



Andrew Murray Pretoria
5th of July 2020
Liturgist:
Rev. Stefan Botha



† **Invocation and Greeting:**

God, we know that in our darkest hour,
when we sometimes feel like you have forsaken us,
You are with us.
There, in the darkness and pain,
You are with us.
In the grief and disappointment,
You are with us.

We know that the pain is never unending,
although it consumes us in the moment.
We know that the end of the story is never death,
although we often feel it is.
We know that the darkness of a tomb is never our ultimate home,
although when we're there, we feel we will never leave.
We know that the Saviour, God Incarnate,
went willingly to pain, death, and tomb,
to show us the end of suffering.

And in his suffering,
we find hope.
In his going down to darkness,
we find light.
In his succumbing to death,
we find life.
In his giving over all control,
we find a Rock.

Christ allowed the powers of this world to do their dirty work on him,
so, he could teach us about redemption.
And it is on this work, Christ's work, that we meditate,
To learn something precious,
He is our solid Rock.

**Family of God, it is with joy that I greet you all in the Name of Triune God.
I greet you in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

† **Scripture Reading and Sermon: "On Christ the Solid Rock." Ps. 27:5.**

Good morning to all. We all look for it. We all refuse to live without it. We all think we've found it, but it can only really be found in one place. It's been shaken to pieces this past year. Many people have begun to believe that it has been permanently lost. What is it that I'm talking about?

"He will place me out of reach on a high rock." (Psalm 27:5)

Well, here it is. All human beings are searching to somehow somehow find that solid rock on which to stand.

- That one thing that they can depend on.
- That one thing that will keep them upright when the storms of life are raging.
- That one thing that will remain firm for the duration.
- That one thing that will give them security when nothing else does.
- That one thing that will give them that deep and abiding inner sense of well-being that every rational human being desires.
- That one thing that gives them the courage to face what they otherwise wouldn't want to face.
- That one thing that they can rely on.
- That one thing that will keep them safe.

Everyone is searching for that **solid rock**.

As the Covid19 pandemic has shown us all beyond any doubt, no human being enjoys feeling that he/she is living in the sinking sand of unpredictability, disappointment, and danger with no rock to reach for and stand on.

In fact, this quest for a solid rock, this desire for surety, which is with us every day, points us again and again to the reality of God's existence and our identity as his creatures, his image bearers. We aren't hardwired to live by instinct.

- Like God, we are in possession of thoughts, desires, and emotions.
- Like God, we are beings of vision and purpose.
- Like God, we are spiritual beings.

As people made in his likeness, we long for our hearts to be satisfied and our minds to be at rest. We think, analyse, and wonder. We ponder our lives over and over in our hearts, trying our best to make sense of the mystery of our own story and recognizing the scary reality that there's little that we are actually in charge of.

In our honest moments, we know that we couldn't have written ourselves into the situations, locations, and relationships that make up our daily lives. We couldn't have written the story of even one day. Yet we long for our lives to make sense. We long to have meaning and purpose, and we long to have lasting stability.

The problem is that the longer we live, the more we know that there is little around us, in this fallen world, that's truly stable.

I have a wonderful marriage to a woman who, in many ways, is my hero, but our marriage is still marred by our sin, and this reality still introduces pain and unpredictability into a relationship we have now been working on for six years!

You may think your job is a source of stability, but a pandemic, or a bit of a turn in the global economy could have you out on the street in a relatively short period of time.

It may seem that your material possessions are permanent, but every physical thing that exists is in a state of decay, and even in its greatest longevity it doesn't have the ability to quiet your heart.

So here is the dilemma of your humanity: you are clearly not in control of the details or destiny of your life. Yet, as a rational, purposeful, emotional being, you cry for a deep and abiding sense of well-being.

In your quest, what you are actually discovering, is that you were hardwired to be connected to Another.

- You were **not** hardwired to walk the pathway of life all by yourself.
- You were **not** hardwired to be independently sufficient.
- You were **not** hardwired to produce in yourself a system of experiences, relationships, and conclusions that would give you rest.

**You were designed to find your “solid rock” only
in a dependent, loving, worshipful relationship with Another.**

In this way, every human being is on a quest for God; the problem is we don't know that, and in our quest for stability, we attempt to stand on an endless catalogue of God-replacements that end up sinking with us.

In fact, our inability to find security for ourselves is so profound, that we'd never find on our own the One who is to be our rock; no, he must find us.

The language of Psalm 27 is quite precise here: “*He will place me out of reach on a high rock.*” (Psalm 27:5) It doesn't say, “*I will find the rock and I will climb up on it.*”

Here is the hope for every weary traveller whose feet are tired of the slippery instability of a fallen world. Your weariness is a signpost.

- It's meant to cause you to cry out for help.
- It's meant to cause you to quit looking for your stability horizontally and begin to cry out for it vertically.
- It's meant to put an end to your belief that situations, people, locations, possessions, positions, or answers will satisfy the longing of your heart.

Your weariness is meant to drive you to God. He is the **Rock** for which you are longing. He is the one who alone can give to you the sense that all is well. And as you abandon your hope in the mirage rocks of this fallen world and begin to hunger for the true **Rock**, he will reach out and place you on solid ground.

There is a **Rock** to be found. There is an inner rest to be experienced that's deeper than conceptual understanding, human love, personal success, and the accumulation of possessions. There is a rock that will give you rest even when all those things have been taken away.

That rock is Christ, and you were hardwired to find what you are seeking in him. In his grace, he won't play hide-and-seek with you. In your weakness and weariness, cry out to him. He will find you, and he will be your **Rock**.

*On Christ the solid rock I stand,
all other ground is sinking sand.*

So, take a moment, and ask yourself honestly:

- If you examine the way you live, what do you look to as your “**solid rock**”?
- How would your living be different, if Christ really were your “**solid rock**”?

† **Prayer**

Our prayer from the words of King David in 2 Samuel 22:

*“The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my saviour;
my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.*

He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.

He is my refuge, my saviour, the one who saves me from violence.

I called on the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and he saved me from my enemies.

The grave wrapped its ropes around me; death laid a trap in my path.

But in my distress, I cried out to the Lord; yes, I cried to my God for help.

He heard me from his sanctuary; my cry reached his ears.

He reached down from heaven and rescued me; he drew me out of deep waters.

To the faithful you show yourself faithful; to those with integrity you show integrity.

You rescue the humble, but your eyes watch the proud and humiliate them.

God’s way is perfect.

All the Lord’s promises prove true.

He is a shield for all who look to him for protection.

For who is God except the Lord?

Who but our God is a solid rock?

The Lord lives! Praise to my Rock!

May God, the Rock of my salvation, be exalted!”

Amen. (2 Samuel 22: 2–4, 6–7, 17, 26, 28, 31–32, 47)

† **Benediction (Amen)**

Whatever we face, we do not face it alone.

Wherever we go, we do not journey alone.

However we suffer, we do not bear it alone.

Whoever we are and wherever we go and however we journey,

we go in peace, in hope, and in faith

for we go with Christ, who always goes with us.

Go...

(+) In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.