Judah  
with people and animals. <sup>28</sup> And just as I  
took care to uproot, to pull down, to  
overthrow, to destroy, and to demolish  
them, so I will take care to plant them and to  
build them up. <sup>29</sup> When that time comes,  
people will no longer say,

"The parents ate the sour grapes,  
But the children got the sour taste."

<sup>30</sup> Instead, those who eat sour grapes will  
have their own teeth set on edge; and  
everyone will die because of their own sin."

<sup>31</sup> The Lord says, "The time is coming when  
I will make a new covenant with the people  
of Israel and with the people of Judah. <sup>32</sup> It  
will not be like the old covenant that I made  
with their ancestors when I took them by  
the hand and led them out of Egypt.  
Although I was like a husband to them, they  
did not keep that covenant. <sup>33</sup> The new  
covenant that I will make with the people of  
Israel will be this: I will put my law within  
them and write it on their hearts. I will be  
their God, and they will be my  
people. <sup>34</sup> None of them will have to teach a  
neighbour to know the Lord, because all will  
know me, from the least to the greatest. I  
will forgive their sins and I will no longer

remember their wrongs. I, the Lord, have spoken.”

### *Lord's prayer*

Our Father in heaven, arms up  
hallowed be your name, banner shape  
your kingdom come, hands together out to side

your will be done, side, palms side out  
on earth as in heaven. Palms down & up

Give us today our daily bread. Hand together cupped

Forgive us our sins brush right hand  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
brush left hand

Lead us not into temptation fist to chest across

but deliver us from evil. Other fist to chest across

For the kingdom, arms wide, palms side  
the power, fists lifted

and the glory are yours rain fingers  
now and for ever. Right hand pointing, left hand spiral finger out

Amen. Hands clap above head

### *All age Prayer*

Song: Nothing's too big, big, big for his power

Nothing's too little, little for his care

Nothing's too big, big, big for his power

Nothing's too idly, widdly for his care

Nothing's too big, big, big for his power

Nothing's too incy-wincy for his care

Nothing's too big, big, big for his power

Nothing's too teeny-weeny for his care

He is God of the big, God of the little

God of the stuff somewhere in the middle

The King of moving mountains

Love's you more than you will ever know

Nothing's too big, nothing's too small

Nothing's too much, he cares for it all

### *Sermon: God our restorer*

'Homes under the Hammer', 'George Clark's tiny homes', 'Ugly house to lovely house', and of 'grand designs' are all TV programmes about property development. It seems to me that the developers in all these programmes fall into two broad categories – ones that buy a house to paint it grey from ceiling to skirting board and rent it out for an arm and two legs, or those who lavish the house with careful restoration of every period feature, and live in it forever. If we were to try and describe God's character, he is like the latter. God is our restorer.

Here in Jeremiah 31 we learn more about the wreck of the house of Israel and Judah that we heard about from Lamentations two weeks ago. Jerusalem is destroyed and Judah have been carried off into exile, or slavery. Jeremiah has been weeping for 30 chapters for a city, nation and identity that has been lost and broken. Jeremiah is a prophet lamenting the utter break down of the relationship between the people of God and God. God who led his people by the hand like a father out of slavery, through the wilderness and into the promised land, this God has been forgotten. This God of care, compassion and mercy and love has been forgotten. Other gods have been sought instead and now destruction has come.

As Jeremiah sees the ruins of the city, he sees the ruins of a relationship between the people and God. And this relationship was a special one, because it was a covenant relationship. God has always promised his presence to his people, he has always promised to be faithful and loving to his people. God has always kept his promise, but the people failed. The ten commandments are the law which God asked his people to keep.

In a traditional marriage ceremony here in the UK, we exchange vows which are very

beautiful. But there is actually only one legally binding part and it is:

Are you Martin free lawfully to marry Davinia?

I Martin take you Davinia to be my wedded wife

I Davinia take you Martin to be my wedded husband

This is the legal promise or covenant that is the foundation of marriage. First that you are free to marry, not married to someone else. And two that you want to be married, to be wedded to each other. The rest of the vows that often made are:

For better for worse  
For richer for poorer  
In sickness and in health  
To love and to cherish

These vows expand what it means to be married, to be in a covenantal relationship with another person is to stick with them through thick and thin, to care for them in sickness and to love them. It means putting up with annoying habits and celebrating even small things – on both sides.

One of the problems of the relationship with God that Jeremiah found was that the people of God had forgotten the basis of their relationship. So then the emphasis shifted away from being a faithful follower of God, to defining small matters of the law and what could work around the law. If a married person asks – do I need to care for my partner when they are sick from flu or is it just when it becomes pneumonia? We know the relationship is trouble. If God's people say – we know that you are the creator of the world, but we're going to pray to this golden cow for some rain as well, we know the relationship is in trouble.

God does not change, but through the prophet Jeremiah he speaks reminding his people that they have. He reminds them that through their broken relationship with him, their lives have become broken as individuals, families and as a nation. So much so that Israel is no longer called a nation here, but a people scattered across the earth.

But God is a restorer.

God looks at the house of Israel and of Judah, and picks through the rubble and has a vision of what it could look like. He doesn't dream of bi-folding doors and basement gym but dreams of a people followed God by their heart. He dreams of a people who don't follow him by law like a shopping list but one that flows out of their heart. To be in this kind of relationship with God is where we too say – I love the lord first, and then I work out the details of how that looks. I love the lord first for he is written on my heart. Our relationship with God ought to be one that starts in love, is surrounded in love, and one that never, ever ends for true love does not end.

The property developer who pours concrete into the back garden is only interested in profit and easy maintenance. The property developer who looks at the back garden and dreams of fruit trees, dappled shade and a table for feasting is the one who God looks most like. For the God who offers this new relationship is v28 one who will take care to plant and to build up. God the restorer doesn't want a new relationship with new terms, expanded arrangements and lengthy legal arrangements. God the restorer looks to rebuild the relationship he has with his people and for it to be fruitful. This relationship is one for growth.

God the restorer is like the developer who carefully strips back the layers of wallpaper,

decades of bad decisions, layer by layer. He strips woodwork warped by years of dodgy paint, he takes off the fake fireplace, and knocks through the wall to find the original one. God the restorer is making a new covenant with his people but it's based on an old love. This old love is the one that made the world, brought us into being and beckons us into relationship with him today.

God's tool for this process of restoration is forgiveness. Did you know that God loves you with a never-ending love? Did you know that his forgiveness for all that we have done that is not right is available to us now? For the God of restoration did not stop at Israel or Judah because v 34 all will know me.

At communion today we are reminded that God's restoration did not stop then either. As Jesus was sent by the Father to the world, he was sent to restore. He was sent to remind us of the God who loves us, and yearns for us to follow him. As Jesus dies and rises from death, he shows God's love of restoration to the maximum. As Jesus sent the Spirit to us, he now takes on the work of restoration in our lives today.

What might God want to restore in us today? Where might he plant? Or build us up? How might we need to know his forgiveness? God the restorer is present with us now as we share this meal together. His call to us is to have faith looking at the wreck of house before us for he has the hope of restoration and is calling us to be part of his restoration of the world and of our hearts. God is our restorer, may our hearts be restored by his hope.

Song: Restore us Lord  
Our mouths they were filled, filled with laughter  
Our tongues they were loosed, loosed with joy

Restore us, O Lord  
Restore us, O Lord

Although we are weeping  
Lord, help us keep sowing  
The seeds of Your Kingdom  
For the day You will reap them  
Your sheaves we will carry  
Lord, please do not tarry  
All those who sow weeping will go out with songs of joy  
The nations will say, "He has done great things!"  
The nations will sing songs of joy  
Restore us, O Lord  
Restore us, O Lord

### *Communion*

### *Prayers for the world*

Song: Build your kingdom here  
Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand  
Heal our streets and land  
Set Your church on fire  
Win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere  
Build Your kingdom here  
We pray  
Come set Your rule and reign  
In our hearts again  
Increase in us we pray  
Unveil why we're made  
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope  
Like wildfire in our very souls  
Holy Spirit, come invade us now  
We are Your Church  
And we need Your power  
In us

We seek Your kingdom first  
We hunger and we thirst  
Refuse to waste our lives  
For You're our joy and prize  
To see the captive hearts released  
The hurt, the sick, the poor at peace

We lay down our lives for Heaven's cause  
We are Your church  
And we pray revive  
This earth (we're prayin' for revival)

*Build Your kingdom here  
Let the darkness fear  
Show Your mighty hand  
Heal our streets and land  
Set Your church on fire  
Win this nation back  
Change the atmosphere  
Build Your kingdom here  
We pray (change the atmosphere)*

Unleash Your kingdom's power  
Reaching the near and far  
No force of hell can stop  
Your beauty changing hearts  
You made us for much more than this  
Awake the kingdom seed in us  
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ  
We are Your church  
Oh, and we are the hope  
On earth

Blessing