



Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

Sunday 26th July 2020, 10:30am, Matthew 7: 7-12 "Ask, seek and knock"

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's Spirit, bring us all closer together, as a church, the family of faith in Jesus.



Good morning church!

Opening Prayer:

Loving God we gather with joy and faith this morning, unite us and help us be of one accord with our spiritual family: our brothers and sisters in Bransgore, Highcliffe, believers in many places around the country, the ends of the earth and the saints in heaven. We are separated by distance but not in our desire, love and devotion to You. We welcome Your Holy Spirit to flood our homes and our lives afresh this morning as we worship You in Truth and Spirit, may Your beautiful fragrance of peace, love, truth and power permeate our homes and our lives. **Amen.**

Proclamation:

O' give thanks to the Lord!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
Glory in His holy name;

Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord!

Seek the Lord and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!

Amen Psalm 27: 1-4 NKJV.

Hymn: SoF 1981 O' Church Arise

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXN0-OGUGyU>

O church, arise and put your armour on;
Hear the call of Christ our Captain;
For now the weak can say that they are strong

In the strength that God has given.
With shield of faith and belt of truth,
We'll stand against the devil's lies;
An army bold whose battle cry is "Love!"
Reaching out to those in darkness.

Our call to war, to love the captive soul,
But to rage against the captor;
And with the sword that makes the wounded whole,
We will fight with faith and valour.
When faced with trials on every side,

We know the outcome is secure,
And Christ will have the prize for which He
died—
An inheritance of nations.

Come, see the cross where love and
mercy meet,
As the Son of God is stricken;
Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His
feet,
For the Conqueror has risen!
And as the stone is rolled away,
And Christ emerges from the grave,
This victory march continues till the day
Every eye and heart shall see Him.

So Spirit, come, put strength in every
stride,
Give grace for every hurdle,
That we may run with faith to win the
prize
Of a servant good and faithful.
As saints of old still line the way,
Retelling triumphs of His grace,
We hear their calls and hunger for the day
When, with Christ, we stand in glory.

Townend Stuart Christopher Andrew / Getty Keith © Worship
Together Music, Thankyou Music, Thank You Music.

Prayer of Confession:

*If we say we have no sin, we make
ourselves out to be perfect and in no need
of a Saviour. If we repent in sorrow and
confess our frailty and our weakness, You
Lord, being faithful and just, will forgive
our sins and cleanse us from all
unrighteousness.* 1 John 1:8-10 Amplified Version

Let us confess our sins:

Lord Jesus Christ I confess I often fail You
as did Your first disciples; I am sorry that
my good intentions are not always
followed by a sacrifice of self. My self-
reliance and selfishness betrays You and

results in me being less obedient to You.
Lord forgive me, Christ have mercy.

I am sorry for the times I lack the
boldness to proclaim You and Your mighty
deeds of power and love particularly with
friends and family who do not know You.
Forgive me for the times when I assume
that others do not want me to witness to
them, for limiting Your intervention and
for not trusting that it is You who adds to
the number being saved and not me.
Lord forgive me, Christ have mercy.

For the times when I have believed more
in churchianity than Christianity and
placed more trust in the organisation and
the building rather than the Saviour,
keeping traditions rather than Your
commands. I am sorry for the times when
I have lacked in my desire to see You and
follow You with all of my heart.

Lord forgive me, Christ have mercy.

Forgive me when I have not been loving,
supportive or encouraging to my brothers
and sisters in Christ, when I have thought I
can just leave it to others or have belittled
myself thinking that my voice is small and
unheard, help me Lord to know that I am
part of Your body, the church on earth,
that requires my contribution.

Lord forgive me, Christ have mercy.

Pause

*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.*

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw us close to Himself and cleanse us
from all of our sins so that we may behold
the glory of His Son, the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Absolution taken from Common Worship

Transform Lives for Good (TLG), “Make Lunch”

“Things had got so bad that my daughter's school had put things in place for us over the school holidays. One of the things we were told about was the Make Lunch club at the Baptist church in town. Make Lunch has turned out to be a lifesaver for us – a complete Godsend” Joanne.

TLG is a Christian charity working on the frontline to support families facing food insecurity through the Make Lunch clubs, they know first-hand that Free School Meals are a lifeline to children who should not have to go hungry. The recent announcement about the Free Meals Scheme being extended to include this current school summer holiday period will make a big difference to those families who have relied upon the vouchers over the course of the pandemic. Families can now look to the summer holidays knowing that they will have some financial support in helping provide food for their children, at a time where more and more are feeling the strain of financial and food insecurity.

One of these families is Sarah and her family, supported by TLG Make Lunch in Hinckley, “it’s a huge relief for many families because it helps us out with the weekly shop, especially for families who can't work due to the pandemic.”

“The impact of the COVID-19 health crisis calls for a community-wide response. We need churches and individuals to play their part in coming alongside struggling families - offering care, connection and a wider support network that caters to individual needs. As a charity, we will continue to support these families through our TLG Make Lunch Clubs and

our ‘Boxes of Hope’ initiative – equipping local churches to personally respond to the needs of families on their doorsteps. So far 100 churches in partnership with TLG have provided over 35,000 equivalent meals to nearly 2,000 children and their families”. Tim Martin CEO.

We pray for the work of TLG in highlighting and tackling the root causes of child deprivation and family crisis. That more churches and individuals will respond by playing a part in this essential work. We pray for God’s peace to be with children who are suffering the anxiety of seeing Mum’s and Dad’s worry about their household money and access to food. We pray for a strong Christian influence on families that desperately need to hear of God’s transforming love and provision, perhaps through a grandparent or friend. We pray for our Government and its agencies to make wise and compassionate decisions concerning struggling families.
Amen.

For more information about the work of Transform Lives for Good please go to: <https://www.tlg.org.uk/your-church/make-lunch>

Preparation for the reading and preaching of scripture:

Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wisdom hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of this Holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which You have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen** John Wesley, a prayer to precede the reading of scripture.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 7:7-12

⁷ ‘Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹ ‘Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹² So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

New International Version - UK (NIVUK)

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

Preaching notes:

We have in recent months become familiar to having essential messages being given to us in memorable triplets: “stay home, protect the NHS, save lives”. Each instruction is essential in its own right and makes sense as an instruction on its own yet is also closely related to each other (conditional yet also separate). Ask, seek, knock, can also be seen in the same way, in terms of our relationship with God and our prayer life, each one is an essential individual action, yet each is also seen as related. As also with: “way, truth and life” (John 14).

Scripture has a lot to say about our hearts, have you ever considered why? For example: “seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all of your heart and all of your soul” (Deuteronomy 4:29)

Jeremiah repeats this theme with: “when you search for me, you will find me if you seek me with all of your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13). Our hearts are the wellspring of our desires, the saying: “I have my heart set on...” portrays for us immediately the strength of feeling about that particular thing. The expressions: “his heart is not in it” or “she put her heart and soul into it” indicate without doubt that the heart is the key aspect of desire and perspective. These three imperatives (ask, seek and knock) are rooted in a pre-existing faith in God, for example: “without faith it is impossible to please God, He rewards those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). So, to say, “if I could only just see God then I would believe” is an illogical statement, “faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).

Asking and having confidence that God, as a good Father, will give what we ask for depends on our faith, it is all about relationship and could not be otherwise. Without a relationship with God as our Father and trusting and following in Jesus as Son and Redeemer, then to whom are we praying and trusting in? Without a relationship with God that makes us sons and daughters then what is the relevance to stones, snakes and bread and fish (Matt. 7 verses 9-11). The reference to being “evil” or as some versions say “sinful”, we must remember that this is stated as a comparison to God versus fallen humanity, isn’t that why we are in need a Saviour?

We are all in need of God’s grace, we set our hearts on a right relationship with Jesus and in the power of His Holy Spirit rid ourselves of sinful and selfish desires.

God says: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

We continually ask, seek and knock, as a community of believers, as a church, trusting in faith that revival and growth in new believers will be our fruit. **Amen**

Hymn: StF 254 Amazing Grace

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words. a special version of Amazing Grace with 'friends' for the global ecumenical prayer movement led by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=156&v=LXBsCkIxVRU&feature=emb_logo

Amazing grace (how sweet the sound)
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come:
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand
years,
bright shing as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.

John Newton (1725-1807)

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 TLG. We pray for struggling families during this time of uncertainty, we pray for opportunities to share our faith in You to all those we meet.

We pray for children to be nurtured, cherished and fulfilled. For a lifting of anxiety from their young shoulders so that they may know the joy of a relationship with You.

We pray for persecuted Christians around the world, caught in the unfairness and repression of discriminatory regimes.

We pray for our Government, leaders and those with influence to exercise wisdom and integrity as they make decisions about our future as a nation.

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 intelligence services, in these days of international tensions we pray for them to have the knowledge and ability to protect us. For the trade negotiators of the EU and GB to work together to find solutions to problems.

We pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for the nation of Israel to accept the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and Saviour.

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 their Saviour.

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

Hymn: StF 51 Great is Thy Faithfulness

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

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

Great is Thy faithfulness
O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not
Thy compassions they fail not
As Thou hast been
Thou forever will be

Great is Thy faithfulness

Great is Thy faithfulness

Morning by morning new mercies I see

*All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord unto me*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness

Great is Thy faithfulness

Morning by morning new mercies I see

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided

Great is Thy faithfulness

Lord unto me

Pardon for sin
And a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer
And to guide
Strength for today
and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside

Great is Thy faithfulness

Great is Thy faithfulness

Morning by morning new mercies I see

All I have needed Thy hands hath provided

Great is Thy faithfulness

Lord unto me

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)

Blessing: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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