



Charity number 1134226

Peter finds Forgiveness

This is a slightly different service. I have written it as though Peter is speaking – first he goes off fishing and is very unsure of his place in the band of believers. This is followed by a meditation. Then Peter meets the risen Jesus and finds forgiveness. This is followed by another meditation

Call to Worship:

You wait for us until we are open to you,

We wait for your word to make us receptive

Attune us to your voice, to your silence.

Speak and bring your Son to us – Jesus, the word of your peace.

Hymn: Now than we all our God,

Now thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things have done, in whom this world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous though all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace, and guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given,
The Son and Him who reigns with them in highest heaven,
The one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore,
For thus it was is now, and shall be ever more.

Prayers of Adoration, Praise and Thanksgiving:

Risen Lord, Saviour and Redeemer, we give you thanks for your presence with us. For your unchanging love which reconciles and sets us free to worship you.

We praise and thank you, Lord.

For your faithful people of every age and culture who, through the power of your love have proclaimed and shared the good news of the gospel.

We praise and thank you, Lord.

For those who day by day build bridges in love, serve with humility and quietly share their faith without counting the cost.

We praise and thank you, Lord.

Holy Spirit, guide, counsellor and friend, who leads us into all truth, for your love which recreates, renews and changes us to be more Christ like.

We praise and thank you, Lord.

For the ways in which your Spirit enlightens our ignorance, changes our ideas and thinking and challenges us to seek new opportunities for mission and service.

We praise and thank you, Lord. Amen

Readings: Matthew 6:9-15 (Taken from the Good News Bible)

This then is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven, may your holy name be honoured;

May your Kingdom come; and may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today all we need.

Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.

Do not bring us to hard testing, but keep us safe from the Evil One.

“If you forgive others the wrongs they have done to you, then your Father will also forgive you.

But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive the wrongs that you have done”.

Luke 6:27-31 (Taken from the Good News Bible)

“But I tell you who hear me: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who ill-treat you. If anyone hits you on one cheek, let him hit the other one too; if someone takes your coat, let him have your shirt as well. Give to everyone who asks you for something, and when someone takes what is yours, do not ask for it back. Do for others just what you want them to do for you.

Peter Goes back to Fishing

What on earth am I supposed to do now? Don't misunderstand me, all the pain and distress of losing Jesus has gone and I'm still filled with the wonder and amazement at seeing the Master again. The trouble is, I don't know what, if anything is going to happen now. We've seen Jesus several times but it's difficult to pin Him down; to get Him to explain what we need to do next. He keeps slipping away. The only positive instruction was to come here to Galilee and wait. So here we are back at home in Capernaum – but **is** it home? Is this where we belong now? I must admit it felt odd to come back to the house, so quiet now without Him and all the crowds that followed us.

But there is something nagging at the back of my mind; will there be anything for us – for me – in whatever's going to happen next? Jesus is so..... different. Perhaps He's going to take over now, you know, with hosts of heaven, legions of angels, that sort of thing. Is that why He's sent us home to Galilee? Is He trying to tell us that we have played our part? “Off you go back home now boys.”

But if I'm **absolutely** honest, I wonder if it is **me** that the message is directed at? I don't think there can be a place for me in the company now. He has never said anything to me about what I did and said that Friday; in fact He has never spoken to me directly since it happened. I don't know what I would say to Him if He did. Me and my big mouth! I said I would follow Him no matter what and die with Him if necessary. But the fact is that, under pressure, I let Him down, showed that I couldn't be trusted. So, I guess that whatever He has planned for the future, I am no longer part of the plan! Still, I've always got the boats and fishing. After all, that's what I am, an uneducated fisherman from Galilee who met and followed the Son of God, Jesus who overcame death and hell. Not many people can say that. But it's all over now and I'm off fishing!

It's a beautiful evening and I've told the others that I'm going out for a night's fishing. John put his hand on my arm and asked if I was sure about going back. I explained that I expect Jesus intended us to go back to fishing. The others looked unsure but said they would come too.

So here I am, standing on the deck as the boat rolls gently with the evening swell, **so** familiar, **so** comfortable. **He** used to stand here just where I am now and told stories to the crowds, hungry for His words, demanding His time, pressing in on Him. The crowds are gone now. There are just the usual fishermen, preparing for a night on the lake.

Automatically we handle the ropes, the thwarts and sails. Thomas and John heave the boat out, run through the surf and leap aboard, skills learned long ago and never lost. We grin at each other in the gathering darkness. It feels good to be back. Yes – this is probably where we belong now. Jesus has been glorified and has a whole Kingdom to win. But at least we can say we had a small part to play..... at the beginning!

Meditation

*Can I ever go back Lord?
When the confidence has gone,
And I am unsure of my calling,
When the road ahead is lost in the mist of confusion,
Can I go back, return to the familiar, the comfortable?*

*The familiar closes in around me,
Like a comfortable pair of slippers
Or the patched jacket I could never bring myself to throw away.
I'm safe here.
I can't be buffeted by the stresses and strains of always trying to do the right thing.*

*But you know Lord,
That I am not safe here,
Not safe from you.
Long ago Lord you put into my heart the longing for something more.
You called me away from the familiar.
You called me to an amazing adventure with you.
You didn't say it would be easy, but I accepted your challenge.
And didn't you say that once we put our hand to the plough,
There is no turning back.*

*So Lord,
When I am confused,
Unsure of the way to go,
Stop me from craving the safety of the familiar.
My safety, although uncomfortable at times,
Is with you my Lord.*

Peter at the Lake - Meeting Jesus

The morning sun has just risen above the Galilean hills. Long streaks of gold stream through the countryside and out onto the lake. This must be the most perfect spring morning. There is not a cloud in the sky. There's a slight breeze ruffling the water of lake which glitters in the sunlight. And there is the smell of fish cooking on an open fire. Jesus is busily tending the fire seeming to give all His attention to it. We are all hungry after a night's fishing. We hadn't caught anything until the Master arrived. Then the catch was so great we could hardly pull in the net. Was He reminding me of the time three years ago when He called me away from the nets, "to catch people" he had said? In my confusion I had tried to go back to fishing. The truth is we can never go back.

But as I sit here, I am very aware that this is the first time I have been alone with Jesus since He returned. The guilt I feel for leaving Him alone in the garden and then denying that I even knew Him – not once, but three times, is eating into my very soul and I am paralysed, unable to look Him in the face.

Then Jesus speaks. He doesn't look at me. He is busy tending the fire. "Do you love me more than these other do Peter?"

I manage to find my voice, but I can only stare at my hands as I say, "you know I love you Lord". "Then feed my lambs" He says quietly.

I am usually impetuous, always ready to speak – too ready some might say. I want to ask Him what He means but I am still weighed down by guilt. For a second time Jesus asks "Peter, do you love me?" Did He have to ask again? "Yes Lord, you know that I love you!" "Then look after my sheep"

My face is burning red as He turns to look me full in the face, His eyes searching mine. "Peter, do you **really** love me?" My eyes fill with tears that run down my cheeks. How can He still doubt me? "Lord" I shout at Him, "you know everything. You know that I love you"

Now He is smiling at me. He nods His head as He says "Yes Peter, feed my sheep"

And now, suddenly, everything is clear. Others can condemn me for what I did but Jesus has forgiven me and that is all that matters. I will never return to the boats and fishing now. There is work to be done and a whole Kingdom to win. He trusts me enough to put me in charge of His little flock. I have no idea what this is going to mean but just sitting here in the bright morning sunshine with him beside me, I think I can do anything.

Meditation

Light of the world and Lord of compassion,

*When tears flow and I feel abandoned, teach me that I am **always** loved by you.*

When I put myself out of the circle of your light,

*Show me the way back and teach me that I am **always** loved by you.*

Why do I turn my back on you Lord?

Why do I go my own way?

Why do I want my own way?

Why do I hurt you with my words and actions?

Why do I doubt your love?

As I consider again your suffering and death for me and all people Lord, I realise that your suffering continues as the people you died for turn their backs on you.

*Forgive me – forgive **us** Lord for hurting you,*

*And teach us that we are **always** loved by you. Amen*

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 steaming to me and to you:

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.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet; why do they roam?

Love only waits to forgive and forget, home weary wanderer home!

Wonderful love dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love, come and abide,

Lifting my life till it rises above envy and falsehood and pride;

Seeking to be lowly and humble a learner of thee.

Prayers of Confession:

Lord, you give us brother, sister, parent, child, friend and colleagues; you offer the possibility of rich, loving relationships. But we take each other for granted; we abuse and do not respect one another as we should. Father, forgive us

And help us to be more aware of your way.

Lord, you offer us a new way of living, a supreme example for us to follow; but we are easily attracted by material things and lose sight of our goal. Father, forgive us,

And help us to be more aware of your way.

Lord, you share with us all you have. Yet we are reluctant to give you our 'all', because it is costly and painful. Your hands are open and ours are so often closed. Father, forgive us,

And help us to be more aware of your way.

Let us hear the words of assurance – our sins are forgiven.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

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: and places where people suffer because of climate change)

Lord Jesus

Where there is hatred, bring your love.

We bring to you Lord, broken relationships and mistrust in the world:

(We pray for governments, religious and political leaders, and all those who make decisions on behalf of others – especially we bring to you the meetings of world leaders on climate change)

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 the coming of God's Kingdom, 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:

(We pray for the sick and bereaved, the lonely and the 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: 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 of 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 a 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 ...

Final Prayer:

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