

Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey Circuit
SERVICE AT HOME – Sunday, March 7

Prepared by the Revd Gareth Hill

Gathering Words

(based on Psalm 19, 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25)

The world finds no proof of God.
But the heavens tell of God's glory.
God's message is foolishness to the world.
But God's folly trumps human wisdom.
The freedom of the world brings us death.
But obedience to God's ways brings life.
We gather in the name of Christ crucified.
The Word made flesh brings life to God's people!

Listen, Read, Pray or Sing Along

O for a heart to praise my God (StF 507)

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

O for a heart to praise my God,
a heart from sin set free,
a heart that always feels thy blood
so freely spilt for me;

A heart resigned, submissive, meek,
my great Redeemer's throne,
where only Christ is heard to speak,
where Jesus reigns alone;

A humble, lowly, contrite heart,
believing, true, and clean;
which neither life nor death can part
from him that dwells within;

A heart in every thought renewed,
and full of love divine;
perfect, and right, and pure, and good,
a copy, Lord, of thine!

Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;
come quickly from above,
write thy new name upon my heart,
thy new, best name of love.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Opening Prayer

(inspired by 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25)

Loving God,
we come to you in worship and thanksgiving.
You are greater than we can understand;
open our eyes that we may see the wonderful
truths you have shown to us in Jesus.

You are more loving than our hearts
can respond to;
help us to give ourselves to you in worship
so that we learn what you want us to be.

You are wiser than we can know;
still our minds as we worship you
so that we can understand the things you are
saying to us.

Loving God, in Jesus
you chose to come to the world in humility.
You chose the path the world saw as foolish.
You used what the world considered weak.
We worship and adore you. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Jesus, cleanser of temples and souls,
in this Lenten journey,
look deep within our hearts and our lives,
and clear away all that holds us back.

May our minds, spirits and bodies
be a Temple that is open to Your presence:
and may our words and our actions
be transparent to Your love and truth.

In a moment of silence we sit before You,
and name those things for which
we seek Your cleansing and healing,
so that we may be more faithful disciples.

Silence

Words of assurance

Friends of Jesus, we are made clean
by the words he has spoken to us.
There is room in our lives and in our
community for the Holy One to dwell.
Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

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.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us
from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are
yours, now and forever. Amen.**

Reading John 2:13-22

13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. 15 So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he said, 'Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!' 17 His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'

18 The Jews then responded to him, 'What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?'

19 Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.' 20 They replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?' 21 But the temple he had spoken of was his body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

Listen, Read, Pray or Sing Along

What kind of love is this? (StF 286)

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

What kind of love is this
that gave itself for me?
I am the guilty one,
yet I go free.

What kind of love is this,
a love I've never known;
I didn't even know his name
— what kind of love is this?

What kind of man is this,
that died in agony?
He who had done no wrong
was crucified for me.

What kind of man is this,
who laid aside his throne
that I may know the love of God
— what kind of man is this?

By grace I have been saved;
it is the gift of God.

He destined me to be his own
such is his love.

No eye has ever seen,
no ear has ever heard,
nor has the human heart conceived
what kind of love is this?

- Bryn Haworth and Sally Haworth

Reflection

Jesus doesn't get angry, does he? Didn't some of us used to sing *Gentle Jesus, Meek and mild*?

I'm afraid I'm much more drawn to a Jesus who tells it like it is. Last week, Peter was told to "Get behind me, Satan" when he tried to talk Jesus out of his path to crucifixion. Today we see an explosion in the Jews' holiest place - the Temple in Jerusalem.

I suspect we don't understand the power of this episode because history, and familiarity with the text, has reduced it to a moment of drama rather than the shock it would have generated at the time.

How do we compare it? Well, in the TV series *The West Wing*, there is an episode called *The Two Cathedrals*.

US President Jed Bartlet has attended the funeral of his long-time PA Mrs Landingham, who died in a hit and run accident.

After the service Bartlet, a devout Catholic, stays in the Washington National Cathedral and rants at God - mainly in Latin - as he lights a cigarette and stubs it out on the floor. You can watch it, complete with translation of the Latin, here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYcMk3AJKLk>

The series creator Aaron Sorkin spoke about being in the cathedral just before filming and saying to a priest "You know he's about renounce God, right?" The minister said, "Yeah, I saw rehearsal, it's gonna be great." I said, "That's fine, but am I going straight to hell?" ... Then he gave me a pretty good talking-to about how true people of faith are supposed to question God - and about how those who don't are usually the ones who end up sending their money to guys with cable TV shows."

Why is that an example? Because we so often run away from confronting the things that are deep within us and need to be expressed.

Everything that was happening in the temple courts was routine as part of the Passover preparation. Merchants sold animals; money-changers exchanged *denarii* into half-shekels so pilgrims could pay the temple-tax; pilgrims wandered round, bartering with the tradespeople and looking for priests to complete sacrificial rituals. Animals were offered in sacrifices for ritual purity so the penitent could participate fully in the Passover.

The answer to Jesus' actions - and his anger - is in verses 16 and 17. Jesus said, 'Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!' His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'

The commercialising of faith - and the desire to profit from it - compelled Jesus to make a whip, scatter the coins on the floor and drive people out. The first century equivalent of stubbing out a cigarette in the cathedral.

But if we're not careful we can miss what the disciples remember. This was about a passion for the worship of God and a reminder that God's power couldn't be contained in a building, even one as magnificent as the Temple.

Alicia D. Myers, Associate Professor of New Testament and Greek, Campbell University Divinity School, writes: "Rather than a maniac come to disrupt worship, Jesus' disciples understand him to be like the righteous sufferer of Psalm 69: one whose "zeal" for God's house and statutes made him a target for his enemies (69:9-12). These enemies greatly outnumber him, but he is steadfast in his reliance on God's deliverance (69:13-15). (<https://www.workingpreacher.org/>)

This isn't a temper tantrum from Jesus. It is a proper reminder that what we build around our worship of God can sometimes distract us and become the thing we most protect. It's been painful throughout lockdown but worship has still been possible though the familiar trappings have all been stripped away.

What is it in our worship experience that could prevent us from hearing God? What are we unwilling to let go? What new ways has God found to reach us during the pandemic?

What do we need to overturn? Amen

Prayers for Others

Creator God, we come before you asking prayers for those who lead nations, cities, churches, homes.

As you poured out your love in the Word may we hear your word and follow; may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts lead us to you.

Holy One, we come before you - a people broken into shards of lives sick, poor, hungry hidden by the limitations of our eyes.

Help us to see as You see
as you poured out your love in the Word.
May we hear your word and follow
may the words of our mouths and
the meditations of our hearts lead us
to you.

God of Mercy, we come before you –
seeking to live as you command, but often
failing,
and thus we are torn by cries of
despair, anger, power, control,
lost to foolishness and stumbling blocks
despite your love in the Word

Help us to hear your word and follow
May the words of our mouths
and the meditations of our hearts
lead us to you.

Gentle God, we come before you
giving thanks for all our blessings
the gift of life
hope, faith
love, family
friends -
all we care for this day.
Help us to be Your hands.

Incline Your heart, O gracious God,
and teach us to love
O Christ, our rock and our Redeemer.
Amen.

Listen, Read, Pray or Sing Along

Show me how to stand for justice (StF 713)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8ClU66oFMQ>

Show me how to stand for justice:
how to work for what is right,
how to challenge false assumptions,
how to walk within the light.
May I learn to share more freely
in a world so full of greed,
showing your immense compassion
by the life I choose to lead.

Teach my heart to treasure mercy,
whether given or received
— for my need has not diminished
since the day I first believed:
let me seek no satisfaction
boasting of what I have done,
but rejoice that I am pardoned
and accepted in your Son.

Gladly I embrace a lifestyle
modelled on your living word,
in humility submitting
to the truth which I have heard.
Make me conscious of your presence
every day in all I do:
by your Spirit's gracious prompting
may I learn to walk with you.

- Martin Leckebusch (b. 1962)

Closing blessing

May the holy wisdom of God
Guard your ways and guide your paths
May the living truth of God
Enlighten your hearts and open your minds
And may the living Spirit of God
Give you life, and life to the full!
Amen!

Gathering prayer — adapted from *The Abingdon
Worship Annual 2009*, © 2008 Abingdon Press. Posted
on the **Ministry Matters** website.

Opening prayer - from *The Worship Sourcebook*
1.4.42. Posted on the **Calvin Institute of Christian
Worship** website. [http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/
resource-library/worship-service-a-foolish-message-1-
corinthians-1/](http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/worship-service-a-foolish-message-1-corinthians-1/)

Prayer of confession - written by Ann Siddall, and posted
on the **Stillpoint Spirituality**
Centre website. <https://stillpointsa.org.au/>

Prayer for others - written by Terri C. Pilarski, and posted
on RevGalBlogPals. [http://revgalblogpals.org/2012/03/11/
sunday-prayer-lent-3b/](http://revgalblogpals.org/2012/03/11/sunday-prayer-lent-3b/)

Closing blessing - posted on Literature &
Liturgy. <https://jesusscribbles.wordpress.com/>

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