

Written Service Sunday March 3rd
A service of worship for use at home
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A Reflective Act of worship

As we come into God's presence let us settle ourselves as we listen to these words from Sri Lanka.

" Slow me down , Lord.

Ease the pounding of my heart by the quietening of my mind.

Steady my hurried pace with a vision of the eternal reach of time.

Give me, amid the confusion of the day, the calmness of the everlasting hills.

Break the tension of my nerves and muscles with the soothing music of the singing streams that live in my memory.

Teach me the art of taking minute vacations, of slowing down to look at a flower, to chat with a friend, to smile at a child, to read a few lines from a good book.

Slow me down Lord, and inspire me to send my roots deep into the soil of life's enduring values, that I may grow more towards my greater destiny,

Remind me each day that the race is not always to the swift, that there is more to life than increasing speed.

Let me look upward to the towering oak and know that it grew great and strong because it grew slowly and well."

Let us pause and reflect on the images drawn for us in those words. Let them touch our hearts and souls and speak to us of the things of God.

Hymn 161 StF Speak O Lord as we come to you.

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your holy Word
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us
All Your purposes for Your glory

Teach us, Lord, full obedience
Holy reverence, true humility
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority
Words of pow'r that can never fail
Let their truth prevail over unbelief

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity
And by grace, we'll stand on Your promises
And by faith, we'll walk as You walk with us
Speak, O Lord, 'til Your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory

Prayer from the Patrick Compline. Northumbria Community

In the name of the king of life :

in the name of the Christ of love,

in the name of the Holy Spirit :

the triune of our strength we come.

We love you, O Lord our strength. The Lord is our rock and our deliverer. Our God is our rock in whom we take refuge. We will praise the Lord who counsels us: even at night our hearts instruct us.

We have set the Lord always before us. Because he is at our right hand . we shall not be shaken.

We place our souls and our bodies under thy guarding this night, O Christ, May Thy cross be shielding me. Amen.

Today the third Sunday of Lent where we are asked to reflect on Jesus' anger at the misuse of priests and merchants in the temple courts in Jerusalem . Here he showed his 'zeal for his father's house. His desire to see God's laws being followed .

Jesus Cleanses the Temple *John 2: 13-25*

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵ Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!' ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' ¹⁸ The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' ²⁰ The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' ²¹ But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

²³ When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵ and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.

The psalm for today is Psalm 19 . As I was reading it I wondered what was the connection between it and the gospel reading. Then I thought it might be helpful to do this reflection together together.

So here we have two versions of Psalm 19

Psalm 19. NRSV

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament^[a] proclaims his handiwork.

² Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

³ There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;

⁴ yet their voice^[b] goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens^[c] he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hidden from its heat.

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple;

⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;

the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;

⁹ the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring for ever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.

¹³ Keep back your servant also from the insolent;^[d] do not let them have dominion over me.

Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

The Message Translation

19 ¹⁻² God's glory is on tour in the skies, God-craft on exhibit across the horizon.

Madame Day holds classes every morning, Professor Night lectures each evening.

³⁻⁴ Their words aren't heard, their voices aren't recorded, But their silence fills the earth: unspoken truth is spoken everywhere.

⁴⁻⁵ God makes a huge dome for the sun—a superdome!

The morning sun's a new husband leaping from his honeymoon bed,

The daybreaking sun an athlete racing to the tape.

⁶ That's how God's Word vaults across the skies from sunrise to sunset, Melting ice, scorching deserts, warming hearts to faith.

⁷⁻⁹ The revelation of GOD is whole and pulls our lives together.

The signposts of GOD are clear and point out the right road.

The life-maps of GOD are right, showing the way to joy.

The directions of GOD are plain and easy on the eyes.

GOD's reputation is twenty-four-carat gold, with a lifetime guarantee.

The decisions of GOD are accurate down to the nth degree.

¹⁰ God's Word is better than a diamond, better than a diamond set between emeralds.

You'll like it better than strawberries in spring, better than red, ripe strawberries.

¹¹⁻¹⁴ There's more: God's Word warns us of danger and directs us to hidden treasure. Otherwise how will we find our way? Or know when we play the fool?

Clean the slate, God, so we can start the day fresh! Keep me from stupid sins, from thinking I can take over your work; Then I can start this day sun-washed, scrubbed clean of the grime of sin.

These are the words in my mouth; these are what I chew on and pray.

Accept them when I place them on the morning altar,

O God, my Altar-Rock, God, Priest-of-My-Altar.

Hymn StF 107 I sing the Almighty Power of God

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

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

I sing the goodness of the Lord,
who filled the earth with food,
Who formed the creatures through the Word,
and then pronounced them good.

Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed,
where'er I turn my eye,
If I survey the ground I tread,
or gaze upon the sky.

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?

Psalm 19 reminds us of the servant of God following God's ways – facing trouble head on but remaining true to the laws of God.

So is that the connection to Jesus in the Temple. He was righteously angry at the way dealings were being done in the Temple Courts, not for the benefit of the people but for the traders.

Psalm 19 would have been a part of Jesus as a Jewish man of the time. He would have thought often about its words which reveal knowledge of God's purposes in creation. I love v 7-9 of The Message. 'God's word melts across the skies.' Just need to look and see.

Jesus would have often been made aware as he was growing up of the importance of following God's laws which show the way to live. They remind us of God's call on our lives – to do the right thing. The precepts of the Lord are true – precepts being the right way to behave.

But from today, for Jesus, his life changed. He was a target for murderous schemes to get rid of him. Following God's ways led to his death. A challenge to us as we think about what we do for and in God.

Read Psalm 19 again . What is it saying to you?

Prayers for others. I invite you to spend some time in quietness before God asking to be shown the people and places to who need your prayers and God's blessing.
So today we continue to seek to discover and follow God's laws. Laws to bless others. May we be guided throughout this coming week in all that we do and say.

Hymn – StF 662 Have you heard God's voice? Has your heart been stirred.
Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred?
Are you still prepared to follow?
Have you made a choice to remain and serve,
though the way be rough and narrow?
Will you use your voice; will you not sit down
when the multitudes are silent?
Will you make a choice to stand your ground
when the crowds are turning violent?

Will you walk the path that will cost you much
and embrace God's love and sorrow?
Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow?
Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith
and believe it could be different?
Will you share your views using words of grace?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

In your city streets will you be God's heart?
Will you listen to the voiceless?
Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start,
will you share your faith with the faithless?
We will walk the path that will cost us much
and embrace God's love and sorrow?
Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow.

A final blessing – Paul Field

Go peaceful, in gentleness
Through the violence of these days
Give freely show tenderness
In all your ways.

Through darkness, in troubled times
Let holiness be your aim
May you be known by love.

Be righteous, speak truthfully
In a world of greed and lies
Show kindness, see everyone.
Through heavens eyes.

Seek wisdom, faithfulness
burn like a flame.

God speed you, God lead you
And keep you
Wrapped around his heart

God hold you, God enfold you
Wrapped around his heart
May you be known by love. Amen .