



Worship@Home

Sunday 5th February 2023

Fifth in Ordinary Time



Call to worship

When our words are not enough, how should we act?
When our actions seem too little,
how should we pray?
God calls us to speak and act and pray,
that others will see and praise God
through the love that shines from us. **Amen**

STF 609: As we gather in your presence now

Sing/read/pray the words or listen to it here
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpFhLE765IM>

- 1 As we gather in your presence now,
Lord, we will worship ;
as we sing our thankful songs aloud ;
Lord, we will worship.
When we go out in the name of Christ,
Lord, we will worship ;
as your word and Spirit shape our lives,
Lord, we will worship.
*And whatever we do, in word or deed,
we do for the one who set us free ;
when we're on our feet or on our knees,
Lord, we will worship,
Lord, we will worship.*
- 2 When we love our friends and families,
Lord, we will worship ;
when we give ourselves to those in need,
Lord, we will worship.
When we take instruction cheerfully,
Lord, we will worship ;
when we lead with Christ's humility,
Lord, we will worship.
- 3 In the course of every working day,
Lord, we will worship ;
when our business takes us far away,
Lord, we will worship.
When we care for children in the home,
Lord, we will worship ;
when our audience is you alone,
Lord, we will worship.

Joel Payne

Let us pray together

Restorer God,
we praise you for who you are –
our healer and our redeemer.
Your light has broken forth like the dawn.
You came into our darkness to live among us,
your body broken on the cross that we might live.
We cry out to you and you respond: 'Here I am.'
Transforming God, we adore you. **Amen.**

A Prayer of confession

Restorer God,
we have sinned against you in our thoughts and
actions.
You came to loose the bonds of injustice,
and we have stood by and said nothing.
Restorer of the streets – forgive us.
You came to let the oppressed go free,
and we have kept them in chains.
Restorer of the streets – forgive us.
You asked us to share our bread with the hungry,
and we let them starve.
Restorer of the streets – forgive us.
You asked us to bring the homeless into our homes,
and we shut the door.
Restorer of the streets – forgive us.
Restorer, healer, forgive us and transform us,
so our hearts and our homes will always be open –
open to you and the call you have placed on our lives
to be lights in our communities. **Amen.**

OT Lesson: Isaiah 58:1-9a

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:13-20

Time to Reflect

At the Taize service at Ticknall a few weeks ago, an icon of Jesus the Good Shepherd was put in central place on the table at the front, surrounded by candlelight, as a fixed point of focus for the congregation. Jesus, robed in red and blue, had a lamb across his shoulders, its legs dangling down his chest. One of the stewards remarked that she had seen a shepherd on 'This Farming Life' a few weeks before, who was carrying a lamb in exactly the same way. Art copying life.

When Jesus is called the good shepherd, we are being given an image, a picture, to convey his compassion and concern for us in our lostness and need. The icon is an image through which we see the character and action of God. In Genesis 1, we humans are described as "made in the image (icon) of God." We are meant to convey something of God's character, will and action towards one another and the rest of the created order.

So, how much do we deliberately attempt to

represent God in his world? How strongly do we desire to demonstrate Godly character and purpose in our everyday living? Do we ever realise or remember that we have these choices to make?

In our Gospel reading, Jesus invites us to make a difference, to allow our saltiness to affect the flavour of the world around us; to let our light shine brightly. Being God's man or woman makes us something distinctive, changing us in order to change the world around us. Our actions for good, he says, are to be clearly seen so that other people can understand how God wants to do them good.

There is clear intention here. Jesus calls us to work on our righteousness. This is not an invitation to be "holier than though" or to be self-righteous: it is an invitation to be God's partner for God through the disciplining of our choices and actions, the taming of our passions and the moderating of our words, so that people see God through the icon of our living. If we hear Jesus clearly, he is inviting us to put all our effort and desire to work in order to let God be seen and known, to allow God to be present and seen through our human form, just as he was in the form of Jesus, the light of the world.

Of course, we are never a perfect reflection. But we can always be a better reflection by continually inviting God to make his presence clear in us through changing us for the better. John Wesley saw this as a root purpose for the Methodist movement – for its people to spread holiness – that sense of God's difference – in every sphere of life that they touched. May it be so for us.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

We pray, loving God,
for those whose knowledge is shaping our world:
those with great technical knowledge;
those with great scientific knowledge;
those with great medical knowledge.
May they be blessed too with your wisdom.

We pray for those whose wisdom is not valued,
and for those whose wisdom has been learned
through suffering.
May their voices be heard, and their stories shared.

We pray for the media and for one another,
bombarded as we are by facts and figures,
by 'must sees' and 'must haves'.
May we see the truth behind the facts,
the lives behind the figures,

and know that in you we are both rich and blessed.
We pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

StF 706: Longing for light, we wait in darkness

sing/read/pray the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT-p828ugOQ>

- 1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.
*Christ, be our light !
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light !
Shine in your Church gathered today.*
- 2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.
- 3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.
- 4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.
- 5 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

Bernadette Farrell (*b.* 1957)

A Sending out prayer

Light of the world, shine through us.
Like salt of the earth,
scatter us where there is need.
Help us work together
to repair and renew,
to rebuild and rejoice
throughout this place.
In Jesus's name. **Amen.**

Blessing

Christ, the Son of Glory, shine upon you, that you may walk in the light as in the day, and not in the night, and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all. **Amen**

Worship materials taken from rootsontheweb.com
Reflection written by Dave Bonny
Blessing taken from *Clouds and Glory* by David Adam