



This service was originally constructed for delivery at worship during a residential weekend at The Queen's Foundation in Birmingham as part of Marc's training towards ordained ministry in the Methodist Church.

Let us begin in meditation:

Take a moment to listen to the still small voice of God within the bustle of the day which has begun. Create a quiet place where you can enjoy precious moments of peace in God's presence. Sit quietly and listen to the sounds of the world around you, both outside and in the place where we are; both outside and in the person that you are. Breathe slowly and rest in God's presence...

Pause

Almighty God, from our rising in the morning to our lying down again, you are with us every hour of the day; our reassurance when storms assail, and strength when courage fails. From our rising in the morning to our lying down again, your light illumines every step of the way; our comfort when darkness falls and peace that calms our souls. From our rising in the morning to our lying down again, you are with us:

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

Hymn StF 1 All People that on Earth Do Dwell - Consider the words of our first hymn

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| 1. All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice:
him serve with mirth,
his praise forth tell;
come ye before him and rejoice. | 3. O enter then his gates with praise;
approach with joy his courts unto;
praise, laud, and bless
his name always,
for it is seemly so to do. |
| 2. The Lord, ye know, is God indeed;
without our aid he did us make:
we are his folk, he doth us feed;
and for his sheep he doth us take. | 4. For why, the Lord our God is good;
his mercy is for ever sure;
his truth at all times firmly stood,
and shall from age to age endure. |

5. To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
the God whom heaven and earth adore,
from earth and from the angel host
be praise and glory evermore.

William Kethe

We continue in **prayer**:

A word of Confession:

When our faith is weak you strengthen us, when we lose our way you rescue us, when we fall into sin you forgive us. Gracious Father, please remind us as we forget, that your love is unconditional, always moulding us into what we could be, always blessing us that we might glorify you. For love, grace and forgiveness, we thank you.

A word of Praise and Adoration:

God, creator, artist supreme,
The potter who forms us,
The father who keeps us,
The mother who holds us,
The word who sustains us,
The love who will not let us go,
We offer you our sacrifice of praise.

Jesus, Messiah, saviour and friend,
The rabbi who teaches us,
The prophet who stirs us,
The healer who touches us,
The One who dies for us,
The love who will not let us go,
We offer you our sacrifice of praise.

Spirit, power, Breath of Life,
The guide who prompts us,
The truth who inspires us,
The fire who empowers us,
The spirit who enables us,
The love who will not let us go,
We offer you our sacrifice of praise.

AMEN

In this service we will use two familiar passages, one from the Gospel of Matthew, and the other from the books of Psalms. There won't be much explanation or "teaching" around either passage, but rather a space to rest and wonder with the passages and discover what they might be saying to us.

The Gospel passage is from Matthew 7:24-29, a section titled "True Obedience", and this translation is from the New Testament for Everyone:

"So, then, everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Heavy rain fell; floods rose up; the winds blew and beat on that house. It didn't fall, because it was founded on the rock. And all those who hear these words of mine and don't do them—they will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. Heavy rain fell; floods rose up; the winds blew and battered the house—and down it fell! It fell with a great crash."

When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching. He was teaching them, you see, on his own authority, quite unlike their scribes.

Admit it: You began singing the song didn't you? It's a familiar story for many, and one we can often recite and roll off the tongue. It's one thing to know the story, it's another to be confident that it's happening in our lives.

Are our foundations based in the words that Jesus gives? Have we picked and chosen which of those words we base the foundations of our lives on? I wonder, for example, if you're like me. You see I know what Jesus says about loving other people. I know what Jesus says about what I'm to do to show my love to my neighbour. That's what I often use as the foundation for the life I am building. Don't misunderstand me... I don't think that's a bad thing! But I wonder how good am I at including in the bedrock for my foundations the fact that Jesus speaks of God's

love for me? Do I place as much trust in the knowledge that I am, as I am, loved and welcomed by God? Do I try to be more, or other than I am, and to base my life on how I love other people? What would it look like for me to also build my life upon God's love for me, and to simply be in relationship with God?

Consider the words of the song "**Build my Life**":

Verse 1:

Worthy of ev'ry song we could ever sing
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring
Worthy of ev'ry breath we could ever
breathe
We live for You

Verse 2:

Jesus the name above ev'ry other name
Jesus the only one who could ever save
Worthy of ev'ry breath we could ever
breathe
We live for You, We live for You

Chorus:

Holy there is no one like You, there is none
beside You
Open up my eyes in wonder
And show me who You are, And fill me with
Your heart,
And lead me in Your love to those around
me

Bridge:

I will build my life upon Your love, It is a firm
foundation
I will put my trust in You alone, And I will not
be shaken

Brett Younker | Karl Martin | Kirby Kaple |
Matt Redman | Pat Barrett

We **pray** again:

A word of intercession:

Loving God, when the foundations of our world shake and crumble, we know that we can stand firm on your promises.

We pray for the people all over the world. For all those who experience natural and human made disasters. For all who have lost family, friends, and homes, and for all who are providing aid and assistance. For those caught up in war, both in the world, but also in our communities and family where disagreements can pull strong foundations down. We of all people know that the road to recovery is not easy and we pray for them to have strength to build their lives and communities.

Lord, in the name of Jesus, our rock and foundation, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for all those beset by the storms of ill-health. Let Your healing Spirit work in their minds and bodies, restoring them to strength and well-being.

Lord, in the name of Jesus, our rock and foundation, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the rebuilding of the Community of Faith, throughout our country and the world, and for all who work to build your Church, bringing light and hope to those whose lives are built on shifting sands. Strengthen and uphold all who minister in Christ's name.

Lord, in the name of Jesus, our rock and foundation, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for our own homes and families. Let your love and compassion be a guiding force in our lives and our relationships with others. Make us alive to the needs of our own community and help us to share one another's joys and burdens.

Lord, in the name of Jesus, our rock and foundation, **Hear our prayer**

When the storms of life rage, Lord keep us safe in the strength of Your Word and promises.
Amen

Our other reading is Psalm 46:1-7, 10-11. This is from the New Living Translation:

God is our refuge and strength,
always ready to help in times of trouble.
So we will not fear when earthquakes come
and the mountains crumble into the sea.
Let the oceans roar and foam.
Let the mountains tremble as the waters
surge!

Interlude

A river brings joy to the city of our God,
the sacred home of the Most High.
God dwells in that city; it cannot be
destroyed.
From the very break of day, God will protect
it.

The nations are in chaos,
and their kingdoms crumble!
God's voice thunders,
and the earth melts!
The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among
us;
the God of Israel is our fortress.

Interlude

"Be still, and know that I am God!
I will be honoured by every nation.
I will be honoured throughout the world."

The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among
us;
the God of Israel is our fortress.

Interlude

As I was pondering this Psalm, and particularly those challenging 8 words "Be still, and know that I am God", I began writing a piece of spoken word poetry. I know poetry isn't for everyone, and that spoken word is a bit more niche in the rhythms it uses, but I share it with you now, and invite you to rest with the words and feelings that you notice as you reflect.

Simply Be.

42... That's the answer, but what's the question!?

"I will take the ring to Mordor, but I do not know the way..."
That's an answer that acts like a question... Will you show me?
I'm not sure I was asking for your sword Boromir, but thanks.

"Who are you? Ooh ooh, ooh ooh..." Oh, and "Alice, Alice!? who is this Alice!?"

"Why do birds suddenly appear, every time you are near?"
Follow up question: Does anyone know what type of birds they are?
They look like vultures to me...
"To be, or not to be. That is THE question"
That is the question offered by the bard

Preemptively like Douglas Adams the Psalmist shouts in answer "Be!"
And my heart still cries Be!
But like Frodo I don't know the way... Will you show me!?
And I don't know who... The Who sing true!
And what does it mean when I notice what's around me,
be it doves of peace or vultures of death!?

Not who will I be,
Or what will I be
Or where or why or when will I be,
But will I simply be, here as me, or not?

Be.

Realise you are enough to come and come as you are
To feel the grace, the warm embrace, and place
Yourself in the heart of God.

Be.

Open your eyes and recognise the life within, without.
See and be seen, know and be known, be present, and be more,
Simply by being.

Be, still.

Endure. Run the race, whatever your pace, as long as it takes.
Run not from, nor to, against nor for, but with, alongside
And for the joy of running... That from a non-runner...
Continue to be.

Be, still.

And whilst running be still.

Be Still. And Know. That I AM God.

Be Still.

In Hebrew the word is "Raphah. Harpu."
Meaning: Cease. Stop. Let go.
Breathe out. Surrender. Sink in.
Don't just pause, but give up.
Imagine your bed at the end of the day
Safe in the knowledge that it will hold you
Embrace you
Let you sink in and stop.

Give up the notion of needing to know,
Give up the notion of needing to win the race,
Know that you are called merely to participate
To discover with others God when you run.
Cease holding yourself up.
Let go, and let God. Run free.
Don't stop being you, but cease trying to hold yourself up.
Stop trying to be someone else.

Be, still, but be still.
And know.

Know.

In Hebrew the word is "Yada."
Not a head knowledge with and answer to the questions,
As helpful as that might be.

Not simply a guttural knowledge, that recognises the need for questions,
As helpful as that might be.
Not merely a heart knowledge, that embraces and searches for what is "right"
As good as that might be.
Not even that soul knowledge, that ushers in peace,
Oh for that to be...

But a raw, naked, carnal, visceral, intimate
Knowledge and experience that breeds life,
in us and in the world.

Just as Adam yada Eve and she bore a son;
just as Noah yada the earth was ready
for bearing fruit after the flood and planted seeds;
just as God yada Jeremiah in his mother's womb and called him forth;
just as to yada Jesus is to yada the creator who sent him;
just as God yada you, yada me, we are to yada God.
May we yada God in all our naked glory;
May we rest in intimacy with God
and so let go and let God.

And as we run the race by being still,
As we know by being known,
May we recognise the freedom of the knowledge that
It is not I that is God,
with all the responsibility that entails
to have all the answers,
but rather it is I AM who is God.

To be, or not to be. That IS the question.

To simply be. That is the answer.

Be. Be still. And Know. THAT I am God.

Be. Breathe out. Surrender. Sink in.

Get intimate with God and grow life.

I wonder what you will take away, be it from, something written here, or from where your heart has taken you?

Ultimately the words of our closing hymn sum up the journey I have been on in preparing this service.

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| 1. Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God. | 3. I love you with a steadfast love.
I love you with a steadfast love.
I love you with a steadfast love. |
| 2. I am the Lord who saves and heals.
I am the Lord who saves and heals.
I am the Lord who saves and heals. | 4. In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
In you, O Lord, I put my trust.
In you, O Lord, I put my trust. |

May we take time to be; To be still; To endure; and to get intimate with God.
May we know that we are known and loved by God,
and build our lives upon that firm foundation.

Amen

Prayers:

<https://www.faithandworship.com/Wednesday.htm#gsc.tab=0>

https://www.faithandworship.com/prayers_Praise.htm#gsc.tab=0

Intercessions adapted from <https://comeandseegovbay.wordpress.com/2015/06/17/strong-foundations-the-wise-and-foolish-builders-2/>