



# Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2020, 10:30am, Matthew 7: 24-27 “Hearers and Doers”.

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:**

Heavenly Father, as we join now with others this morning, help us to know that you are with us by adding to us 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**

We gather this morning in changing and uncertain times, so much has changed but so much remains the same. For some, these are days of new beginnings for others, they long to go back to how things were. Think of the excitement and anticipation of embarking on a journey to a new land, you are surrounded by friends and familiar things to bring with you. Do not look back or long for what is now gone but instead bring the best of “what was” with you, into this new and better land.

**Proclamation:**

This is what the Lord says –

“Forget the former things;  
do not dwell on the past.  
See, I am doing a new thing!  
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?  
*(Pause)*

I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland”.

Isaiah 43: 18,19 NIV(UK), the chosen passage of scripture for this new coming Methodist Connexional year.

**Hymn: StF 418 We have a gospel to  
proclaim** Sing/read /pray /proclaim the  
words

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-SPYAgCtkw>

We have a gospel to proclaim  
Good news for men in all the earth;  
The gospel of a Saviour's name:  
We sing His glory, tell His worth.

Tell of His birth at Bethlehem,  
Not in a royal house or hall  
But in a stable dark and dim:  
The Word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of His death at Calvary,  
Hated by those He came to save;  
In lonely suffering on the cross  
For all He loved, His life He gave.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn:  
Empty the tomb, for He was free.  
He broke the power of death and hell That  
we might share His victory.

Tell of His reign at God's right hand,  
By all creation glorified;  
He sends His Spirit on His Church  
To live for Him, the Lamb who died.

Now we rejoice to name Him King:  
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.  
This gospel message we proclaim:  
We sing His glory, tell His worth.

Edward Joseph Burns (b 1938)

### **Prayer of Confession:**

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and  
righteous to forgive us our sins and to  
cleanse us from all  
unrighteousness.      1 John 1:9*

*if my people who are called by my name  
humble themselves, pray and seek my face  
and turn from their wicked ways, then I  
will hear them from heaven and will  
forgive their sin and heal their land.  
2 Chronicles 7:14*

Loving and forgiving God, we come to  
confess to You our errors; for the times  
when our pride, our self-reliance and our  
lack of love for our brothers and sisters  
have entered our thoughts and  
determined our actions. Your word says  
we must love You and our neighbours as

ourselves, we are sorry for the times  
when that does not happen. For the times  
when our good intentions are not  
followed by our sacrifice of self, for the  
times when we "hear" but do not "do".

**Father forgive, Christ have mercy.**

For the times when we have made being a  
Christian a comfortable status, a  
statement of attendance or belonging  
instead of a way of living our lives for You  
and helping others to do likewise. Forgive  
us for the times when, through the sin of  
arrogance or pride, we have not been  
good witnesses to others. **Father forgive,  
Christ have mercy.**

For the times when we have believed that  
salvation is something to be achieved, a  
rule to be kept, a sermon to be listened  
to, a human process to be followed  
instead of the beautiful sacrificial gift of  
grace that by Your shedding of blood on a  
cruel Roman cross You freely offer to us.  
**Father forgive, Christ have mercy.**

For the schemes and plans of man,  
thinking that they will result in the growth  
of our gatherings instead of prayerful  
obedience and the seeking of Your perfect  
will. For the sins of our world, for the  
aggression, the pollution, the racism, the  
greed and the immorality of sinful man.  
**Father forgive, Christ have mercy.**

*Pause*

Father, I name the specific things for  
which I come to You, asking for Your  
forgiveness.... **Father forgive, Christ have  
mercy.**

*A time of silence to hear what the Lord  
may be saying to us today. To rest in His  
presence, to know in your heart His  
perfect peace, a time to accept His offer of  
forgiveness and be washed clean of sin.*

God of love and power, thank You for the forgiveness and freedom You have given me from my sins, heal and strengthen me by Your Holy Spirit so that I may be delivered from the evil one. May I walk today a fresh and new path of righteousness accompanied by my family of faith, my brothers and sisters in Christ. Your Grace is an unmerited gift to me each and every day. **Amen.**

**Song StF 407 Hear the call of the Kingdom.** Sing/read /pray/proclaim  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WL-UdwB0Qvc>

Hear the call of the kingdom  
Lift your eyes to the King  
Let His song rise within you  
As a fragrant offering  
Of how God rich in mercy  
Came in Christ to redeem  
All who trust in His unfailing grace

Hear the call of the Kingdom  
To be children of light  
With the mercy of heaven  
The humility of Christ  
Walking justly before Him  
Loving all that is right  
That the life of Christ may shine through us

*King of Heaven we will answer the call  
We will follow bringing hope to the world  
Filled with passion, filled with power to  
proclaim  
Salvation in Jesus' name*

Hear the call of the Kingdom  
To reach out to the lost  
With the Father's compassion  
In the wonder of the cross  
Bringing peace and forgiveness

And a hope yet to come  
Let the nations put their trust in Him

*King of Heaven we will answer the call  
We will follow bringing hope to the world  
Filled with passion, filled with power to  
proclaim*

*Salvation in Jesus' name.* Keith and Kristyn Getty  
and Stuart Townend 2005 Thankyou Music.

### **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 Your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, speak to us today of the truth and certainty that only by being obedient to Your word and acting on Your teaching will we be fully in relationship with You. May our hearts be like fertile soil, soft and willing to receive. **Amen**

### **Gospel Reading: Matthew 7:24-27**

<sup>24</sup> “Therefore, everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

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

### Preaching notes:

This is the sixth and final week of our preaching series on Matthew chapter 7. The Sermon on the Mount is regarded as the pinnacle of Jesus' teaching. John Donne the 17<sup>th</sup> century poet and scholar (well know for "no man is an island") famously said of the Sermon on the Mount: "all of our Christian articles of faith, everything we believe as followers of Christ" are within these three chapters of Matthew. So, when we hear Jesus saying: therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine **AND** acts on them..." (my emphasis) He is sweeping up all that He has said from the moment he began at the start of chapter 5.

One of my favourite Bible translations is where the words of Jesus are in red print, other than the introductory two verses of chapter 5 "he began to speak..." and the concluding two verses of chapter 7 "everyone was astounded at His teaching" every word throughout these three chapters is in red, it is all teaching direct from the mouth of Jesus and must not be missed, read selectively or in any way diminished or revised. Within chapters 5, 6 and 7 lies a complete explanation on what it means to live a life as a follower of Jesus, a Christian - a version of Christ. Jesus does not make any of this teaching optional and when He says "everyone" He means every person who hears -or for us reads- "these words of mine". Therefore, to read them, as expounded by some commentators, could be considered as dangerous, once you know what is expected of you there is no excuse.

William Barclay, the great Bible commentator, draws out from the passage that Jesus is a practical, hands on

carpenter, a man who may have built houses so when he speaks of proper foundations he knows what he is talking about. What may appear at first sight to be safe ground and a good place to build may require preparation and testing to ensure that the foundation is solid and can go deep enough. Jesus uses a "house" as an illustration for our life's and clearly demonstrates the consequences of not putting His teaching into practice. Both "houses" (or life's) of the wise and foolish will have storms come against them (trials, sickness, loss, rejection) but only the wise – having built his/her life on the teachings of Jesus will withstand and not fall.

"Many thousands (perhaps hundreds of thousands) listen to the teachings of Jesus every Sunday, they have a reasonable knowledge of what Jesus taught and yet make little or no attempt to put it into practice" (William Barclay). "I know what the Bible teaches but..." are common phrase from many church pews or "yes, but did Jesus really teach that..." offer many people a perceived way out of following what Jesus actually said. The difficulty is that Jesus did not leave any room for confused, mixed, luke-warm or muddled thinking, it is either broad or narrow, wise or foolish, obedient or disobedient.

Take a look back at our earlier prayers of confession and the verses from 1 John (New Testament) and 2 Chronicles (Old Testament), each begins with "if", it is our choice -to follow or not follow, to be a hearer and doer of Jesus' teaching or just a hearer with no or just partial acting. As we conclude; today is a good day for a reassessment of our lives, do we have the

full teaching of Jesus, active and real as our life's foundation or only a partial or patchy application? Ask any builder or engineer, a partial or patchy foundation is just as bad -if not worse-than no foundation because when the storm comes -as it will- that is that worst point for the house to fall.

Jesus tells us that "the fall will be great", not to condemn us or scare us into action but to lovingly bring us into His household of faith -His church, as those who are both hearers and doers of all of His teaching.

**Amen**

**Song: Don't go 'round judging others**

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words to the tune of O Jesus I have promised.

Don't go 'round judging others, or they may judge you, too.

Don't criticize your neighbours for things you also do.

Don't squander what is holy or waste what you've received.

Hold fast the faith God gives you; rejoice, give thanks, believe!

Ask God, and God will give you; search well, and you will find.

Knock and the door will open for God is just and kind.

Do everything for others that you want them to do.

The Law and Prophets matter! This is God's Word for you.

The gate to life is narrow; destruction's way is wide.

So take the way that's harder and let God be your guide.

Beware of those who lead you down pathways that destroy.

And seek the fruit of heaven; God gives us kingdom joy!

Not all who call the Lord's name will enter heaven's realm,

But only those obeying will call God's kingdom Home.

The wise hear God and follow; on rock, they stand secure.

The storms of life may shatter, but they will still endure.

Words with permission of Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

**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 the evil one.

For Thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession:**

*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 1 Timothy 2:1-2*

Father we pray for our national and local government leaders to have wisdom, integrity, compassion and a living faith in You during these days of medical and financial uncertainty. Lord, may our leaders seek and listen to You in the decisions that must be made, may they humble themselves, ask forgiveness for sin and draw close to You.

We pray for our church leaders to be involved with their fellowships offering guidance and leadership during uncertain times ahead. For the leaders of Christian denominations to be seeking ways for working together for the unity of the faith.

Lord, help us to know how to respond to the unfolding tragedy and misery of those who leave their homelands seeking a better life in Europe. We pray against the greed, exploitation and the building of false hope in vulnerable people. We pray for comfort to be poured out for the young man who died trying to cross the channel from France to England.

Gracious and loving Father we pray for the relief of pain and grief for those families of the dead and injured from the Manchester Arena bombing. The trial and sentencing of the man convicted of their murders has brought back memories of this terrible crime. Bring Your peace and Spirit of Forgiveness into the situation.

Generous God, for those facing hardship, fear of financial problems, be with those who have lost jobs, may new and better doors open for them.

For the lost and lonely, the anxious and the depressed, those in pain, be with them Lord we pray.

We pray for all those we know personally and ask Lord for Your loving hand to be on them. In the name of Christ we pray **Amen**

### **Hymn: StF 141 Abide with me**

Sing/read /pray/proclaim.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05mfjx5>

Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me  
abide!

When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass  
away;  
Change and decay in all around I see;  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour.  
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's  
power?

Who like thyself my guide and strength  
can be?

Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with  
me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless,  
ills have no weight, and tears no  
bitterness.

Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy  
victory?

I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing  
eyes.

Shine through the gloom and point me to  
the skies.

Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain  
shadows flee;

in life, in death, O Lord, abide with  
me.

Henry Frances Lyte (1793-1847).

### **Blessing:**

Keep alert, stand strong in your faith, be  
courageous, be strong, let all that you do  
be done in the love of Christ. **Amen.**

Until we meet again, God bless. Phillip  
Telephone 01425 673350

[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