

Worship at Home - Sunday 5 September 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Father God,
We unite ourselves with all who worship today, both in churches and people's homes. Nothing can separate us from your love and we rejoice that we can celebrate together, giving thanks for all your mercies. Bless our worship today and may we be strengthened and uplifted. Amen.

Hymn: StF56 King of Glory, King of Peace

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here
<https://youtu.be/tSEsknhPd0>

King of Glory, King of Peace,
I will love thee;
and that love may never cease
I will move thee.
Thou hast granted my request,
thou hast heard me;
thou didst note my working breast,
thou hast spared me.

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
and the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.

Though my sins against me cried,
thou didst clear me;
and alone, when they replied,
thou didst hear me.

Seven whole days, not one in seven,
I will praise thee;
in my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.
Small it is, in this poor sort
to enrol thee:
e'en eternity's too short
to extol thee.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Let us pray together

Lord God, we praise your holy name and come before you with awe and wonder. You bless us in many different ways and for that, we give you thanks and praise. We have not always appreciated your gifts and have often abused them. In your mercy, forgive us

Lord. We pray that you will help us to keep to your paths and to resist those things that would lead us astray, for you are the rock of our salvation. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 7:24-37

Time to Reflect

If you have time, look at the other lectionary readings for today i.e. Psalm 25 and James 2:1-10. There is a common theme in all of these and it is that God cares for everyone and has a particular heart for the needy and oppressed. God's compassion is not just for those who love Him but reaches out into the wider world. People can be in desperate situations, through no fault of their own, and they need help and support. Yet, there are often barriers that restrict this.

The story in Mark 7 reminds us of prejudices that existed between Jew and Gentile. A Gentile woman, who was also a Canaanite- approached Jesus seeking healing for her daughter as she believed that He was the Messiah. (Note: Canaanites were particularly shunned by Jews). In the story, the word dogs is mentioned, which was a common term for Gentiles. Jesus referred to dogs so was He highlighting this prejudice? The woman responded by saying that even she deserved mercy and Jesus responds by healing her daughter. Despite the barriers before her, the woman persevered and asked for basic care and compassion.

We live in a world of many prejudices based on such things as religion, status, race and gender. Governments may legislate against such things eg The UK Equality Act of 2010, but it is often the hearts of people that need to change.

Jesus came to save the world; even those we may feel are undesirable. He is the way to a new life and who are we to put barriers in the way of this? Rather, we should be showing God's love and helping people to see the nature of God, and encourage them to find salvation through Jesus.

And to those of us who have accepted Christ as Saviour, how has this changed our perception of the world and those around us? Covid-19 has thrown up many challenges; one being our concern for those less fortunate than ourselves. Let us take a few moments to reflect on what our response has been, and whether

barriers – from ourselves and governments - are preventing some people from receiving basic care and compassion.

Amen

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

God of compassion and mercy, we come before you in our prayers as we bring to you the needs of the world and ourselves. We often feel overwhelmed by the needs around us but you are a great God and we put our trust in you. Show us what we can do to make this world a better place.

Where there is poverty, may we share our riches.

Where there is war, may we bring peace.

Where there is division, may we bring unity.

Where there is despair, may we bring hope.

Where there is apathy, may we challenge and stimulate people to action.

Where there is hatred, may we show love.

We bring before you those known to us personally who have suffered loss and hardship. Visit them and give them all that they need to comfort and sustain them in their time of need.

Strengthen and guide us as we seek to do your will and make this world a better place in which to live for all people everywhere. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to StF 693 Beauty for Brokenness on

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxfBh9ay8gE>

Beauty for brokenness,
hope for despair,
Lord in your suffering world
this is our prayer.
Bread for the children,
justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset,
Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives,
cures for their ills,
work for all people,
trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed,
rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause
of those who can't speak.

*God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion we pray;
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain;*

*come, change our love
from a spark to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars,
havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary,
freedoms to share.

Peace to the killing fields,
scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness,
His cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,
oceans and streams
plundered and poisoned –
our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness,
carelessness, greed;
make us content with
the things that we need.

Refrain

Lighten our darkness,
breathe on this flame
until your justice burns
brightly again;
until the nations
learn of your ways,
seek your salvation
and bring you their praise.

Refrain

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

A prayer of blessing

Bless our worship today and may that which we have received enrich and bless our lives in the coming days. To that end, may the peace and blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Original Materials by **John Roughley**

All

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We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team.

Mark 7:24-30

From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at this feet. Now the woman was a Gentile of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her 'Let 'the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs'. But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go – the demon has left your daughter. So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.