

## A song to sing or to read: Fill My Whole Life – TiS 596

Fill my whole life, O Lord my God in every part with praise  
That my whole being may proclaim your being and your ways.

Not for the lip of praise alone, nor ev'n the praising heart  
I ask, but for a life made up of praise in every part.

Praise in the common things of life, its goings out and in  
Praise in each duty and each deed, however small and mean.

Fill every part of me with praise: let all my being speak  
Of you and of your love, O Lord, poor though I be and weak.

So shall you Lord receive from me the praise and glory due  
And so shall I being on earth the song for ever new.

So shall no part of day and night from sacredness be free  
But with you Lord in every step my fellowship will be.

*Tune and lyrics in the Public Domain  
Tune: Richmond 86.86*

## Closing Prayer

Fill my whole life, O Lord my God,  
In every part with praise  
That my whole being may proclaim  
Your being and your ways.

**Amen**



With thanks to Brian Turrell for preparing today's reflection



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Church in a Bag  
Sunday 10 May  
Dubbo Uniting Church



## A Gathering Prayer

O God, who out of love for humanity, sent us Jesus to be our light, to show us the way, to bring love into our lives, and to travel with us as we sought to follow him. May we see the truth that he revealed and the wisdom of what life is meant to be. Be present as we come, just as we, to worship in the quiet of our home.

**Amen**

## A Prayer of Preparation

As we pause in prayer before reflecting on your word, we pray, O Lord, as the psalmist did. Open my eyes that I may behold the wonderful truths in your law.

O God of love, of wisdom. We come humbly into your presence, to lift our eyes unto you from whence comes our strength. To know you as God, Heavenly Father, one who guides us, one who we can trust, one who is there for us whenever and wherever we are.

This morning, as we reflect on the witness of Stephen, we pray that we may have the conviction and courage to stand up for you, our Lord, to proclaim our belief, our love, our reverence for you and our dependence on you.

Remind us, our God, that worship is a time of renewal, of reconnecting with you, as a time to prepare ourselves for service ... for grasping every opportunity to help ... to reach out to others ... to those needing support, companionship, comfort, a friendly voice.

**Amen**



## Reading: John 14: 1–14

There are several important messages in this passage. Firstly, Jesus tells Thomas “I am the truth, the way, and the life”. That is a message for us. In trusting that message we will discover the way to live, the truth of the meaning of life, and we shall experience life in all its fullness.

The second message is found in the words of Jesus, “now that you have known me, you will know my Father, and from now on, you know him and have seen him”. Jesus is assuring us that our relationship with God is one of a child and parent – of care and guidance, of unconditional love.

The third message is that in Jesus we have seen the Father, seen God. No words, attempts to explain, to describe, to define God are possible. To define is to limit. But in saying that we who have seen Jesus have seen the Father and that is all we need. The Chinese have a proverb – one picture is worth a thousand words. John’s Gospel tells us that Jesus is the picture that reveals the nature of God – perfect love and wisdom. God is everything that Jesus was.

## Reading: Psalm 31: 1–5, 14–16

Let us look at four verses:

3: You are my refuge and defence.

5: You will save me, Lord, you are a faithful God.

14: My trust is in you, O Lord, you are my God.

15: I am always in your care.



What a wonderful experience this psalmist has had – to have led him to write these words, to express what God means to him. That is something that we should take time to do – reflect on what God has done for us, on what he means to us ... on the part he plays in our lives.

What an experience to take with us of a God who cares for us, who we know we can trust through life, through times of sadness and joy, through health and sickness, through frustration and loneliness – knowing God is always there, who comes to us in prayer, in worship, in the love of family and friends.

## Reading: 1 Peter 2: 2–10

Peter invites us: “Come to the Lord, the living stone, rejected by man as worthless, but chosen by God as valuable. Come as living stones, and let yourselves be used in building the spiritual temple ... ”.

One message for us is to remind us that Jesus is the cornerstone of our Christian life, that he is the one to build our lives on. The other message is that we are called to reflect on how we can be used, how we can serve, how we can help others to make the life and teachings of Jesus the corner stone of their lives ... to know the life of unselfishness, of kindness, of fulfilment.

## Reading: Acts 7: 55–60

This is an account of Stephen being stoned to death for speaking out and pointing out how the religious leaders of his day were just as stubborn as their ancestors who persecuted God’s prophets, killed God’s messengers who announced the coming of God’s righteous Servant. And now you have betrayed and murdered him.

Stephen spoke out bravely saying what he believed needed to be said, even though he knew what would happen to him. Many people since have spoken out again issues of cruelty, of unfairness, opposing injustices and discrimination. Dietrich Bonhoeffer spoke against Hitler’s rise to power and his abuse of power, and he paid the price just before WW11 ended. Martin Luther King spoke out against the discrimination and injustices meted out to African-Americans, and he paid the price. Christians in China, in Indonesia, in many countries of Africa face persecution, and need our prayers.

In the past we have turned a blind eye to unfairness ... to discrimination. Are we prepared to stand up for our Christian values of love and respect for all humanity, and defend and help those who are unfairly treated? How far are we prepared to share what we have with the disadvantaged, the poor, the homeless? It is embarrassing to reflect on that when we have a home, food, friends and family and an income. Let us reflect on how can live out and practise agape love.