



# Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020, 10:30am, Matthew 7: 21-23 “Self-deception”.**

**Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon with contributions from Glenda Sidding and Winifred George.**

This written worship has been lovingly 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 this morning with all of 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:**

Almighty God our Heavenly Father, we call upon your name as we come to worship you. We recognise your majesty and come before your throne of grace with grateful humble hearts. *(Pause)*

We never cease to praise you for all you have done for us through the creation of your world in which we live. You provide for us the air we breathe, the sun that shines, the rain that falls. You provide seed time and harvest and give us an abundance of good things that makes our lives sing. *(Pause)*

You are a great and mighty God and we come before you today to praise and worship you in love and peace. **Amen**

Glenda Sidding, Supernumerary Minister Highcliffe

We gather this morning as a “Family of Faith” in Jesus Christ, with different emotions.

In joy, as morning sung of a battle won. In weeping from the night, struggling in the fight. Whether Joy or Weeping, this morning we are all in need of God's abundant mercy. May His praise continually be in our mouths.

### **Proclamation:**

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;  
make known among the nations what he has done.

Sing to him, sing praise to him;  
tell of all his wonderful acts.

Glory in his holy name;  
let the hearts of those who seek  
the Lord rejoice.

Look to the Lord and his strength;  
seek his face always. **Amen**

1 Chronicles 16 v 8 – 11 New International Version (NIV)

**Hymn: StF 20 Be Still.**

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKfyudrhGK4>

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
The holy One, is here;  
Come bow before him now  
With reverence and fear  
In him no sin is found  
We stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
The holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
Is shining all around;  
He burns with holy fire,  
With splendour he is crowned:  
How awesome is the sight  
Our radiant king of light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord  
Is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord  
Is moving in this place:  
He comes to cleanse and heal,  
To minister his grace -  
No work too hard for him.  
In faith receive from him.  
Be still, for the power of the Lord  
Is moving in this place.

David J Evans (b1957)

**Prayer of Confession:**

Lord our God we humble ourselves before you as we confess our sins and all that separates us from you and those we live amongst.

We see the temptations of the world around us and feel ourselves being drawn into the ways of the world. We confess that it is easy to turn a blind eye to the attitudes that abuse others through words and actions that hurt and harm.

We confess that we forget to thank those around us, who support and care for us when life gets hard.

We confess, we ignore the needs of people, whose lives do not measure up to our privileged standard.

We confess, that we find it easy to judge others, when they get things wrong but find it hard to take criticism, when we are at fault.

*A time of silence when we confess our sins to God and listen to what He may be saying to us.*

Father God, forgive our sins and renew us in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

God is slow to anger and full of compassion.

He forgives all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer written by Glenda Sidding, Assurance of Forgiveness from Exodus 34:6-7 and Romans 8:1

**Thanksgiving:**

Father God, we thank you for sending your son Jesus to live our earthly life; he came to offer us your love in new and creative ways. We thank you that Jesus taught us to love one another with an unconditional love, a love that teaches us to turn the other cheek and to walk the extra mile. We thank you that you give us the courage to follow Jesus to the cross on which he died for us, so that we can attain an abundant and eternal life. We thank you, that in your great love for us, you brought Jesus back from death to live forever more with us through resurrection life. We thank you and offer these prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

**Amen.** Written by Glenda Sidding

**Hymn: StF 41 Blessed be your name.**

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p055bdmh>

Blessed Be Your Name  
In the land that is plentiful  
Where Your streams of abundance flow  
Blessed be Your name  
Blessed Be Your name  
When I'm found in the desert place  
Though I walk through the wilderness  
Blessed Be Your name

Every blessing You pour out, I'll  
Turn back to praise  
When the darkness closes in, Lord  
Still I will say:

*Blessed be the name of the Lord*  
*Blessed be Your name*  
*Blessed be the name of the Lord*  
*Blessed be Your glorious name*

Blessed be Your name  
When the sun's shining down on me  
When the world's 'all as it should be'  
Blessed be Your name  
Blessed be Your name  
On the road marked with suffering  
Though there's pain in the offering  
Blessed be Your name

Every blessing You pour out, I'll  
Turn back to praise  
When the darkness closes in, Lord  
Still I will say:

You give and take away  
You give and take away  
My heart will choose to say  
Lord, blessed be Your name

*Blessed be the name of the Lord*  
*Blessed be Your name*  
*Blessed be the name of the Lord*  
*Blessed be Your glorious name*

Matt and Beth Redman

**Preparation for the reading and preaching of scripture:**

Father, prepare our hearts for the reading of Your word, help us to understand the real meaning of what we are reading. By the power of Your Holy Spirit may these words, spoken by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, speak to us today of the truth and certainty that only by seeking Your will and being fully in relationship with You will we be saved from the self-deception that is so easy to fall into. That it's not just what we do that matters but the reason behind it and for whose benefit, never as lip-service but always as heart-service. **Amen**

**Gospel Reading: Matthew 7:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

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

**Preaching notes:**

These three verses appear on many people's mental list of "most shocking, uncomfortable and challenging" verses in the New Testament, but they needn't be. Whilst these verses have been described as "heart piercing" they are said by Jesus for us to be completely sure of our

motives in the things we do. Is our relationship with Him “lip service” or “heart service”? The things we do, are they from a sense of duty (doing or saying the right thing) or as an expression of our deep love of God?

The term “not everyone”, that Jesus begins with, means that some will enter the kingdom but some (many?) won't. Remember the audience -perhaps this audience- these are people who believe themselves to be on the correct path, the Kings Highway but find themselves, in the end (on that day) to have been on the wrong path all along. Jesus helps us -if we are willing to accept his words- in knowing which are which. The key is seeking to do God's will with all of our hearts -how? By knowing God's heart and Him knowing ours.

The sub-title inserted prior to this short text in the NIV translation emphasises the continuation of last week's passages (verses 15-20), the “false and true” comparison. Here it is again: “false and true disciples”, in verse 21 Jesus makes it clear who will enter the kingdom of heaven -another way of saying receive eternal life- “only those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven”. Do we still think that it is about attending a church service, by having Christian parents, attending a Christian organisation, doing more “right than wrong” like a moral balance sheet, by piling up good works? No, whilst those things are fine, it is not enough, to believe this is “self-deception”. Instead it is about putting into practice all that Jesus has taught throughout this long sermon (the “Sermon on the Mount which begins at chapter 5 ). Bible expositor Matthew Henry states: “we have here (in

chapter 7 in general and these verses in particular) the conclusion of this long and excellent sermon, the scope of which is to show the indispensable necessity of obedience to the commands of Christ”.

Jesus is talking here in these verses to those who may have an outward appearance of religion but not a heartfelt deep love and desire to be close to God. He is introducing the concept of self-deception or delusion and the idea that some (He says many) are living under a false sense of security by assuming that their religiosity will lead to their salvation -which Jesus says very clearly it will not.

In his early ministry as a Church of England Minister John Wesley, was very devout, very observant, pious and diligent, out of duty he made the long and dangerous journey to America and ministered amongst the settlers and natives but looking back on that time he admitted that he did not truly know God, He had no assurance of his personal salvation. One evening whilst attending a Bible study in Aldersgate, London, he describes his heart being strangely warmed and he received God's Holy Spirit into his life. Some may say: “he was already a Christian, he was a minister, tested and trained” - he was not, because despite the clerical collar, he did not fully and truly know God nor did God truly know him. The anointing from God is surely far more important than the ordination from men (good as that is).

As we conclude please consider the words of Jesus that none of us wishes to hear: “I never knew you”, do we only turn to God in times of trouble, as a last resort when all else fails? Humanly, what type of

relationship would that be with a family member if that were our attitude?

God, through Jesus, offers us a close relationship, a family relationship, in which we are adopted as children: "He gave the right to become children of God to all those who believe in His name" (John 1:12). Seeking to do our own will (whilst calling it God's for effect or credibility) will not end well and no one can say they were unaware of the consequences. If you have not done so yet, prayerfully consider beginning a closer relationship with Jesus today, do not put it off to another day. **Amen**

If anything in today's teaching has stirred you in anyway or if you have questions please contact me by telephone or email.  
Phillip

**Song: StF 331 King of Kings Majesty**

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

King of kings, Majesty  
God of Heaven living in me  
Gentle Saviour, closest friend  
Strong Deliverer, beginning and end  
All within me falls at Your throne

*Your Majesty, I can but bow  
I lay my all before You now  
In royal robes I don't deserve  
I live to serve Your Majesty*

Earth and Heaven worship You  
Love eternal, Faithful and True  
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls  
Brought this sinner near to Your throne  
All within me cries out in praise.

*Your majesty, I can but bow  
I lay my all before You now  
In royal robes I don't deserve  
I live to serve Your Majesty* Jarrod Cooper

**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)*

Father God we come into your presence now with awe and wonder, but aware that you care for us your children. That you care so much that you sent Your Son to die for our Sin at Calvary and to rise again on the third day. Help us we pray. Help us to grow in knowledge and understanding of You and of the Bible, Your Holy Word, that we may truly serve You. Save us from the Sin of Self-deception and help us to be true disciples of Your Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We bring to you now the concerns upon our individual hearts and in a moment of personal stillness lay them before you committing them and ourselves to your loving care.

We pray for your Church Family here in Bransgore and Highcliffe, for those who are sick, those recovering from accidents and operations, for those who are lonely and those who mourn the death of loved ones. We ask that they may all feel your loving presence with them.

We think of the explosion, the devastation and the great loss of life in Beirut, Lebanon. Grant we pray comfort to those who mourn, strength and perseverance to those who search through and try to clear the rubble; and generosity of spirit to the nations of the world, to help and support each other in times of trouble both manmade and natural.

We remember also the destruction of habitat for birds, fish and animals, caused by the wrecking of an oil tanker off South East Mauritius. Be with those who undertake the 'clean-up' and with the fishermen and their families who fear for their livelihoods.

We think too of the loss of habitat by fire in the forest area near Ringwood and the work of the fire-brigades here and throughout the country. We ask your blessing upon the people affected by all these events and also upon the families and friends of those who have lost their lives and those injured in the tragic train crash on Wednesday in Eastern Scotland.

At this time of pandemic and economic uncertainty for individuals and nations we ask your blessing upon all who seek to use their God given talents and skills in the service of others.

Bless guard and keep them.

As individuals and a Church Family we pray in the words attributed to Richard of Chichester-

'Day by day, day by day,

O, dear Lord, three things I pray:

To see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and follow thee more nearly,

day by day.' **Amen**

Winifred George , Highcliffe Worship Leader.

**Hymn: StF 531 What a friend we have in Jesus.** Sing/read /pray/proclaim.

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

What a friend we have in Jesus  
All our sins and griefs to bear  
And what a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer  
Oh, what peace we often forfeit  
Oh, what needless pain we bear  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer

Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Saviour, still our refuge—  
Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer;  
In His arms He'll take and shield thee,  
Thou wilt find a solace there.

Joseph Medlicott Scrivens (1818-1886)

**Blessing:** Brothers and sisters, be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Until we meet again, God bless. Phillip  
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[phillip.dixon@methodist.org.uk](mailto: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