

WORSHIP AT HOME

SUNDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2020

Call to Worship:

With trust and delight, we wait for the Lord.
With desire and commitment, we wait for the Lord.
With patience and stillness, we wait for the Lord.
With hope in God's promises, we wait for the Lord.

Hymn – Let all the world (StF 57)

- 1 Let all the world in every corner sing:
My God and King!
The heavens are not too high,
His praise may thither fly;
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
My God and King!
- 2 Let all the world in every corner sing:
My God and King!
The church with psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out;
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
My God and King!

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Prayer:

God of the vineyard, you have entrusted your world to us. Forgive us when we let you down. When food is bought through unfair trade, leaving workers to go hungry, save us and help us, that we may praise you as we share with our neighbour.
When interest is gained through questionable business, putting your world in jeopardy, save us and help us, that we may praise you through our care for the earth.
When security is sought through warfare, taking the lives and homes of others, save us and help

us, that we may praise you in peace and respect for all.

God of the vineyard, call us back to your way; turn us to love our neighbour; let us face you, that we might hear your words of grace when you say to us, 'Your sins are forgiven.' Amen. Thanks be to God.



The Lord's Prayer - Our Father.....Amen

Today's Reading: **Matthew 21: 33-46**

Reflection:

If you have a magazine that comes with a Sunday paper or any other magazine to hand, have a flick through it and glance at the adverts. What kind of lifestyle are such adverts selling? Does it presuppose a life centred on God, on the needs of my neighbour, or on myself? When we make choices about how to spend our time, all money, our energy how do we decide between what we want and what we actually need? What are the priorities of a God-centred life and how do these differ from a me-centred one? On reading this parable, we might be tempted to sit back with a smug smile believing it to be a criticism only of the religious authorities of Jesus' day. And to an extent that would be true. When the wicked tenants reason that eliminating the Son will enable them to inherit the vineyard, they throw him out of the vineyard and kill him. The Jewish authorities who are engaged in this dialogue with Jesus – and who inadvertently condemn themselves by their answer - don't initially get the point. But Matthews quoting from Psalm 118 makes it perfectly clear: "the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." This is a text the early church used to underscore God's vindication of the prophetic, crucified Jesus in the resurrection. Unambiguously the Son in the story is Jesus and the wicked tenants are those who would keep his kingdom, the vineyard, for

themselves. You can imagine the original hearers of the parable, a mixture of Jewish and Gentile Christians, getting into a bit of a squabble with the synagogue down the street, deriving comfort from this word of judgement spoken against the opposition. However, lest they and we are tempted to be complacent, the story then takes a rather different turn. The vineyard is wrenched from the hands of the original tenants, but it is handed not to the Gentiles as opposed to the Jews, but 'to a people who produce the fruits of the Kingdom.' There is no reason for Matthew's initial or present day readers to gloat over the plight of the original tenants. The question raised by this parable for every one of us is, 'Are we a people producing the 'fruits of the Kingdom'?' Changed lives and radical obedience to God rather than right talk or theology are what matters – summed up simply in the two commandments to love God and love neighbour. Amen

Read: Galatians 2: 22-25

Prayer:

Walls and vines: building and planting, planning and tending, measuring and pruning, protecting and nurturing, waiting and watching – God is at work. Walls protect but also separate; demolish all that separates me from you, O God. Vines can flourish or fail: help me to respond to your loving care, O God. Grapes can be sweet or sour; may I bear fruit that brings your joy, O God. People can be honest or corrupt; make me a responsible tenant of this bit of your world. Amen
Spend some time in silent prayer, allowing the Holy Spirit to bring to mind those people, places and situations where in your words and actions the fruit of the Spirit can bring healing and hope.

Hymn – The Kingdom of God (StF255)

1 The kingdom of God
Is justice and joy,
For Jesus restores
What sin would destroy;

God's power and glory
In Jesus we know,
And here and hereafter
The kingdom shall grow.

2 The kingdom of God
Is mercy and grace,
The prisoners are freed,
The sinners find place,
The outcast are welcomed
God's banquet to share,
And hope is awakened
In place of despair.

3 The kingdom of God
Is challenge and choice,
Believe the good news,
Repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners
Brought Christ to his cross,
Our crisis of judgement
For gain or for loss.

4 God's kingdom is come,
The gift and the goal,
In Jesus begun,
In heaven made whole;
The heirs of the kingdom
Shall answer his call,
And all things cry glory
To God all in all!

Bryn Rees (1911-1983)

Blessing:

May God who plants vineyards call us to work for justice and righteousness. May God sustain us as we work and bring forth good fruit. And may we be blessed in the knowledge that we are children of God.

(Rev Jennet McLeod CCL No. 315086)

WORSHIP AT HOME

SUNDAY, 11 October 2020

Call to Worship:

The fire is lit.
The table is set
The door is open
Here is your invitation to come and share at
God's banquet.
Come and let your mind, body and soul feast
on His love.

Sing 24 (StF) Come now is the time to worship
Come now is the time to worship.
Come now is the time to give your heart.
Come just as you are to worship.
Come just as you are before your God, come.

One day ev'ry tongue will confess you are God,
One day ev'ry knee will bow.
Still the greatest treasure remains
For those who gladly chose you now.

Come now is the time to worship ...

Brian Doerksen (b1965 -)

Prayer:

God as we gather here as your guests, and
chosen to accept your invitation, may we feel
the warmth of your welcome, may we taste the
joy of your feast and may we respond with
hearts full of praise AMEN
Dear Lord, for the times we have turned down
your invitation
Generous God, **forgive us**
For the times we have taken your invitation for
granted,
Generous God **forgive us**
For the times we have feasted on fine food, but
ignored the plight of the hungry,
Generous God **forgive us**
For the times we have chosen our own way
and not yours,
Generous God, **forgive us**
Remove all our self-centeredness and help us
be worthy guests of your banquet.

AMEN

Lord's Prayer - Our Father.....Amen



Today's Reading:

Matthew 22. 1-14

GNB

Reflection:

The king is arranging a wedding feast for His son. To make sense of this first bit, we need to understand that, when the feast was announced, there was no date or time given. All invitations were sent out and as soon as everything was ready the people invited were sent for and expected to turn up at once. At the same time as the party was announced the King would also have sent out wedding clothes that all those invited were expected to wear. That's the reason the King threw out the man he found among the second lot of guests who had not bothered to wear them.

So, the parable begins: the king announces the feast and sends out the invitations along with the wedding clothes. When the feast is ready, he sends out his servants to summon those invited. But they decided they did not want to come for a variety of reasons. Some even went to extremes and killed the servants sent to them (we aren't told why). The king is very angry and sends his soldiers to kill the murderers and burn their city. He also seems to have decided not to waste good food and sends out more servants to invite anyone found in the streets to come instead. Remember, they would also have received wedding clothes like the first lot. So when the king looks at the new lot of guests, he is surprised to find one not wearing the wedding clothes provided and immediately has him thrown out.

Jesus has made this story really quite complex, let's see if we can see unravel it a bit.

Matthew has already compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a great feast earlier in his gospel (chapter 8 verse 11) and Luke does it too in chapter 14, verse 15 of his.

The King is God, the son is Jesus. The many invited guests are the Jews. The feast celebrates the union of Christ with his bride the

church. The servants sent to summon the people to the feast are Jesus' disciples, who for many years after were persecuted and even killed, by the Jews for trying to teach them who Jesus is.

The destruction of the city prophesied here actually happened forty years after Jesus' death, when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.

As we already know the majority of the Jews didn't believe Jesus was the Son of God and would not have accepted the invitation to the feast. So, God invited the outcasts, Gentiles and sinners – (verse 10) "invite as many people as you find, good and bad alike." You remember the one guest not wearing his proper wedding clothes who was spotted by the king and thrown out? The one who had decided not to wear the wedding clothes he had been given represents those who have not truly believed in Jesus. They will be thrown out.

Jesus concludes, "Many are invited but few are chosen." The gospel is preached to all and many hear the call to follow Jesus but some do not fully give their lives to Him. They enjoy the good food at the feast but are not able to give themselves fully to His service. Remember John 15 verse 16: - "You did not choose me, I chose you to go and bear much fruit, the kind of fruit that endures. And so, the Father will give you whatever you ask of Him in my name."

Amen

Prayers:

God, I accept your generous invitation and ask that each time I return to your table, you will remind me that it is what we bring to the table that helps to make up your kingdom. Amen.

Hymn –409

- 1 Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace ;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions :

Chorus: *All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

- 2 Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace ;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus :
CHORUS

- 3 Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat :
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space ;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us
Chorus

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face ;
let us bring an end to fear and danger :

Chorus

- 5 Let us a build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter :

Chorus

Marty Haugen (b. 1950)

Blessing:

God we came at your invitation, send us out in
to our streets to invite others.

God you fed us at your feast: send us out into
our streets to feed others.

Help us to remember that you are with us in
our streets always. AMEN

(Alan Ladds , CCL No. 315086)

WORSHIP AT HOME

SUNDAY, 18th October 2020

Call to Worship:

(This can be spoken rhythmically and, perhaps, you could add an action for each line.)

Now we are the family of God,
Our Father will meet with us here,
To give him our praise and our thanks,
To hear and we learn from his word,
To bring him the needs of the world,
To ask for forgiveness for sin,
To look for the grace of his Son,
To give of ourselves as we serve.
Amen.

Hymn – Praise, my soul (StF 83):

1. Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet your tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
evermore his praises sing.

Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King!

2. Praise him for his grace and favour
to his people in distress.
Praise him, still the same as ever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless.

Alleluia, alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness!

3. Fatherlike he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows.
In his hand he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes.

Alleluia, alleluia!
Widely yet his mercy flows!

4. Angels, help us to adore him;
you behold him face to face.
Sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space.

Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace!

Prayer:

Eternal God, by your word you create and by your breath you give life. We worship you with joy and thanksgiving, praising you for the fullness that

your presence brings to our lives, and our life together.

We praise you that by your word you feed us; we are satisfied, and there is always more.

Your goodness is displayed in your wonderful works for all humanity, and in your perfect love. In our humanity we are rebellious, and sometimes follow after foolish ideas; going ways which lead away from life with you...

And yet, when we cry out you are there, your word healing our inner emptiness and pain, embracing us, leading us in your life-giving ways. For your unending faithfulness, revealed to us in Christ Jesus, and made present to us in your Holy Spirit we praise you, Lord God. Amen

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father.....Amen

Today's Readings:

Psalm 99
Matthew 22:15-22

Reflection:

Do You remember the Looney Tunes characters Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote? The coyote was always trying to capture Road Runner. However, he always failed, and he never learned his lesson. In Matthew 22 we see a similar dynamic between Jesus and the Jewish officials. They keep trying to trick and trap Jesus and, of course, they fail. However, thankfully for us, we can learn from these interactions.

We learn that buttering up Jesus doesn't work. Do you think we ever try that with God, in order to get a favourable response to our prayers? The officials are hoping to trap Jesus on religious or political grounds, but Jesus is onto them. God sees right into our hearts. We can't deceive God. By Jesus' response we can see that we should respect our national leaders. I'm sure that we don't all agree with everything that our



government does. I've also never met anyone who enjoyed paying taxes. However, Jesus makes it clear that these institutions are not inherently evil, and generally speaking, we should obey the laws that they set.

However, greater loyalty is due to God. Jesus instructs us to give to God what is God's. Is not everything God's? The image on currency is often that on the nation's leader but people were made in God's image. So, it is good and right to respect our government, and other authorities in our lives, but our greatest loyalty should be shown to the one whose image we bear.

They couldn't outwit Jesus. Both directives he gives are true and scripturally unarguable. Jesus satisfies the governmental obligation without compromising the devotion that is due to God.

Prayer:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised to hear us when we pray in faith. Lord, as we face these uncertain times, we pray for your protection on all those whom we love. We pray for all those who are ill because of coronavirus or from on-going medical conditions, we also pray for all those who are fearful of getting ill.

We pray for all staff working for the emergency services, hospitals, hospices and care homes and for all those caring for others who are ill. We pray for all those for whom this day will seem long and hard, especially remembering those who are still self-isolating at this time.

We pray for all those who are struggling to work or to earn money due to the coronavirus. We pray for businesses that are struggling to keep afloat in these uncertain times and for people who are fearful of losing their jobs. We pray that, as a nation, we will unite to help all those in need at this time. We pray that your Spirit will guide us, as a church, to care for those in our community who need our help at this time.

We pray for our leaders in government and health organisations who are having to make difficult decisions at this time and are under great pressure.

We pray for all those who are fearful about the future of church and pray for your Spirit to guide
Sophie Carnaby CCL No 315086

us as we come together in a new way. As a church, may we know that although we are not all together in person, we are united together by prayer.

We name those who we especially wish to pray for today...

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn – Take my life and let it be (StF 566)

1. Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise.
2. Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.
3. Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee.
4. Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use every power as thou shalt choose.
5. Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,
it shall be thy royal throne.
6. Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee,
ever, only, all for thee.

Blessing:

May the peace of the Christ go with you,
Wherever he may send you.
May he guide you through the wilderness,
Protect you through the storm.
May he bring you home rejoicing
At the wonders he has shown you.
May he bring you home rejoicing
Once again into our doors. Amen

WORSHIP AT HOME
SUNDAY 25th October 2020

Bible Sunday

Call to Worship:

Happy are those who reject the advice of evil people, who do not follow the example of sinners or join those who have no use for God.

Instead, they find joy in obeying the Law of the LORD, and they study it day and night.

They are like trees that grow beside a stream, that bear fruit at the right time, and whose leaves do not dry up. They succeed in everything they do
Psalm 1 v1-3 (Good News translation)

**Hymn – Powerful in making us wise to salvation
StF 160, by Christopher Idle**

*Can be sung to Epiphany or Spean, better known as tunes to
'Brightest and best of the sons of the morning'*

Powerful in making us wise to salvation,
witness to faith in Christ Jesus the Word;
breathed out for all by the life-giving Father –
these are the scriptures, and thus speaks the Lord

Hammer for action and compass for travel,
map in the desert and lamp in the dark;
teaching, rebuking, correcting and training –
these are the scriptures, and this is their work.

Prophecy, history, song and commandment,
gospel and letter and dream from on high;
words of the wise who were steered by the Spirit,
these are the scriptures; on them we rely.

Gift for God's servants to fit them completely,
fully equipping to walk in his ways;
guide to good work and effective believing –
these are the scriptures; for these we give praise!

Prayer:

Almighty God, we praise and thank you for your word, which has come to us in the Bible.

We praise you for all we can find in it: truth, guidance, hope and reassurance; history, poetry, prophecy and vision; joy, sorrow, anger, compassion and every other part of human experience.

We praise you for all the ways in which the Bible shows your love for your people, from creation to salvation and the ongoing gift of the Holy Spirit.

We thank you for the teachings of Jesus, your living Word, and the example he sets for our us: to trust in God and use our lives to show his love.

Merciful God, we're sorry for the times when we don't follow your ways as recorded in your word, the Bible.

We're sorry for the times when we don't follow the teachings of Jesus

and instead choose to neglect your ways.

Forgive us when we do not want to learn about you and refuse to open our hearts and lives to your love.

Please forgive us for our past mistakes and free us to try again to live as your son Jesus taught us.
Amen



The Lord's Prayer - Our Father Amen

Today's Readings:

Leviticus 19 v1-2, 15-18

Matthew 22 v34-40

Reflection:

Today is recognised as Bible Sunday – an initiative of the Bible Society, whose website gives this simple reason for their existence: “we believe that when people engage with the Bible, lives can change – for good”. Therefore the Bible Society works to translate and distribute the Bible, as well as encouraging and helping people to engage with its teachings. Bible Sunday is a reminder not to take our access to scripture for granted, and to commit ourselves to engaging with it regularly and seeking its lessons for our lives. Reading and studying God's word is one way of showing and developing our love for him – alongside prayer, worship, communion and many other ways.

In many of the world's major religions, the scripture used is simply a record of the teaching of the faith's major leader(s). I find it fascinating that much of our scripture was also scripture for Jesus, and the New Testament often refers back to the Old Testament. Today's readings are an example of this, though less explicit than some where Old Testament texts are directly quoted: we find the same command to love our neighbour within both passages. I'm sure Jesus knew the Jewish scriptures well enough to have been fully aware of this link, giving his teaching a particular emphasis on this point.

As I write this the coronavirus 'rule of 6' is a few days old, and tougher restrictions are being considered. Perhaps, as you read it, we are back

under a stricter form of lockdown. The message at present is that recent increases in cases are most likely to be due to people not properly following the rules and guidance in place – not quarantining on return from relevant countries abroad (or when experiencing symptoms) and/or not observing social distancing rules. Younger people, who don't fear serious illness, are largely blamed. As the government tries to tackle this, I've heard these words on the radio a lot lately: "I wash my hands to protect my family. I wear a face covering to protect my mates. I make space to protect my nan. I wash my hands to protect my colleagues. I wear a face covering to protect strangers. I make space to protect you." In one respect, just a (rather annoying, after a while) public information campaign. Also, though, a call to love our neighbour – to act for others, even if we don't feel the need to protect ourselves. If the call is heeded, we may need fewer restrictions, which will be better for the overall wellbeing of society in so many different ways. It shouldn't need a pandemic to teach people that showing love for each other creates a better world – something a bit more like God's Kingdom. Jesus told us over 2,000 years ago.

What can you do, this week, to show that you love your neighbour?

Prayer:

Father God, help us to hear, understand and obey your words to us, and to learn more of your ways. May those we meet learn of you through us. We pray for the work of the Bible Society, making your Word accessible to all, and for all initiatives seeking to bring the Bible alive for children.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those we know of currently going through difficult times; that your Word may speak to them the words they need to hear, and they may feel your sustaining presence near.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those in need of our help, to whom we can live out God's word and Christ's compassion, the neighbours you call on us to love. We pray especially at this time for the work of local foodbanks and Covid support hubs.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who suffer in this world because your commandments of love are broken: for all victims of violence, hatred, prejudice, injustice, selfishness and greed. Help us to play our part in bringing change.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen

Hymn – God has spoken, by his prophets

StF 157, by George Wallace Briggs

Tune Hyfrydol ('Alleluia, sing to Jesus')

God has spoken – by his prophets,
spoken his unchanging word;
each from age to age proclaiming
God, the one, the righteous Lord.
'Mid the world's despair and turmoil
one firm anchor holding fast:
God eternal reigns forever,
God the first, and God the last.

God has spoken – by Christ Jesus,
Christ, the everlasting Son,
brightness of the Father's glory,
with the Father ever one;
spoken by the Word incarnate,
God from God, ere time was born;
Light from Light, to earth descending.
Christ, revealing God to all.

God is speaking – by the Spirit,
speaking to our hearts again,
in the age-long word expounding
God's own message, now as then.
Through the rise and fall of nations
one sure faith is standing fast;
God still speaks, the Word unchanging,
God the first, and God the last.

"All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every good deed"
(2 Timothy 3 v16-17)

Blessing:

Triune God – Father, Son and Spirit - we ask that you will help us to learn more about you through the Bible. May you guide us through life with the knowledge and understanding from your Word. Amen.

Prepared by Karen Edmondson