



Welcome to our Sunday Service (15/8/21)

When I'm weak, then I am strong!

Prepared by Karen Hudson

Blessed Be Your Name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed be Your name

Blessed Be Your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed Be Your name

Every blessing You pour out, I'll
Turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your glorious name

Blessed be Your name
When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's 'all as it should be'
Blessed be Your name

Blessed be Your name
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be Your name

You give and take away
You give and take away
My heart will choose to say
Lord blessed be Your name

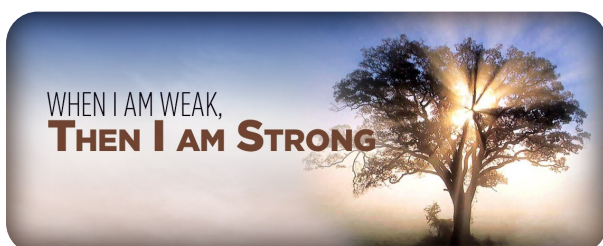
By Matt and Beth Redman



Father God, we bring you the worship of our hearts afresh today. Thank you that you are our creator and that you have compassion on all that you have made. You remember that we are dust and you choose not to treat us as our sins deserve. Thank you Jesus for being everything we could never be, and for offering your perfect life as a payment for the debt we could never pay. Help us to enjoy the wonder that our sins are forgiven and we are free! Help us to fully inhabit the grace you offer us, and live in the joy of knowing that when we are weak, then we are strong. Empower us to share this hope. In Jesus name we pray. **Amen.**

2 Corinthians 12 v 9-10

⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



INTRODUCTION

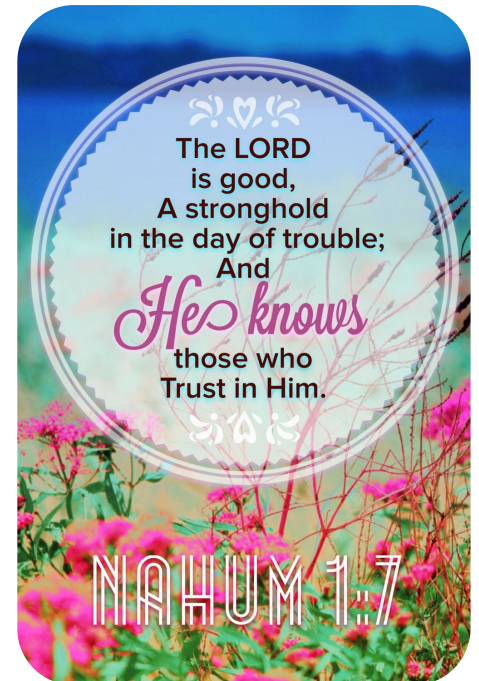
Hello everybody and welcome to Croftlands Community Church. I'm so pleased that you can join us this morning, whether on-line or through the written service notes. My name's Karen and I just want to say a really big welcome to you all and it's so great to have you join us. I, along with my husband Adam and daughter Annabelle joined your church just before lock down and we look forward to getting to know you all when we meet up again very soon.

How's your summer going? We're having a brilliant time and I hope that you're enjoying spending some more time with friends and family. We've got some lovely weather at the minute.

So coming up in this service....

- ◆ I'll be giving a short testimony,
- ◆ There's the words of a worship song on the front page
- ◆ There's a time of reflection

Above all, I do hope and I pray that you will just enjoy dwelling in God's presence and reflecting and thinking about His goodness and His greatness



Karen's Testimony

I've been asked to share a little bit about what I felt a welcoming Church would be or maybe what it would look like. I felt that I wanted to share with you a testimony that Adam and I experienced ten years ago, when we were struggling with my pregnancy.

We were told that our daughter Annabelle was going to be born with heart problems, so we needed to go and have her in Newcastle, at Newcastle Hospital. At the time, obviously it was very upsetting, it was very difficult news to come to terms with, and we were told to prepare to be there for at least a month. This meant that we were having to prepare to go to Newcastle, a strange place where we didn't know anyone, we didn't have any family, we didn't have any friends there and we knew that we were going to have to spend a lot of time in the hospital there with our baby daughter who wasn't going to be very well.

So, the first thing I did was to look on the internet to find a Church at Newcastle, because I just felt that we needed to be part of a family and part of community. So, I reached out to a Church there which was Tyneside Vineyard Church, and I sent an email explaining what was happening in our situation. I received a lovely email back – it was so welcoming, and they said.... *"next time you come up why don't you come and meet with us, and we'll invite all of our Church community over so that you can meet key people who are willing to help you"*. They gave us a piece of paper with everybody's name and contact numbers on, who were willing to offer us food, or do some washing for us, or at any time if we needed some help, we were able to phone them.

We just got such a lovely, lovely welcome and we were blown away by the generosity of how they were with a complete stranger. They didn't know who we were, we weren't part of their Church, but we turned up in need and that was a humbling experience, because often we don't like to depend on other people, we like to be independent and so we had to accept help from people.

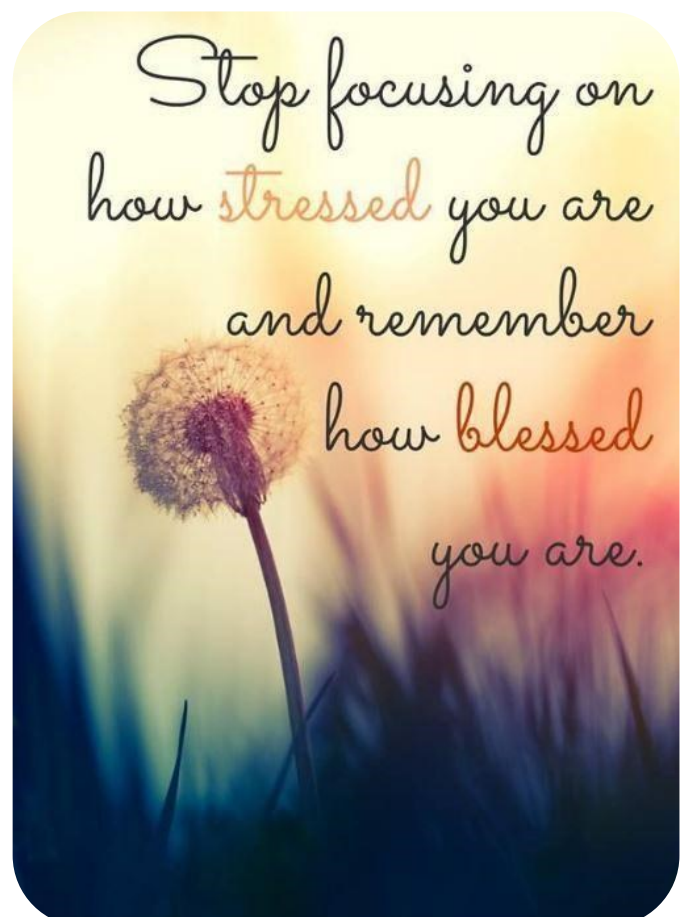
The Pastors, as it turned out, lived three streets away from the hospital, it was absolutely incredible, and we were able to go round and have food with them, they would drop off any spare food they had leftover; they sent us a key in the post for their house, and said that they would be away when we arrived, but we could use their drive to park the car and we could use their washing machine. We were absolutely inundated with offers and support from a welcoming, welcoming Church.

So when I think about Kathryn and what she was saying over the last few months about how Church needs to be welcoming, that we welcome strangers, that we love people, that we support people. I've experienced that first-hand and even though it was such a difficult time for us – we ended up being there for nine months – we had a lovely Church family, we had friends and we didn't feel alone. It was just incredible that even though it was a very difficult time, it was one of the best times as well because we trusted in God; we found out that it didn't matter where we were, the Church family is extended across the nation, across the world and that we can belong and be part of God's BIG family.

I just love the verses on page 1. We went to Newcastle – our family was stripped away, our work was stripped away, our house had been stripped away, we were in such a strange land, in a place of weakness, but we were immensely blessed.

It became quite fun to count our blessings, to think, "even though we are experiencing such a tough and difficult time – let's count our blessings and let's see how God is with us". It was so encouraging and we knew that God was there, right with us, all the way through and he still is now.

I love those verses that when we are weak, then HE is strong in us. I think it's such a powerful, powerful thing that we've experienced. It's been such a life changing event that we have realised that when you do ultimately have to depend, when you can't control your situation, when you can't just make everything better – no money, nothing can change anything – apart from just being where you are, just being planted, being rooted where you are, and just depending on God, and that is when you will see that He will bless you and that He's there and that He's going to take you through these hard times.



A LOVE WITH A DIFFERENCE

by Karen Hudson

I believe his grace and mercy, although I may not see,
I can feel his peaceful presence and His love for me.
His physical appearance, to myself may not be known,
But the Spirit is revealed in my life, so I know I'm not alone.

My path is never clear to me, but to Him it is as crystal,
For God has specifically chosen me and it wasn't accidental.
Magnificently moving and perfectly performing, all done in such glorious ways,
Blessed is he who has life like me, with joy in all his days.

And when I don't listen to good advice and disobey God's Holy will,
My forgiving Father gently whispers my name and says, "I love you still".

God is graciously pure and is continually my Father, my Brother and my Friend,
But unlike everything in this life, the difference is, His love will never end.



THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on
earth as in Heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those
who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours.

Now and for ever. Amen.

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God and the fellowship of
The Holy Spirit be with us all now and
evermore. Amen.**

**For I am
convinced . . .**

**. . .that neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons,
neither the present nor the
future, nor any powers neither
height nor depth, nor anything
else in all creation, will be able to
separate us from the love of
God that is in Christ Jesus our
Lord. - Romans 8:38,39**