



Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

Sunday 19th July 2020, 10:30am, Matthew 7: 1-5 “Do not judge...”

Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon

This written worship has been prepared to bless you and help bring us together into the presence of God to worship Him in Spirit and Truth. We gather in separate homes but fully united in love by the Holy Spirit for our Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing that we share in this worship of God with our brothers and sisters in Christ is hopefully an encouragement to you and can, through the work of God' Spirit, bring us all closer together, as a church, the family of faith in Jesus.



Opening Prayer:

Heavenly Father, as we join now with others this morning, help us to know that you are with us by the presence of your Holy Spirit. Let us empty ourselves of worldly concerns and worries, open our hearts to receive your love and help us to hear you speaking to us. Fill our hearts with compassion for those in need and strengthen us to act with justice and righteousness in Jesus' name. **Amen**

He judges the world with righteousness;
He judges the people with equity.

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,
A stronghold in times of trouble.
And those who know your name put their trust in you,
For you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you. **Amen** Psalm 9: 1,2,7-10.

Proclamation:

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
I will be glad and exult in you;
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.

The Lord is everlasting and sits enthroned for ever,
He has established his throne for judgement.

Hymn: StF 409 All are welcome

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKJgcv8SdnQ>

Let us build a house
Where love can dwell
And all can safely live,
A place where
Saints and children tell
How hearts learn to forgive.

Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
Rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions;

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where prophets
speak,
And words are strong and true,
Where all God's children dare to seek
To dream God's reign anew.

Here the cross shall stand as witness
And a symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where all are named,
Their songs and visions heard and loved
and treasured, taught and claimed as
words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace, let
this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

*All are welcome,
all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Marty Haugen (b.1950)

Prayer of confession:

*Almighty God, we come to make
confession, for we have sinned in thought
and word and deed. We now repent in
honesty and sorrow; forgive us Lord and
meet us in our need. (StF 419 v.1)*

God our Father, we come to you now in
sorrow for our sins. In times of trouble
our first reaction is to try and solve it
ourselves rather than turning it over to
you. We are sorry that we limit your

goodness and power in our lives or turn
our relationship with you into one which
is distant, unloving and infrequent.

In your great mercy Lord, forgive us.

For the times we have sat in judgement of
each other and when we have invented
motives for those actions we do not
understand or have exaggerated their
faults and diminished their virtues.

In your great mercy Lord, forgive us.

We confess that we forget to look to you
in hope and expectancy for new life and
inspiration and we so easily lose the sense
of the wonder and power of the Gospel.

In your great mercy Lord, forgive us.

For letting ourselves be drawn away from
you by the temptations in the world, for
the times when we have not shared our
love of you with our family and friends,
when we have been ashamed of you or
hidden our faith in you.

In your great mercy Lord, forgive us.

When we have seen someone from our
fellowship struggling with a problem but
not come forward to help. For failing to do
in our lives what we profess or sing, for
playing the hypocrite and being a barrier
to the faith of others.

In your great mercy Lord, forgive us.

*In a time of silence and reflection we recall
specific instances for which we are asking
forgiveness. We listen to what God may be
saying to us*

Amen.

God of love and power, forgive me and
free me from my sins, heal and strengthen
me by your Holy Spirit and raise me to
new life in Christ Jesus. **Amen**

Open Doors 65th Anniversary:

This week we're celebrating 65 years since a Dutchman, Andrew, made his first trip into Eastern Europe and received a commission from God that has since grown to become Open Doors!

Ever since that day in 1955 when Brother Andrew – as he is more widely known – felt called to 'strengthen what remains and is about to die' (Revelation 3:2), millions of Christians around the world have been upheld in prayer and empowered practically to continue to be the church in their nations and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ! The prayers and financial gifts from Open Doors supporters enable the worldwide Christian Church to stand against the fiercest persecution and 'run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith' (Hebrews 12:2).

As Brother Andrew said, "The work of the church is not survival. She exists to fulfil the Great Commission. Her work is making disciples of all nations."

Intrigued by the name "Open Doors"? see the words of Jesus in Revelation 3:8.

We pray for the work of Open Doors in nations like Qatar. Qatar is an absolute monarchy. The state religion is a conservative form of Islam; leaving the faith is illegal. Both indigenous and migrant believers risk discrimination, harassment, police monitoring and all sorts of intimidation by vigilante groups. There are many Christian migrants working in Qatar to prepare for the 2022 World Cup; they live and work in poor conditions, are often paid less than promised. But despite their living

conditions, these Christian communities are growing. A Prayer for Qatar: Lord Jesus, thank You that Your light shines in Qatar. Thank You that You are drawing the homesick and lonely migrant workers close to You. Help believers find ways to meet together safely, and may their lives be a testimony to Your grace and love. Protect and provide for Your people.

Amen.

For more information about the work of Open Doors please go to:

<https://www.opendoorsuk.org/>

Preparation for the reading and preaching of scripture:

Lord, prepare our hearts like fertile soil for the reading of your Word. Speak to us through the readings and the preaching of the word and enable us to be not just hearers, but doers of the Word which leads to life.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 7:1-5

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

³Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

A time to pause, read again, pray, and reflect.

Preaching notes:

Bible commentator William Barclay tells us “only the faultless have a right to look for faults in others”, it is the idea that some in our fellowship will “look for faults” or consider themselves to be faultless that is so disappointing. In much the same way as we are warned by Jesus that if we sit in judgement of another then we ourselves must be prepared to be judged in the same fashion. The measure you give will be the measure you get (verse 2b) so by using inaccurate, half-baked information or thinking that the motives of someone are known when actually they are not means it will be the same result for you as you gave to the person you judged, the only difference is that they may have been perfectly innocent of anything but the one who has judged in this fashion will suffer the judgement of God.

Luke 6:37 is a parallel verse to Matthew 7:1-5 in which Luke recounts much of what Matthew covers but with the addition of Jesus telling us the parable of a blind man leading another blind man and both falling into a pit. Reading the two versions together can provide additional insight particularly when linked to John 9.

Turning a blind eye to other people’s behaviour is not the outcome that Jesus is expressing with the command “do not judge”. As Christians we are to challenge each other and hold each other to a higher standard than the world. The apostle Paul, when writing to the early churches was often highlighting behaviours that were inconsistent with a life lived in honour of the risen Jesus. Read the first letter to the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians) and there is no

doubt that Paul was judging their behaviour as being wrong. But it is important to note that it was to them he was addressing this, it was direct, factual, instructive and loving. He is writing as a parent to a child (see 1 Cor. 4:14) rather than a judge to a defendant, he does not pronounce a verdict but challenges and encourages -that is the difference.

Judging others in the way that Jesus describes could be thought of as a form of self-harm. “If you judge other people you wound your own soul” (John Wesley), not only which you may shipwreck the faith of another believer, on whose account will God then judge the loss of a soul and the loss of what was planned for him/her who you have, by your judgement, have discouraged? It is a warning that must take note of and be constantly on guard against the temptation to slip into judgement.

Paul in the epistle to the Romans writes “who are you to pass judgement on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls (Romans 14:4), reminding us that as Christians we are all servants of Christ and His body, the church (the fellowship) but our master is God, not our brother or sister. That does not mean that we do not respect the authority of the leadership of the church and their teaching but we remember the priesthood of all believers: “you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Peter 2:5) and that roles in the church are undertaken on behalf of the church.

This is indeed challenging teaching, but when we allow it to shape us and come under its authority, we can live the full life

as a follower of Christ that He intended, a fruitful and faithful disciple. **Amen**

Hymn: StF 254 Seek ye first the kingdom

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And his righteousness;
And all these things shall be added unto
you,
Allelu, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, allelu, alleluia.

Ask, and it shall be given unto you,
Seek, and ye shall find.
Knock, and the door shall be opened unto
you,
Allelu, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, allelu, alleluia.

You shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of the
Lord,
Allelu, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, allelu, alleluia.
Karen Lafferty (b. 1948)

We pray together our Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against
us. And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7 NIV)

Gracious God, we bring our prayers for the work of Open Doors. We pray for persecuted Christians around the world. Strengthen them to withstand the injustice of not being cared for in this time of crisis,

We pray for the country of India and its people, as they approach their rainy season which is normally a time of increased death and disease, this year they must also cope with the added strain of the Covid -19 virus. May they treat all of their citizens, irrespective of religion or caste, with compassion and offer them aid with justice and fairness.

We pray for our leaders to exercise wisdom and integrity as they make decisions about our future as a nation. We continue to see restrictions being loosened, we pray for the virus to be controlled and for effective treatments. We pray for all those who are continuing to fight the effects of the disease in hospital and for those who are recovering from its effects on their bodies.

Loving Lord, bless The Children's Society in all their work to end hunger, poverty and distress in families, especially as the school summer holidays approach; may they encourage and enable all our young people to be nurtured, cherished and fulfilled.

We pray for the work of our Methodist circuit in its work to prepare for a resumption of physical worship. For the many teams of people who are completing the required checks to help make everything safe.

Loving and merciful God, we bring to you those who we know are suffering the pain of illness, those awaiting operations and those recovering from surgery. Be with them Lord in their times of trouble and pain and give them your peace.

For those working in our health and care services, Lord protect them from fatigue or feelings of hopelessness. We lift them to you and ask you to bless them and their families.

For our family members who do not know you yet Lord; brothers, sisters, wives, husbands, children, parents, we bring them all to you in name and ask that you soften their hearts and put believers in their path who they will listen to and who will tell them the truth of your love and desire for them to know you as Saviour.

We pray for those approaching or have just encountered the anniversary of the death of a dearly loved partner or child. Comfort them Lord.

We bring these prayers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Hymn: StF 503 Love Diving

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

Love divine, all loves excelling
Joy of Heaven to Earth come down
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling
All Thy faithful mercies crown
Jesus, Thou art all compassion
Pure, unbounded love Thou art

Visit us with Thy salvation
Enter every trembling heart

Breathe, O breathe, Thy loving spirit
Into every troubled breast
Let us all in Thee inherit
Let us find that second rest
Take away the love of sinning
Alpha and Omega be
End of faith, as its beginning
Sets our hearts at liberty

Come almighty to deliver
Let us all Thy grace receive
Suddenly return and never
Never more Thy temples leave
Thee we would be always blessing
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing
Glory in Thy perfect love

Finish then thy new creation
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee,
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

An excellent version of Love Divine can be found from All Souls Prom Praise here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igs3mNsppsI>

Blessing: Now may the Lord of Peace Himself give you peace at all times in all ways, the Lord be with you all.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen. Until we meet again, God bless. Phillip Telephone 01425 673350 phillip.dixon@methodist.org.uk

YouTube links are external resources and are provided to help you engage with the songs. Singing the Faith and Hymns and Psalms resources are provided under license: CCLI 178182