

Written Service Sunday October 20th 2024
A service of worship for use at home
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Nottingham North East
Methodist Circuit
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Call to worship:

Come, Holy God, come loving source of our life,
Come, healing Light.
Come, healing Light, source of our life,
Come, healing Light.

Hymn: O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hands have made.
I see the stars, and hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed.

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee,
how great thou art: how great thou art.*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees.
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
and hear the brook and feel the gently breeze.

Then sings my soul ...

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:

Then sings my soul ...

When Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation
to take me home – what joy shall fill my heart;
Then shall I bow in humble adoration,
and there proclaim: my God how great thou art.

Then sings my soul ...

Prayer of Adoration and Praise

Eternal God,
You are the power that created the universe,
The energy that fires everything,
The strength that sustains our world.

Eternal Father,
You are the love that encircles us,
The grace that enables us,
The truth that enlightens us

Eternal Saviour,
You are the glory of the cross of Christ,
The Hope of the resurrection,
The life of the Holy Spirit.

God of love and power and might
Through Him who led us to your heart of love,
Even Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Readings: Mark 10:35-45 (taken from Good News version)

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. "Teacher" they said, "there is something we want you to do for us."

"What is it?"

They answered, "When you sit on your throne in your glorious Kingdom, we want you to let us sit with you, one on your right hand and one on your left."

Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking for. Can you drink of the cup of suffering that I must drink? Can you be baptised in the way I must be baptised?"

"We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them "You will indeed drink the cup I must drink and be baptised in the way I must be baptised. But I do not have the right to choose who will sit at my right and my left. It is God who will give these places to those He whom He has prepared them."

When the ten disciples heard about it, they became angry with James and John. So Jesus called them altogether to Him and said "You know that those who are considered rulers of the heathen have power over them and the leaders have complete authority. This however, this is not the way it is among you. If one of you wants to be great he must be a servant of the rest; and if one of you wants to be first, he must be a slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served; He came to serve and give His life to redeem many people."

Romans 12:1-3 (taken from Good News version)

So then my brothers and sisters because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to His service and pleasing to Him. This is the true worship you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God – what is good and is pleasing to Him and is perfect.

And because of God's gracious to me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you should. Instead, be modest in your thinking, and judge yourselves according to the amount of faith that God has given you

Hymn: I will offer up my life in spirit and truth.

I will offer up my life in spirit and truth,
pouring out the oil of love as my worship to you.
In surrender I must give my every part; Lord,
receive the sacrifice of a broken heart.

*Jesus what can I give, what can I bring
to so faithful a friend to so loving a King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung
as a praise of your name
for the things you have done?
O my words could not tell, not even in part,
of the debt of love that is owed by this thankful heart.*

You deserve my every breath for you've paid the great cost;
giving up your life to death, even death on the cross.

You took all my shame away, there defeated my sin,
opened up the gates of heaven, and have beckoned me in.

Jesus what can I give ...

Sermon:

The passage from Luke's Gospel has numerous things to tell us.

1. It tells us something first about the honesty of Mark. There is a story about Oliver Cromwell who had his portrait painted by the renowned artist, Hogarth. Now Cromwell was plagued by warts on his face. When the portrait was ready, it was discovered that Hogarth had sought to get into Cromwell's good books by leaving out the warts. When Cromwell saw the painting he immediately sent it back. Cromwell wanted it done again but this time with "warts and all." It would seem that Mark's account seemed to do the same.

This story is told in Matthew's Gospel as well as Mark's Gospel – but there was a big difference. In Matthew's Gospel it is James and John's **mother**, Salome, who asked the question. It is probable that in Matthew's account he is trying to save the blushes of James and John by making it seem that it all is his mother's idea. It maybe that that Matthew thought that such a request was unworthy of an apostle and to save their reputation he attributed it to the natural ambition of their mother. In Mark's account the disciples were not seen as a company of saints but people with and the understanding and ambition of normal people. So he showed them "Warts and all."

2. It also tells us about James and John. It tells us that they were very ambitious. It is very telling that James and John made this request just after Jesus had explained what would happen to Him when they reached Jerusalem – it would lead to disputes with the Chief Priests and the doctors of the law; He would be scourged and eventually be handed over to Gentiles put to death.

But they had entirely the wrong idea about what Messiah-ship meant. It was not going to be a quick fix; a time of tribulation and eventual victory. They had completely misunderstood that Jesus was going to Jerusalem to die and that would usher in a time of terrible persecution.

Maybe their ambition was kindled because more than once James and John, along with Simon Peter had been in 'the inner circle.' Jesus had made them the 'chosen three.' And it maybe that they were richer than the others, as their father was rich enough to hire servants. Whatever it was they felt it was their prerogative to ask Jesus to make them chief ministers of state. It seems that words were not enough to rid them of the idea of a Messiah being about earthly power and glory - only the cross could do that.

3. It tells us something about how Jesus regarded Messiah-ship. He used two metaphors to explain what He meant. He said "Can you drink the cup of suffering that I must drink? Can you be baptised in the way I must be baptised?"

Jesus used the idea of the 'cup' to mean what God handed out – whether good or bad – to human beings.

The word 'baptised' in Greek meant not just baptism - as with John the Baptist's Baptism - but meant to be 'immersed' in anything and could mean to be 'submerged' in something, as with suffering. So Jesus was saying if you follow me, not only will you find suffering but you're very lives will be in danger – so much for their belief that they would reign with Jesus in an earthly kingdom!

4. Inevitably, the actions of James and John aroused resentment among the other disciples. It seemed to them that James and John had tried to steal a march on them and to take an unfair advantage. Immediately the old controversy about who would be greatest in the kingdom began to rage again.

It was a serious situation and might have wrecked the fellowship had not Jesus taken control. He called the disciples together and explained to them that they were not to think in terms of the world. In the kingdoms of the world the standard of greatness was power. The test was: how many people does a man control? How great an army of servants has he at his beck and call? On how many people can he impose his will?

Not long after this Galba was to sum up the pagan idea of kingship and greatness with these words "Now that I am emperor, I can do what I like and do it to anyone."

The kingdom of Jesus was to be very different. It was to do with service. Greatness consisted, not in reducing others to one's service, but in reducing oneself to their service. It was not what service can I extract, but what service can I give?

5. The basic trouble with human nature is to want to do as little as possible and get as much as possible out of it. It is only when we are filled with the desire to put more into life than we get out of it that life for ourselves and others will be happier.

Let's go back to the Epistles to the Roman's – in this Paul writes 'Do not be conform your selves to the standards of this world, but let God transform inwardly by a complete change of your mind' What Paul is saying is that we no longer have to be subject to the world and its values but that we should be subject to Christ and His values. The trouble is that we are greedy, self seeking and value those who are rich and famous.

What Jesus is saying in this reading is we must value all people not merely those people that the world values.

A story is told about a man from India, called Venkayer. At that time in India there was a caste system. He was a member of a caste called 'the untouchables', which was the lowest of all the castes and meant that he was not valued at all and neither could he marry outside of his caste. He couldn't read or write as he wasn't thought worth spending the money on teaching him and as far as the Indian's were concerned he had no value at all. However he had heard of people who worship a God who loves all people – even the untouchables! So he became a Christian. He still couldn't read or write but when he was old and was completely blind he would sit at the side of the road and tell anyone who would listen about a God whom he worshipped, who loved all people – even the untouchables!

Hymn: Come let us sing of a wonderful love

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget,
home weary wanderers, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came;
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;
Seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love,
come and abide.
Lifting my life till rises above
envy and falsehood and pride;
Seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

Prayers of Confession:

Let us thank God that though misunderstanding and unfaithfulness He has brought us to this day of truth and joy

Yes Lord, so says my heart.

Forgive us Father that we have harboured suspicion and magnified the hurts within the church

Yes Lord, so says my heart.

Forgive us father that we have been blinded by prejudice, carelessness in our conversations, quick to anger and slow to forgive

Yes Lord, so says my heart.

Forgive us Father as we have forgiven as we have forgiven all who have offended us
Yes Lord, so says my heart.

Christ Jesus came into the world so save sinners.
Hear then the words of grace "Your sins are forgiven".
Yes Lord, so says my heart. Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, you said, "My peace I leave you."
In a world of violence, pain and mistrust:
Make us channels of your peace.

We bring to you Lord, the troubles of the world:
(We pray for places of conflict- especially Ukraine, Yemen, Syria, Iran, Russia, The Holy Lands, Lebanon and China. We continue to pray for all those who suffer because of climate change – those living with drought, flooding or extreme weather events.)

Lord Jesus
Where there is hatred, bring your love.

We bring to you Lord, broken relationships and mistrust in the world:
(We pray for the new government, religious and political leaders, and all those who make decisions on behalf of others)

Lord Jesus
Where there is injury, bring your pardon.

We bring to you Lord the Church, both here and throughout the world:
(We pray for this church. Give us a vision for the future. We ask for the coming of God's Kingdom in this dark world; for those who seek and those who guide, for those who are persecuted and those who live in fear)

Lord Jesus
Where there is doubt, bring true faith.

We bring to you Lord, all human sorrow:
(In silence we pray for those we know who are sick and bereaved, lonely and anxious)

Lord Jesus
Where there is sadness, bring your joy.

We bring to you Lord, ourselves, our trials and temptations:
(In silence, we pray for ourselves)

Lord Jesus
May we be channels of your peace and love.
In the name of Jesus: AMEN

Hymn: All my hope on God is founded

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 His 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 souls 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.

Final prayer: Say together:

May our Lord, guide us in our plans and visions and sustain us as we seek to do His will – May the blessing and peace of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit go with us this day and into eternity,

Amen