



**Written Service for Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2021.  
By Deacon Guy Austin-Bride**

**Call to Worship** – This is the day that the Lord has made  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

**Hymn** – StF 50 Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.

**Prayers of Adoration and Confession –**

Loving God, all-sufficient one,

we acknowledge your presence, and we worship you.

We adore you, Lord of all.

We worship you, Lord Jesus Christ, holy and anointed one.

You laid your life down that we might live.

We adore you, Lord of all.

We welcome your authority and influence in our lives, Holy Spirit.

You intercede for us when we have no strength.

You are with us and guide us in our weakness.

We adore you, Lord of all.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are worthy of all our praise:

we adore you, Lord of all.

**Amen**

We bow before you, O God,

and we confess that we have let you down.

We have turned away from you and gone our own way.

We have allowed material things to dominate our lives,  
and to occupy our minds.

We are sorry, and we lay everything at your feet.

We are sorry that we overcomplicate everything.

Help us to learn how to be still and know that you are God.

Help us to seek simplicity, to slow down and not to hurry,  
to require nothing more than what you give,

and to fear being vulnerable,

so that we can be complete in your presence.

**Amen.**

Jesus Christ, you died and rose again

that we might be released from all the worldly things

that weigh us down.

Thank you that we are forgiven,

that our chains are gone,

and we have been set free to serve you once again.

**Amen.**

**Old Testament Reading – 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10**

**New Testament Reading – Mark 6:1-13**

**Hymn – StF 404 God's Spirit is in my heart.**

Reflection –

I am blessed with two sisters. The youngest is fourteen years younger than me, and although I was generally happy to have a sister, I wasn't always happy to have her hanging around me when I was out with my mates trying to look cool. It's also not great when you are trying to talk to a girl and then realise that you have sticky, milky, biscuity handprints all over your Ben Sherman shirt.

My Sisters have always been dancers and singers, they trained at theatre school and were always in some amateur performance of some kind. My youngest sister left school and became a fulltime dancer and singer. One day she asked me to come to one of her performances, so I did. I was expecting some amateur performance with people dressed in tea towels, wearing masks made of cereal boxes and orange squash at the interval.

I arrived at the venue and was shocked to find that it wasn't a school hall or community centre, it was a full on proper, posh theatre. The name of the show was in big lights above the door, there were ushers selling programmes and a huge queue of people eagerly waiting outside. I thought I must be in the wrong place; this can't be it.

As I got to the door, a lady in uniform came to me and said 'you must be Guy, your sister said you were coming, follow me'. The lady led me passed the queue and down the stairs, she escorted me to my seat near the front row, and on my seat was a programme that my sister had taken around and had the whole cast autograph for me. The Lady made sure I was seated and said to let her know if I needed anything.

I was really quite taken aback.

Anyway, the show started with a live orchestra, curtains lifted, lights flashed and dancers came on, they were so glamorous. The dancers stood either side of the main singer, each was very tall, clad in glitter, sequins and huge feathers on their heads. They were so professional, there were high kicks, splits and spins, pointed toes and graceful outstretched arms. There was one dancer in particular, who could kick higher than all the rest, the tallest most glamorous, each time she came to the front to do her solo piece the crowd went wild, she was amazing. So elegant and graceful. The Show was over three hours long and the dancers were on stage for most of that time. It was a truly breath-taking experience.

Afterwards I waited in the foyer for my sister.

She came up to me in jeans and T-shirt and excitedly exclaimed 'what did you think, did you enjoy the show'.

We hugged and I told her what an amazing experience it was, the lights, the colours the vibrant energy, I loved it... 'But I didn't see you' I said.

'What do you mean you didn't see me' replied my sister

'I couldn't see where you were' I said.

My sister looked very confused and said 'I was the one of the main dancers at the front, I was the one with all the solo pieces.'

I couldn't believe it, the tallest, most elegant, glamorous and professional dancer on the stage, the one the crowd went wild for, the one on all the posters, including the poster on the wall next to my head, was my little sister.

The one who used to break my toys and once used my guitar as a tennis racket to knock stones over next doors garden.

I didn't even think for a second it could be her.

My sister laughed and said, 'you mean to tell me that you have sat through a three-hour performance, not ten feet from the stage and you didn't recognise me right in front of you'.

Well, what could I say, it served me right for not realising how professional my sister was, and not recognising her hard work and talent.

And to add to my embarrassment a small group of girls ran over to ask for my sister's autograph.

One of the girls asked if she had any advice for young dancers.

My sister replied 'Yes, never invite your big brother to your shows'.

To me she was my little sister, I hadn't recognised the extent of her calling to be a dancer, I hadn't even thought of the hours and hours of training, the hard work and dedication, the blood, sweat and tears, the standing back up after falling down, the determination to succeed, I had never let my sister step out of the role of 'annoying little sibling' that I had put her in.

Although Jesus never wore glitter and feathers he did have a similar experience when he went to his home town.

The full extent of who he was, was not recognised, by those around him. He was just seen as the carpenter, the son of Mary. They probably only ever saw him as a man in a leather apron covered in sawdust and written him off as such.

The sad thing is that what Jesus was able to do was limited by their lack of faith, they didn't want to see the carpenter healing people, so they didn't see it. They missed out on the exciting, life giving, transformational love of the Emmanuel 'God with us'.

The experience I had at the show was nothing compared to the experience I would have had if I had recognised the tall, elegant dancer at the front as my sister.

The experience that the people of Nazareth had was limited because they didn't recognise the Messiah in front of them.

We must never let our prejudices, our past thoughts and actions stop us from recognising Jesus in our lives, otherwise we limit what Jesus can do for us. We miss out on the miracle, the joy, the grace and love of God. We miss out on experiencing faith in all its fullness.

Jesus is here, He is in our lives, and he shares in your life, recognise that, and pray to experience Jesus in all his wonderful glory.

Amen.

### **Prayers of Intercession –**

My power is made perfect in weakness.

Lord God, there are so many situations in our troubled world that need your hand upon them.

Some we are aware of, many we are not. But you know.

My grace is sufficient for you.

We pray today for countries at war,  
that their leaders may realise the futility of human power  
and the all-sufficient power of God, who says:

My grace is sufficient for you.

We pray for areas affected by natural disasters,  
that your order may be restored,  
and your compassion rule.

My grace is sufficient for you.

We pray for people who are disabled,  
who struggle with the tasks of everyday living,  
that they will receive the help and encouragement they need.

My grace is sufficient for you.

We pray for people with illnesses, seen and unseen.  
For those who suffer in ways we cannot begin to understand.  
For people who do not know your love and power in their lives.

My grace is sufficient for you.

Amen.

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn – StF 658 A Charge to keep have I.  
The Grace.**