

LOVE NEVER FAILS. CORONAVIRUS IMPACTS ALL OF US. BUT LOVE UNITES US ALL.

— A Service for Christian Aid Sunday —



Welcome to this weeks service, we hope it will comfort, challenge and inspire you in the week ahead as you learn about the work of Christian Aid at this vital time.

1 Song - Here I am to Worship



2 Prayer for the time of Coronavirus

'For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Romans 8:38-39)

God of heaven and earth,
in these times of isolation,
apart from loved ones
distant from friends
away from neighbours
thank you that there is nothing
in all of creation,
not even coronavirus,
that is able to separate us from your
love.

And may your love that never fails
continue to be shared
through the kindness of strangers
looking out for each other,
for neighbours near and far
all recognising our shared vulnerability,
each of us grateful for every breath,
and willing everyone to know the gift
of a full and healthy life.
Keep us all in your care.

Amen.

3

Christian Aid's work with Rohingya

Christian Aid has been working with Rohingya men, women and children since they were forced to flee Myanmar three years ago. They have been providing humanitarian assistance to 150,000 Rohingya refugees and 50,000 host communities in Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh.

Working with other agencies, they have been providing critical support covering health, water and sanitation, food and shelter for both those living in the refugee camps and their host communities.

Living in a refugee camp is already challenging at the best of times. Camps are overcrowded and lack proper hygiene which increases the potential for the rapid spread of the coronavirus.

Across the refugee camps, 80% of families report having at least one person with a serious illness requiring medical treatment.

In addition, 80% of families report having problems with their temporary shelters and only 67% report having soap.

The coronavirus pandemic compounds the situation and puts their lives at increased risk. The first case of Covid-19 in the camps was reported on 25 March 2020.

In order to reduce the risk of transmission, operations in the camps have been reduced to the provision of essential services. All non-essential visits to the camps have been suspended – but our work continues.

To prevent the spread of the virus they are:

- Raising awareness of the virus and sharing hygiene messages to people in the camps in their local Rohingya languages. We are doing the same with the host communities through community volunteers and religious leaders. We are also using posters and sharing messages using megaphones.
- Helping doctors in the camps receive training so they can treat infected people and train other doctors in health facilities.
- Conducting door-to-door handwashing training sessions.

Christian Aid expects to train 85-100 healthcare staff on infection, prevention and disease control. We're also ensuring healthcare staff are equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE) and that handwashing stations are available at the entrances to 10 health facilities.

In addition, they will build additional handwashing stations throughout the camps, and distribute hygiene kits (containing antiseptic liquid and soap) to 50,000 people.

It is at times like these – testing times – that we recognise we are all in this together. Coronavirus impacts all of us, but love unites us all.





4 Christian Aid's work in Nigeria

Christian Aid is working with some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities to help them stay safe during the coronavirus pandemic. This includes with displaced people in Nigeria.

Christian Aid has been working in camps in Borno state, northeast Nigeria since 2016, to provide essential food to internally displaced people.

They've provided food to 48,550 people, including children and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. They continue to deliver life-saving food on a monthly basis.

In these overcrowded camps, people lack proper hygiene facilities. The disease would spread rapidly in these circumstances. Thankfully, there have not yet been any confirmed cases in the camps, so our work continues with additional precautions in place.

The Nigeria team is working hard to ensure they can continue this essential work without putting people living in the camps, or those delivering aid, at risk of getting the coronavirus.

To reduce the risk of spreading the virus, all staff and volunteers delivering aid are wearing protective equipment, such as gloves and masks, and regularly using hand sanitisers.

They have set up hand washing points in the distribution sites, to enable displaced families to wash and sanitise their hands before they arrive at the distribution site, and again when they leave.

They now have fewer staff members going into the camps, and we are working with more volunteers based in the camps to reduce unnecessary contact. They are also enabling social distancing to keep people safe.

To raise awareness of the virus, they are using jingles in local languages at distribution sites which inform people of the risks without causing fear and panic.

It is at times like these – testing times – that we recognise we are all in this together. Coronavirus impacts all of us, but love unites us all.

5 Song - Whole world in his hands

He's got the whole world in his hands
He's got the whole world in his hands
He's got the whole world in his hands
He's got the whole world in his hands

Hes got you me brother in his hands
Hes got you me brother in his hands
Hes got you me brother in his hands
He's got the whole world in his hands

Hes got the tiny little baby in his hands
Hes got the tiny little baby in his hands
Hes got the tiny little baby in his hands
He's got the whole world in his hands

He's got everybody here in his hands
He's got everybody here in his hands
He's got everybody here in his hands
He's got the whole world in his hands



6 John 14.1-14 (NRSV)

14 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe^[a] in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?^[a] ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.'^[a] ⁵Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' ⁶Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will know^[a] my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

⁸Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' ⁹Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. ¹²Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If in my name you ask me^[a] for anything, I will do it.



7 Love Never Fails *with John Logan*

I often think that you can't go wrong with a good recipe. All you have to do is follow the instructions. What could possibly go wrong! In reality, lots can go wrong! Apart from the obvious problems of my stupidity in forgetting to put some ingredients in or worse than that putting the wrong ingredients in. Have you ever made custard with salt instead of sugar? Believe me, you don't want to try it!

So this morning I thought I would make some bread as we reflect on our theme of 'Love never fails, but love unites us all'

Wish me luck! First of all I would like to point out that I am no expert, nor am I a potential bake off contestant! Thankfully our lesson today comes from the gospel according to St Paul- Hollywood! (other texts are available!) I am always thankful for those who have gone before us and put their advice to paper for us and for our edification.

So let's do it! I have all my ingredients ready- flour, salt, yeast, butter and water. For such a tasty product the ingredients are really simple!

First we mix the salt and yeast into the flour, keeping the salt away from the yeast as much as possible, otherwise it kills it before we start. Then I mix in the butter followed by some of the water. Now 'St Paul' tells me that I might not need all the water and what I really want is a soft dough, not a soggy one! Nobody wants a soggy bottom, let alone a soggy dough!



And now for the Kneading. While I give it the first knead, I will talk.

Today's reading recalls one of a series of sayings of Jesus, known as the 'I am' sayings of Jesus. There are seven of them in John's gospel, beginning with Jesus saying 'I am the bread of life', then 'the light', the gate, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life, and finally the way, the truth and the life the true vine. In the Greek ego eimi 'I am' is a reminder of the God who met Moses at the burning bush. 'Tell them 'I am has sent you', Moses was told.

These pictures in John's gospels are great pictures to explore. If you are a visual type of learner, as I am, they are really helpful in helping explore the meaning of faith. In our reading today, good old Thomas asks the questions we all want to ask! 'We don't know where you are going, Lord, so how can we find the way.'

'Follow me', Jesus replied- I am your route map, I am your recipe.

This recipe is not always easy to follow. It is easy to get things wrong. We frequently forget the ingredients. Jesus taught us that prayer is a key ingredient and yet so

often we substitute it with worry. He taught us to trust, like the birds of the air, and yet so often we substitute it with doubt. Most of all the key ingredient of love. Love is what unites us all, God's love for us and our love for us is amazing.

You see God takes the ordinary and makes it extraordinary! God takes you and me and makes us extraordinary together. We have heard today about the work of Christian Aid with the Rohingya people and in with some of the poorest communities in Nigeria. Their work is a vital part of God's recipe. I am reminded of the words of the sixteenth century saint 'Teresa of Avila'.



"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

The fact is Love never fails. Coronavirus may impact all of us. But love unites us all.

Now have a look at how the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

Well there you are, the ordinary ingredients become extraordinary, just as God takes you and me, really ordinary people and can turn us into the extraordinary. Just like the ingredients in this bread my prayer is that bound together by love we too can become extraordinary.

Amen



8 Prayers for the World

Gracious and loving God, Thank you Lord that we are able to unite in a virtual worship today. As we gather today we believe that you are with us and your presence would guide us as we worship you and praise. We praise you for your comfort and strength at this time of turmoil around the world.

Lord, you are the creator who sustain all what you have created. We believe that we are in your powerful hands that your faithfulness is our shield which protects your people in trouble.

Lord, we bring to you the current turmoil that the world faces today. As you know Lord, that the Corona Virus pandemic has shaken the earth and the people in every nation are going through a very hard time.

We pray for the souls of those who have lost their life due to this virus infection. We remember the sufferings they went through in hospitals, care homes and houses. As we pray for souls, we bring to you those who are in hospitals being treated for this disease. Be with them and give them your strength and hope that they will come out of this soon with your mercy.

Loving and healing God, we pray for the medical workers everywhere, as they sacrifice their life putting the welfare of others before their own staying away from their family and loved ones comforting the concerned and bereaved reassuring the anxious and vulnerable working to heal and restore people who are ill. Be with them guide them give strength, and hope at this challenging time.

We pray for all of us who are locked down and confined to their homes. Isolated from their dear ones and friends. We pray for those who mourn and grieve for the loss of their dear ones as they are locked down, whose hopes have been dashed and find no way to put their lives back together again. We remember the children who cannot attend schools and universities unable to comprehend when this will come to an end.

Merciful God, we pray for the leaders of nations at this time as they take decisions. They are confused as to what step they should take to control this disease. Lord, give them the right wisdom and the right advice so that lives can be protected and saved. Help them with resources so that the supply of protecting equipment could be made available throughout the nations as well as all what is needed for the scientists to carry out the research to find a vaccine.

Lord, we trust on the promise that you laid down in Philippians. We bring all our concerns to you trusting in your mercy. We thank you for your wonderful guidance and protection as you uphold us within your wings. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.



9 Hymn - Love Divine

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)



Donating to Christian Aid

Having heard about the vital work of Christian aid during this time, and feel you would like to support their work, you can give online at the link below:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/emergencies/coronavirus-emergency-appeal>



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