

Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit
Worship at Home Sheet 28.2.2021 Lent 2

Preparation

During this time of Lent, we remember those worshipping in different places and ways.

Call to Worship

Lent calls us to journey, this and every day, following Jesus wherever he leads us.
Lent calls us to worship together, to practice justice, to bring God's hope to all people.
Lent calls us to faithful living, to trust the One who gives us life. Let us worship God, who journeys with us, this and every day.

Listen, read, pray or sing along

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXPn78k6JOo>

Lord of creation, to you be all praise!
Most mighty your working,
most wondrous your ways!
Your glory and might are beyond us to tell,
and yet in the heart of the humble you dwell.

Lord of all power, I give you my will,
in joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil.
Your bondage is freedom, your service is song;
and, held in your keeping, my weakness is strong.

Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind,
rich truth that surpasses my knowledge to find.
What eye has not seen and what ear has not heard
is taught by your Spirit and shines from your Word.

Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart;
I praise and adore you for all you impart;
your love to inspire me, your counsel to guide,
your presence to cheer me, whatever betide.

Lord of all being, I give you my all;
if I should disown you, I stumble and fall;
but, led in your service your word to obey,
I'll walk in your freedom to the end of the way.

Jack Copley Winslow (1882-1974) Reproduced from Singing the Faith 449

Prayer of praise, thanksgiving and adoration

God of infinite wisdom and creativity,
you created the universe, and in you all things
have their being.
Earth, sky, rivers and oceans, plants and
every living creature
is evidence of your great love.
You created us in your own image,
a people born to praise you.
And so, with all creation,
we offer you our praise and adoration.

God of self-giving love,
you lived among us in the person of
Jesus of Nazareth,
Born to share our lives,
he broke the power of death
and set us free.
Your grace, mercy and love know no bounds.
We come now to offer you our praise and
adoration.

God of mystery,
your Spirit moves where Christians gather,
liberating and encouraging,
sustaining and transforming.
We come now to offer you our
praise and adoration.

Confession

Holy God, you have set us in a world full of
wonder, yet we walk through it with closed
minds and hearts.
You have given us a fertile earth so we can
lead fruitful lives,
Yet we waste the opportunities and
pollute sea and sky.
You offer us order, and we return to chaos.
You surround us with glory,
and we worship worthless gods.
Forgive us.

Silence

Words of Assurance

The grace of God is infinite and free.
Rise up and live with faith and hope
in the knowledge that your sins are forgiven.

Read Romans 4: 13-25

Read Mark 8:31-38

Reflection

When I was a teenager, we lived next door to a family with young children. The fencing between our gardens was made of mesh panels and whenever one of us was outside pegging washing on the line, they would appear and ask all sorts of what and why questions like little children often do. Their parents were keen gardeners and the children used to pick flowers from their garden and offer them to us over the fence accompanied by adoring smiles. The little boy was quite a charmer at aged only three! He would lean over the fence and offer my Mum a flower saying, 'Mrs Jones, I love you'. My Mum would always respond with 'that's lovely my dear, thank you, but do you think you should you be picking the flowers? What would your Mummy and Daddy say?' to which his response was always 'don't say it!' He didn't want to hear the difficult truth that picking flowers to give to Mrs Jones was not what he really ought to be doing when playing out in the garden!

Here in this passage from Mark's Gospel Jesus tells his disciples a difficult truth. Peter finds it hard to take and he argues with Jesus. Poor old Peter is in trouble again! I do so love Peter. He's enthusiastic, earnest, passionate, committed. Yet somehow, he always seems to get it wrong. I don't know about you but I don't find it all that difficult to empathise with Peter here. It can be hard for all of us, whether toddlers, teenagers or adults, to accept a difficult truth. This is a difficult text and yet it clearly occupies a crucial place in Mark's understanding of the Gospel. It is the first of three predictions made by Jesus of his

suffering, death and resurrection. Each time the prediction is followed directly by an incident in which the disciples demonstrate their persistent inability to comprehend what Jesus is saying. Each time the disciples' misunderstanding prompts a statement from Jesus about the true nature of discipleship.

Why was it that the first disciples struggled so much to accept the difficult truth about the inevitable suffering, death and rejection Jesus was to face? They were used to danger, living in Galilee at such a perilous time under the Roman occupation. They knew all about revolutions, about holy people hoping God would act and deliver them and ending up getting crucified instead. Any new leader, any prophet, any teacher with something fresh to say was likely to end up getting themselves killed. The death of John the Baptist was surely confirmation of that. They must have known that by following Jesus they were taking risks. What perhaps is strikingly different, however, is that Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes - and be killed and after three days rise again. This is something that Mark is telling his readers had to happen. It was necessary. Perhaps it was this that Peter found so difficult to take.

Jesus' reaction to Peter's rebuke is harsh. Peter receives the strongest possible condemnation, association with the Satan. Poor Peter! He is then accused of thinking about 'human things' rather than 'divine things' when he is surely doing precisely the opposite. Peter has been thinking about divine things, about Jesus' power and authority and his status as Messiah. It was Jesus who had introduced human things with his talk about suffering and death. However, it seems it's really all about perception. Which person, Jesus or Peter, knows what things are 'human things' and what things are 'divine things'? Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians articulates a similar understanding of the cross. By the standards of human wisdom, the cross appears to be

foolishness but by God's standards it is true wisdom. Peter's rebuke of Jesus shows that he has not yet understood what it means to say that Jesus is the Messiah. From here onwards Mark continues to reinforce the understanding of Messiahship as including the necessity of suffering, rejection and death.

For the disciples things have certainly begun to get much more serious. In Mark 1 they accept the call to follow Jesus, leaving behind their families and their livelihoods. Now they are being called to go further and to give up their lives by following Jesus. *'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me'*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes in *'The Cost of Discipleship'*, *'To deny oneself is to be aware only of Christ and no more of self, to see only him who goes before and no more the road which is too hard for us. Once more, all that self-denial can say is: 'He leads the way, keep close to him'*. It is important to acknowledge, however, that too often marginalized persons within and outside the Church have heard this as applying only to themselves or as being forced only on them. True discipleship does indeed require denial of self, but that can only occur when there is a *self* to deny.

Something to think about this week

How do you respond to the dismantling of the dominant theories of power in this passion announcement from Jesus?

Prayers

God our Mother and our Father,
Grant us the help of your Spirit
In our prayers for the salvation of all people.

We pray for the Church throughout the world -
for the Church in Britain and for the church
community to which we belong.
Grant that in faith and unity we may be
constantly renewed by your Holy Spirit for
mission and service.

Holy God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the peoples of the world,
for the leaders of the nations faced with
difficult decisions during the current pandemic -
that they may seek justice, freedom and peace
for all.

Holy God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for this nation -
for those who have authority and influence,
for the Government and its advisers,
that all may serve one another in wisdom,
honesty and compassion.

Holy God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for those among whom we live and work
- for all our neighbours
that we may so use your gifts
that together we may find joy
in your creation.

Holy God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for all in sorrow, need, anxiety or
sickness -
that in their weakness they may know your
strength, and in despair find hope.

Holy God, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

*If you give your weekly offering through
an envelope scheme or in cash,
please set it aside, and pray with
those who give using Standing Orders.*

Gracious God, accept these gifts,
and with them our lives,
to be used in mission and service through
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Listen, read, pray or sing along

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3LCGh02Vew>

All my hope on God is founded
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray our trust;
what with care and toil we fashion
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of nought.
Evermore
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth the Almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand
joy doth wait on his command.

Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all
ye who follow shall not fall.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930) Reproduced from Singing the Faith
455

Closing prayer

Generous God, bless each one of us
and end us out in the power of your Spirit,
that we might grow
deeper in wisdom,
more passionate in faith,
and more loving towards
ourselves and others.
In the name of Christ, we pray

Amen

*Prayers adapted from the Methodist Worship Book
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