

Winchester, Eastleigh & Romsey Circuit

SERVICE AT HOME

– Sunday, October 17, 2021

Prepared by the Revd Gareth Hill

To prepare for worship

Loving and generous God, come by your Spirit and open my mind and heart to receive your love. Speak through these written words and help me to listen. Amen

Listen, read, pray or sing along

I sing the almighty power of God (StF 107)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q37_qLKHLSI

1 I sing the almighty power of God,
that made the mountains rise,
that spread the flowing seas abroad,
and built the lofty skies.

2 I sing the wisdom that ordained
the sun to rule the day;
the moon shines full at his command,
and all the stars obey.

3 I sing the goodness of the Lord,
that filled the earth with food;
he formed the creatures with his word,
and then pronounced them good.

4 Lord, how your wonders are displayed
where'er I turn mine eye,
if I survey the ground I tread,
or gaze upon the sky!

5 God's hand is my perpetual guard,
he guides me with his eye;
why should I then forget the Lord,
whose love is ever nigh?

Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

Methodist Church. Singing the Faith Kindle Edition.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Generous God,
You are the source of all life,
creating and sustaining every living thing.

You are the source of all food,
material and spiritual,
nourishing us in both body and soul.

You are the light that goes before us,
shining into the darkness.

May we be filled with your breath
Nourished by your food
Renewed by your living water
and sustained by your love.

Posted on the Weekly Worship pages of the Christian Aid website. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/churches/weekly-worship>

Prayer of Confession

(inspired by Mark 10:35-45)

Lord Jesus Christ,
we expect that you will do what we want,
whatever we ask.
We want places of honour and all the glory.
We want to be great.
We want to be first.
But you, O Christ, are servant of all.

Forgive our brazenness.
Forgive our self-importance.
Forgive us.
Teach us to be humble.
Teach us to be more like you

Posted on the website of University Presbyterian Church, in Tuscaloosa, AL. <http://www.uaupc.org/>

The Lord's Prayer

Reading Mark 10: 32-45

Sermon: Putting your foot in it

Have you ever spoken up and immediately realised you were completely wrong? Sometimes it's out of enthusiasm; sometimes misunderstanding the bigger picture; sometimes because you just feel the need to speak when you probably shouldn't. In today's Gospel story, James and John have spoken out and it looks as though all three apply!

Jesus and the disciples are heading to Jerusalem, where the crucifixion will eventually

take place. They have heard Jesus foretell his death but also the promise that he will 'come in glory with his father's angels'. So they ask their favour. They want special places in glory, seats either side of Jesus' throne.

The disciples have already been rebuked for arguing who is the greatest and now we hear James and John seeing themselves as part of a triumphant ruling class. It appears they don't doubt who Jesus is - their request is to sit with him in his 'glory'.

They have a picture in their heads and want to be centre stage. Jesus' response is to point them to his expectation of them - and it's very different.

42 Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you.'

The Kingdom of God would bring about a different way of looking at things.

This is the third time in Mark where Jesus announces his Passion, only to be followed by the disciples showing they have not got it.

The writer Glenn Monson says: *'There's no doubt we must identify with the disciples here. We too, often are caught up in the hope that Jesus is simply the genie in the lamp, our personal Santa Claus, and our only function is to demand, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."*

Of course, the disciples had taken their eye off the ball ... or more truthfully the cross.

Jesus keeps pointing James, John and the other disciples to the cross. Mark's narrative has Jesus facing the cross and even discussing his death - unheard of!

James and John have taken in some of the teaching and are now anticipating the glory. 'When you get there, count us in!'

US Presbyterian minister Lamar Williamson says in his commentary: *'The disciples have heard Jesus' words, but they have the music all wrong. They still dance to the world's tune.'*

It's as if the forthcoming crucifixion is an unfortunate interruption; nothing more.

For Jesus, his purpose - God's purpose - is fulfilled in the coming arrest, mistreatment and death. To die is to live; to appear to fail is actually to be living out what Jesus knows is his mission.

The baptism Jesus refers to is his 'going down', according to Tom Wright (Mark for everyone). He says: 'The baptism looks back to the beginning of the story. Just as Jesus' own baptism by John committed him to his vocation of suffering Messiahship, at the head of God's new people, so his forthcoming death is to be seen as a kind of 'baptism' - going down beneath the waters of death so that sins might be forgiven.'

There is a lesson here for us about discipleship. It's simple: you can't have Jesus without the cross.

We know of course that the place where Jesus is crowned and lifted up - a gruesome sort of glory - is on the cross with thieves on his left and right: not the disciples, because they've virtually all deserted him.

But there is another issue at stake here, the nature of Kingdom people. The disciples seem to think of themselves in the same way that they think of the structures of society and government. It is another hierarchy where some people lord it over others.

Instead, Jesus insists that 'it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant'. Instead of a race to the top, Jesus insists on a race to the bottom, to the place of servanthood.

The final words of today's Gospel reading are, "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many."

It's telling that in Paul's letters to the Corinthians, he is often struggling with exactly this issue. The church at Corinth, for example, was impressed by the strong leadership of those with spectacular gifts and charismatic qualities. These were not Paul's gifts, not his way. Rather, he had expended himself in serving them as an apostle without pay and without recognition.

Service, not power; self-giving, not self-seeking, is the mark of the new Kingdom inaugurated by Jesus' death and resurrection.

In fact, we learn that the true nature of the Kingdom of God is not about status but relationship:

Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father.' Hebrews 5:5

Sonship is so much more Kingdom-shaped than priesthood. The call of discipleship is to refuse to live by the 'business as usual' model but through the cross and resurrections, offering ourselves to serve.

Listen, read, pray or sing along

From heaven you came (StF 272)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCAAdWs-ZyEk>

1 From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled,
not to be served but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

2 There in the garden of tears
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours,' he said.

This is our God ...

3 Come see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God ...

4 So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone him,
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God ...

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Prayers of Intercession

God, we come to you with praise and thanksgiving for Your faithful love.

Your love never fails—not even we turn away from You:

- when we ignore Your invitation, or desert You for gods of our own making -
- even then You do not abandon us, but reach out -
- again and again - inviting us back into relationship once more.

As You welcome us, so You welcome our prayers. We bring them to You with confidence, knowing that You will hear and answer.

We pray for the world You created and the people who share it with us:

- for countries caught up in war or violence,
- for regions of the world struggling with increased cases of COVID-19 and lack of vaccines,
- for those whose homes and lives are threatened by natural disaster;

For these and all the other areas in our world where there is need and despair,
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for our country and for its people:

- for our government leaders and all politicians,
- for our judicial system, police forces and military,
- for our cities, towns, and rural communities,
- for employers and employees, for young and old,

For all who make up our communities,
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for our local community,

- for those who are unemployed,
- for those in prison,
- for those who are hungry,
- for those who are alone and afraid,

For all our neighbours, both known and unknown to us,
Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for our church community - our brothers and sisters in Christ,
- for those who are ill or whose loved ones are ill,
- for those who are anxious about the future,
- for those struggling with their faith,
- for those who minister among us,
- for those who have died and those who mourn,
for all Your people in this place,
Lord, hear our prayer.

Pour out Your Spirit on us!

Fix our hearts and minds on what is true and honourable and right. Give us the joy and peace that comes from knowing and doing Your will.

Keep us faithful to the call we have received in Christ Jesus, our Lord, extending Your loving invitation to the world around us.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by Christine Longhurst or the re:Worship website.

Listen, Read, Pray or Sing Along

Come down, O love divine (StF 372)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXO4rqBQOAU>

1 Come down, O Love divine, seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

2 O let it freely burn, till earthly passions turn to dust and ashes, in its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

3 Let holy charity mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become mine inner clothing;
true lowliness of heart, which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

4 And so the yearning strong, with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
for none can guess its grace, till he become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

*Bianco da Siena (d. 1434) translated by Richard Frederick Littledale (1833–1890)
Methodist Church. Singing the Faith. Kindle Edition.*

Final Blessing

God, Your grace reaches out to all of us.
You call us to live as citizens of heaven,
working together with one heart and mind.
Strengthen us to live in a manner worthy of the Good News we have received,
offering our lives in service of Your kingdom,
where the last are first, and the first are last,
and there is grace enough for all. Amen

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