



Sunday Worship at Home
11th July 2021

Welcome as today we mark Sea Sunday

As fishermen expectantly cast their nets into the sea,
so may we approach you today, living God,
with that same spirit of anticipation,
trusting that you will meet us where we are
and receive our worship,
which we offer in Jesus' name. Amen.

HYMN

There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in His justice
which is more than liberty.

There is plentiful redemption
in the blood that has been shed;
there is joy for all the members
in the sorrows of the Head.

There is grace enough for thousands
of new worlds as great as this;
there is room for fresh creations
in that upper home of bliss.

For the love of God is broader
than the measures of man's mind;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

But we make His love too narrow
by false limits of our own;
and we magnify His strictness
with a zeal He will not own.

If our love were but more simple
we should take Him at His word;
and our lives would be illumined
by the presence of our Lord.

[Genesis 1; 1-10](#)

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.^[a] **2** The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

3 Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light "day" and the darkness "night." And evening passed and morning came, marking the first day.

⁶ Then God said, "Let there be a space between the waters, to separate the waters of the heavens from the waters of the earth." ⁷ And that is what happened. God made this space to separate the waters of the earth from the waters of the heavens. ⁸ God called the space "sky."

And evening passed and morning came, marking the second day.

⁹ Then God said, "Let the waters beneath the sky flow together into one place, so dry ground may appear." And that is what happened. ¹⁰ God called the dry ground "land" and the waters "seas." And God saw that it was good.



The sea is such an important part of God's Creation, that it is mentioned in verse two of the Bible, on day three of his creation God separated the water from the land, shaping the world as we know it.

The sea gives us boundaries, for many it is a source of food, it provides work for millions; it can be somewhere for great fun...

However, humans cannot tame the sea; it can blow up into a storm of such power that the very best man and machine can do is futile against it. We cannot and will never control its coming in and going out and the tide waits for no one.

We pray together...

Let us praise God who made the earth and sea and sky,
all that lives and breathes
all mysteries beyond our understanding
whose love endures forever.

Let us praise the God who calms storms and quietens our fears,
whose Living Word in Jesus
speaks above the rage of earthly life
whose love endures forever

Let us praise God who gathers us all in love
who renews our lives,
brings us through challenge and hardship
and who gives us an everlasting hope
whose love endures forever. Amen.

We call you, Faithful God, yet we are so often afraid.
When we look at the forces around us,
we lack the confidence that you will bring us safely through.
We are afraid to take the risk of trusting you,
and at times feel as if you have abandoned us.
Loving God, forgive us for our weakness of faith;
and help us to trust your presence. Amen.

Loving Lord, we give you thanks with one voice
for you have freed us from our sins,
from all that binds us;
not because of what we do,
but because of your great love;
and we praise you, as we pray in the
words you taught us...

Our Father...



HYMN [based on Psalm 46 and to the Dam Busters' Tune]

God is our strength and refuge,
our present help in trouble;
and we therefore will not fear,
though the earth should change!
Though mountains shake and tremble,
though swirling floods are raging,
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

There is a flowing river,
within God's holy city;
God is in the midst of her –
she shall not be moved!
God's help is swiftly given,
thrones vanish at His presence –
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

Come, see the works of our maker,
learn of His deeds all-powerful;
wars will cease across the world
when He shatters the spear!
Be still and know your Creator,
uplift Him in the nations –
God the Lord of hosts is with us evermore!

In May 2019, the five-man crew of the MT Iba had been abandoned. The ship's owner had ceased to send supplies, be in communication or pay the crew for the last five months. Unable to leave the ship, a 5000ton oil tanker, they were stuck at anchorage eight miles off the coast of the UAE.

That's when the Mission to Seafarers first became involved and delivered emergency food, water and fuel; the men were lonely, isolated, hungry and fearful. The Mission tried, unsuccessfully to negotiate with the ship's owner.

Then the pandemic struck; the crew faced another year on board, being supplied by the Mission to Seafarers.

In early 2021 a vicious storm blew up; their main and secondary anchorage failed; they ran aground near a public beach in the UAE.

Now they were visible to the people there, questions were asked and a new buyer for the ship found. With wages in their banks, it is hoped the five crew may soon be able to return to their various homes in Myanmar, Pakistan and India. Overall an ordeal of almost four years.

Taken from Sea Sunday 2021, Mission to Seafarers

[Matthew 14: 22-33](#)

²² Immediately after this [Jesus had fed 5000 men with two loaves and five fish] Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. ²³ After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.

²⁴ Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. ²⁵ About three o'clock in the morning^[a] Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!"

²⁷ But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!^[a]"

²⁸ Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water."

²⁹ "Yes, come," Jesus said.

So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the strong^[a] wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

³¹ Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"

³² When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³ Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

Some thoughts....

Can we begin to imagine what those five men on the MT Iba felt, what they went through for months, out at sea? We moaned about staying in or near home in beautiful Cornwall; some even coming to blows over pasta and loo rolls.

The Sea of Galilee often looks beautiful and calm, yet many Biblical writers describe it as an abyss, a fearsome place of darkness and chaos. It is subject to sudden violent storms. Few could swim and even fishermen avoided very deep water. It's not surprising the disciples are terrified, and then especially scared when they see someone or something walking on the water.

Even after Jesus speaks to the disciples, they are still not sure, and so Peter calls out; when Jesus tells him to 'come', Peter steps out of the boat in faith. Having walked on the water a little way, he becomes frightened and starts to sink. 'Lord, save me!', and Jesus' strong arm lifts Peter up. The faith of Peter and those on board grew, 'You really are the Son of God!'

It was the strong arm of those in the Mission to Seafarers, serving troubled people at sea, as Jesus' hands and feet, that lifts up the five crew members on the MT Iba; saving them from a terrible fate.

It seems that if we are going to be faithful to Christ, fruitful in ministry and keep the Church sustainable, then we are all called to make a step out in faith.

As C21 Christians we may not fear water, but we still face stormy seas—those challenging situations that tempt us to stay in our safe little boat; safe in our church. But the world outside is broken; hurting; in chaos. Jesus calls us to step out into the world, the community, the neighbourhood, in mission for him; keeping our eyes upon him.

We pray together...

Creator God,

we lift to you the shipping industry; those who build, own, manage or operate ships to support the trade of the world.

We thank you for every company that cares for those who go to sea and ask that you let justice prevail so those who exploit seafarers would cease to do so.

Lord, we pray for wellness for those who work at sea and ask that you bless them with safe working conditions, good food and just rewards for all their efforts.

Loving Lord,

we give thanks for all who protect and support those working or relaxing on the sea, providing rescue services and safe havens.

We remember the work of the RNLI, HM Coastguard, Trinity House, the Royal Navy and maritime trade unions.

We pray too for those who offer spiritual aid, such as the Mission to Seafarers, the Sailors' Society and others who give assistance and support to seafarers' families.

We lift to you the work of port chaplains around the world as they minister to people of all faiths and none.

We rejoice that the work of these and other organisations around the world gives comfort to those who are at times in danger, exhausted, injured, exploited, lonely and afraid.

HYMN

O the deep, deep love of Jesus!

Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free,
rolling as a mighty ocean
in its fullness over me.

Underneath me, all around me,
is the current of thy love;
leading onward, leading homeward,
to thy glorious rest above.

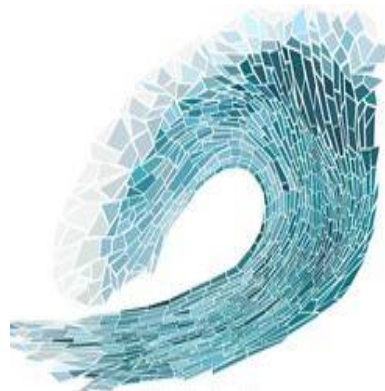
O the deep, deep love of Jesus!
Spread his praise from shore to shore;
how he loveth, ever loveth,
changeth never, nevermore;
how he watches o'er his loved ones,
died to call them all his own;
how for them he intercedeth,
watcheth o'er them from the throne.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus!

Love of ev'ry love the best:
'tis an ocean vast of blessing,
'tis a haven sweet of rest.

O the deep, deep love of Jesus!

'Tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me;
and it lifts me up to glory,
for it lifts me up to thee.



Acts 27; 27-44

²⁷ About midnight on the fourteenth night of the storm, as we were being driven across the Sea of Adria,[Ⓜ] the sailors sensed land was near. ²⁸ They dropped a weighted line and found that the water was 120 feet deep. But a little later they measured again and found it was only 90 feet deep.[Ⓜ] ²⁹ At this rate they were afraid we would soon be driven against the rocks along the shore, so they threw out four anchors from the back of the ship and prayed for daylight.

³⁰ Then the sailors tried to abandon the ship; they lowered the lifeboat as though they were going to put out anchors from the front of the ship. ³¹ But Paul said to the commanding officer and the soldiers, "You will all die unless the sailors stay aboard." ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes to the lifeboat and let it drift away.

³³ Just as day was dawning, Paul urged everyone to eat. "You have been so worried that you haven't touched food for two weeks," he said. ³⁴ "Please eat something now for your own good. For not a hair of your heads will perish." ³⁵ Then he took some bread, gave thanks to God before them all, and broke off a piece and ate it. ³⁶ Then everyone was encouraged and began to eat— ³⁷ all 276 of us who were on board. ³⁸ After eating, the crew lightened the ship further by throwing the cargo of wheat overboard.

³⁹ When morning dawned, they didn't recognize the coastline, but they saw a bay with a beach and wondered if they could get to shore by running the ship aground. ⁴⁰ So they cut off the anchors and left them in the sea. Then they lowered the rudders, raised the foresail, and headed toward shore. ⁴¹ But they hit a shoal and ran the ship aground too soon. The bow of the ship stuck fast, while the stern was repeatedly smashed by the force of the waves and began to break apart.

⁴² The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to make sure they didn't swim ashore and escape. ⁴³ But the commanding officer wanted to spare Paul, so he didn't let them carry out their plan. Then he ordered all who could swim to jump overboard first and make for land. ⁴⁴ The others held on to planks or debris from the broken ship. So everyone escaped safely to shore.

Some thoughts....

Paul is being taken to Rome for trial, but the ship is too late to find a good port in which to over-winter; they hit a storm and are tossed along by a 'north-easter'. To lighten the boat, cargo and tackle are thrown overboard, Paul receives an angelic vision, saying there will be no loss of life. We joined them fourteen nights in; having not eaten, the crew are tired, weak, terrified; ready to abandon ship.

As Paul relays the angel's message to the crew his words reveal his strengths - the anchors for his soul.

Paul knows the PRESENCE of God.

When everyone is in despair and the situation seems doomed, Paul is calm and confident, because he knows God is present.

Storms happen; no one ever said life would always be good [if anyone has, they haven't lived] we, from time to time get caught in our own north-easterlies. Yet, however we feel, there is nothing so rough it can hide us from God. We may not see him, but he sees us. We may feel he's far away, but he's right there, in it, with us. This is the assurance given to Paul by the angel and by God in so many ways, to us.

Do we have an anchor in God's presence?

Paul knows the PURPOSE of God.

Through the angel, the Lord told Paul to not be afraid, and that he would stand trial before Cesar, in Rome.

Therefore, it wasn't in God's plan for Paul to end up at the bottom of the Med. His life was in God's hands and so is ours. In the midst of a life north-easterly, it may feel challenging, if not impossible, to see God's purpose; nonetheless, God calls us to not be afraid.

Do we have an anchor in God's purpose?

Paul knows the PROMISE of God.

God says no one will perish, so Paul is calm.

Within our north-easterlies, God calls us not to worry, but to keep our faith in him. This is not one of those bland, empty lines we often hear, 'It will be fine' or 'You'll be OK' or 'I'm sure you'll pass', spoken when we don't know what to say and have no idea what really will occur. Paul passes on God's message from the heart; knowing that because it is from God it will be true. The Bible is full of God's promises; things happen as he says they will.

Do we have an anchor in God's promises?

May we consider and hold onto the anchor because right at its very heart is the cross, reminding us that through his Son Jesus Christ, God's presence, purpose and promise, are made real for each and every one of us.

God's Presence,
Purpose & Promise
are made real
in Jesus



We pray together...

Almighty God,

we remember those whose lives are lived on your great oceans; for those who go down to the sea in ships, we give thanks; they enrich our lives at great personal cost.

May they daily feel the strength of your protection, the warmth of your presence and the love of your relationship as they seek hope of safe passage.

May they know of your purpose for them, that they need not fear anything, for you are there with them at all times.

We pray for those who are stranded at sea and forced to survive using only the resources available around them.

Comfort them in loneliness and need; and remind them of your promise that in you they are never alone.

Holy Spirit,

may you join the crew of every ship that sails the oceans, bringing peace and harmony to them.

May your presence counsel the downhearted, heal the sick and bind together seafarers of all nationalities, cultures, languages and faith so that they might live in harmony despite their differences.

Loving Lord,

our prayers at this time are only a drop in the ocean, a tiny action in the great sea of need; yet we know that the power is not in what we do but in and through you.

So, please take our prayers, along with those of millions of others, to bring about your purposes of love, healing and hope for all.

In Jesus name we ask, Amen.

HYMN

Eternal Father, strong to save,
whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
its own appointed limits keep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
for those in peril on the sea.

O Christ, whose voice the waters heard,
and hushed their raging at Thy word,
who walkedst on the foaming deep,
and calm amid the storm didst sleep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
for those in peril on the sea.

O Holy Spirit, who didst brood
upon the waters dark and rude,
and bid their angry tumult cease,
and give, for wild confusion, peace:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
for those in peril on the sea.

O Trinity of love and power,
our brethren shield in danger's hour;
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,
protect them wheresoe'er they go:
thus evermore shall rise to Thee
glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

We pray together...

May the Lord keep us safe in his grasp;
that we know we will never fall from his everlasting arms.
May we go out in faith, to serve him in the world.
May we anchor in God's presence, purpose and promise
in and through his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

And, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, ever more. Amen.



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