



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 20th October 2024

compiled by Rev. Melvyn Cooke

Call to Worship

Your word is a light to my path;
May it light our way as we worship today.
Your word is the truth in our lives;
May it bring truth to our worship today

Hymn StF 106 God

1] God, whose almighty word
chaos and darkness heard,
and took their flight:
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the gospel day
sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light!

2] Christ, you have come to bring
on your redeeming wing
healing and sight,
health to the sick in mind,
sight to the inly blind:
O to all humankind
let there be light!

3] Spirit of truth and love,
life-giving, holy Dove,
speed on your flight!
Move on the waters' face
bearing the lamp of grace
and, in earth's darkest place,
let there be light!

4] Blessed and holy Three,
glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, Love, Might:
boundless as ocean's tide
rolling in fullest pride
through the world far and wide,
let there be light!

John Marriott (1780-1825)

Prayer

You are the One, the Holy One,
who looks on all you have made, with love.
You gaze at me, and your faithful kindness overwhelms me.
I fall silent before you, my words stalling,
as my heart breaks open and pours out my thanks, my delight in you.
The more I gaze back at you,
the more I see through your eyes;
I am born again in your devotion to your creation.
Let my words fall before you,
but grant me the words and the acts of love
you long for me to have for your world. Amen.

Kerry Tankard, District Chair, Yorkshire West District

Reading Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.' But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' They replied, 'We are able.' Then Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.'

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

Hymn StF 161

1] Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
to receive the food of Your holy word.
Take your truth, plant it deep in us;
shape and fashion us in your likeness,
that the light of Christ might be seen today
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
all Your purposes, for your glory.

2] Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
let their truth prevail over unbelief.

3] Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
that will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on your promises,
and by faith, we'll walk as you walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built
and the earth is filled with Your glory.

Keith Getty (b.1974) Stuart Townend (b.1963)

Reflection

One of the things that I appreciate most in the Bible, and particularly in the Gospels is that they seek to portray humanity warts and all! I think I would struggle to if the Bible only ever told stories of perfect people living perfect lives, making only right and honourable decisions. Don't get me wrong, I think that we should strive to be the best people we can be, becoming better people by and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, but I have long come to acknowledge that the imperfect will only be made perfect when I reach heaven, and that in the meantime, or as Paul writes "when perfection comes, the imperfect will disappear" (1 Cor 13; 10).

We all love a story with a hero, and the Bible gives us so many, Moses, David, Abraham, Peter, Paul, and numerous others, but the one thing they all have in common is they all have flaws and imperfection in their lives. Dodgy histories, wrong decisions, poor judgements, mixed motives, *(please feel free to add your own*

biblical heroes and list of their imperfections) and yet still God chooses to use them, and their story of faith has become the inspiration of others through the centuries.

In today's reading we find James and John, at first glance seeming to ask the wrong question, 'we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' How selfish is this question, or at least how immature, it almost sounds as if they saw in Jesus to be the source of all their unfulfilled wants and desires. As we read further, we discover that the real desire of their hearts is to have the place of honour - to be seated at the right and left hand of Jesus. To be seated at left hand and right hand denotes wanting the place of highest honour next to Jesus, to be known as being amongst the inner, inner circle, and with it to be given authority. Little wonder when the other disciples heard this, "they became angry with James and John". As postscript to this story, anger is not a wholesome emotion either in this context.

We see too often in life the image and stories of those who seek honour, and a pre-assumed authority, often camouflaged as power. Our world is impacted, and in turn our lives greatly by those who assume that their name, their position or status in society gives them the authority to rule over, disempower, or impugn the lives of others, and sadly the life of Church is not immune from these sorts of people. Over the years I have met countless people who no longer are part of a faith community because individuals in that community have asked of themselves the wrong question. They have asked how to dominate, rather than how to serve.

Jesus reminds the disciples, all twelve of them, not just James and John, that 'the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve'. How often do we need to remind ourselves that the greatest gift in life is to serve others. One of the hallmarks of the church seen in Acts was that they were together in that they shared all they had, the rich sharing with the poor. The hallmark of our Circuit system is that those churches with an abundance of finance, resources, talents should share in the mission and ministry of those churches who are not so blessed.

When I was a young child, we were taught the acronym of JOY - Jesus first, yourself last, and others in between - Oh to be adults with childlike faith once more.

Prayers

Lord,

We thank you because you have raised up and anointed us as people to serve.

What an honour and privilege it is to be entrusted with this responsibility.

Reassured by the knowledge of your abiding presence, may we continue to have the courage to reach out and support one another, to stand firm in what is true, to decrease when others should increase and to lead with vision and compassion.

Lord, we thank you for your enduring presence and perfect wisdom that illuminates our thoughts, decisions and actions, for your endless patience, compassion and love.

Help our us to remain focused on you, to live and to lead as humble, grateful, assured, and generous servants.

To live and to lead as an example.

To live and to lead as faithful followers of Jesus.

As we pray for each other, your world and all who suffer from the abuse of power, the intolerance of difference, and the poverty that comes from imbalance of resources we also pray this prayer for ourselves.

(Pause for private naming of people and situations known to you)

In our relationships with one another, help us to have the same mindset as Jesus who, despite being in very nature God, humbled himself to full humanness. To serve others. Not for personal gain but so that others would know you.

By your grace, may our example, our words, our actions and our reactions point people to you too. Help us Lord, we pray!

AMEN

We say together the Lord's Prayer in the version, and language you are most comfortable using.

Hymn StF 415

1] The Church of Christ, in every age
beset by change but Spirit led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead.

2] Across the world, across the street,
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live until they die.

3] Then let the servant Church arise,
a caring Church that longs to be
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity.

4] For he alone, whose blood was shed,
can cure the fever in our blood,
and teach us how to share our bread
and feed the starving multitude.

5] We have no mission but to serve
in full obedience to our Lord:
to care for all, without reserve,
and to spread his liberating Word.

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

Blessing

We go in peace

To learn from God's word,

To live by God's word, and

To share God's word. **Amen**

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