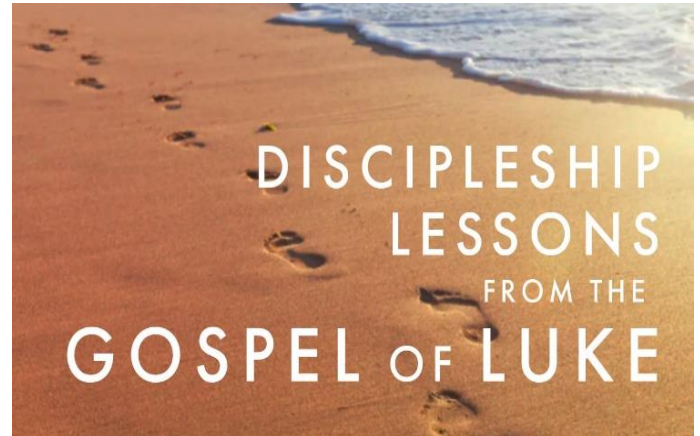




# Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2021 Rev'd David Ellis: "Choices" Luke 10: 38-42**

These written worship sheets are for you to use as we gather, as one, in our homes to worship God. This is the last of our six week preaching series from which we have been learning some important lessons from Jesus on being a disciple. This week's title is particularly appropriate as we all have a choice to make -as did the early disciples- to either take Jesus' teaching into ourselves, allowing it to transform us and live it out or deciding that it is not for us. Jesus calls us to follow Him, the choice is ours to make. Phillip Dixon



## Opening words:

The Lord always keeps his promises;  
he is gracious in all he does.  
The Lord helps the fallen  
and lifts those bent beneath their loads.  
The eyes of all look to you in hope;  
you give them their food as they need it.  
When you open your hand,  
you satisfy the hunger and thirst of every living thing.  
The Lord is righteous in everything he does;  
he is filled with kindness.  
The Lord is close to all who call on him,  
yes, to all who call on him in truth.  
I will praise the Lord,  
and may everyone on earth bless his holy name  
forever and ever. **Amen** Psalm 145:13-18 & v21

## Song: Give thanks to the Lord (Forever) StF77

Sing/read /pray/proclaim the words.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BSjxpiD2DU&ab\\_channel=SamuelHill](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BSjxpiD2DU&ab_channel=SamuelHill)

Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King  
His love endures forever  
For He is good, He is above all things  
His love endures forever

Sing praise, sing praise  
Sing praise, sing praise

With a mighty hand and outstretched arm  
His love endures forever  
For the life that's been reborn  
His love endures forever  
Sing praise, sing praise x2

Forever, God is faithful  
Forever, God is strong  
Forever, God is with us  
Forever

From the rising to the setting sun  
His love endures forever  
And by the grace of God, we will carry on  
His love endures forever  
Sing praise, sing praise  
Sing praise, sing praise,

Forever, God is faithful  
Forever, God is strong  
Forever, God is with us  
Forever, forever

Sing praise, sing praise  
Sing praise, sing praise  
Forever, God is faithful  
Forever God is strong.....Chris Tomlin (b.1972)

## Opening Prayer:

Father God, who created heaven and earth, and everything that is, we praise you. We praise you for your drawing us to you, for your sacrificial love in Christ, who broke down the barriers of sin and death, and who sent your Spirit to bind us together in your love, and to show us your way of truth.

On this, the Lord's Day, we praise you for giving us the church, in which, and around which, your way is expressed, which helps to enable us in worship, in fellowship and learning, and from which, we are called to service. We praise you for your Spirit who helps us and is with us in our every need; when we have needs in suffering, but also when we need to be joyful.

On this St Valentine's Day, we praise you for your love expressed in all its variety in humankind, in family life, in community, national and international life. We praise you for the love which has been the motivation in bonding people together, and to help people in their service to the community in these difficult times, through the skills that have given help to the needy, the sick, the dying and bereaved.

Forgive us for shutting you out and putting up barriers, for seeking to follow our own way and losing your way. Forgive us, we pray, for our failing to express our discipleship and your love. Forgive us in our brokenness and in our lack of faith in you, wondering where you are to help your world out of its struggle; to help us through our struggles.

Help us to see that when we are truly penitent, you forgive us our sin so that we can begin anew, energised to journey on in your love and strength. Help us to be thankful for all that we have received and ready to embrace all that you have to offer in the bounty of your love so that we may have life.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

## Song: Seek Ye First the kingdom of God StF254

Sing/read /pray/ proclaim the words.

<https://youtu.be/q9-Sq5epvVo>

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)

## **A prayer for those who will spend Valentine's Day alone.**

Lord God, You are the Creator of love and the Author of romance. It was all Your idea in the first place, from the very beginning with Adam and Eve. And therefore, You understand when I feel lonely and lost.

Thank You that You understand the deep desire of my heart for companionship, emotional fulfilment, and intimacy. Help me to see that You know me fully and understand me more than any other. Comfort me with that assurance on the days when I miss someone physically – or emotionally – close to me.

Help me to draw closer to You and rely on You for what I need. Help me to trust You during the dark lonely hours of the night. Help me to hold onto the knowledge that You have my best life in mind and that Your wisdom is far above mine.

On this day that so many celebrate human love, help me to celebrate Your love for me, with a deep knowledge that You love me more than any person on this earth ever will. Help me to find joy as I wait for Your best for me. Help me to see Your love for me in every flower that blooms, feel it in every warm ray of sunshine, hear it in every pure and right love song, and experience it in every good and perfect gift I receive.

Thank You that You have searched me and You know me and that nothing is hidden from You.

Lord, You send words my way that remind me that You are the One who opens Your hand and satisfies the desire of every living thing. Lord, take any longing that lies within me that is unhelpful and replace it with a stronger desire for You. And because You tell me to come boldly to the throne of grace and tell You all that is on my heart, I will not try to hide anything from You.

Lord, comfort me on those days when I feel disappointed and hurt by what this world has to offer. Help me to remember that You are the only Perfect Love and the One I must keep my eyes upon. Thank You for Your demonstration of sacrificial love for me and remind me that no one on earth could express that kind of love toward me. You truly are the One I must seek above any other. In Jesus' name, **Amen.** From [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com)

#### **Our Lord's Prayer (the Christian family prayer):**

Our Father in Heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.  
Your Kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For Yours is the Kingdom and the power  
and the glory forever. **Amen.**

**Prayer:** Loving Lord God, as we read Your Holy Word together, we pray that our hearts and minds will be fully open to hear what You are saying to us about making good choices that reflect our love for You. May Your Word always be on our lips and provide us with comfort as we remind ourselves of Your promises. We pray that through Your Holy Spirit we will receive fresh insight. **Amen**

#### **Scripture Reading: Luke 10: 38-42**

<sup>38</sup> As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

<sup>41</sup> "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, <sup>42</sup> but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." New International Version

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

**Preaching Notes:** *these notes are a supplement to the weekly video which can be viewed on our YouTube channel.*

The sisters Mary and Martha and their respective choices as Jesus visits them are very often used as comparisons between the act of worship and the undertaking of service. Unfortunately, this has led people (our brothers and sisters) often being described or characterised as either "Mary's" or "Martha's". The passage preceding (Luke 10: 25-37) stressed the importance of loving one's neighbour as evidence of loving God and now Mary is putting all thoughts of service to one side and is at the feet of Jesus, listening to all that He says and teaches as an act of loving God. Many Bible commentators believe that this passage is about the choices we make at specific times and

not about our character. Leon Morris states, "Few Gospel stories have been subjected to greater mishandling than this one. Through the centuries, Mary has often been idealized at the expense of Martha, and in the Middle Ages, Mary was used as a model to exalt the contemplative life over the active one. However, that is to misuse the text and to misunderstand the context."

To be "distracted" is to be human, Martha is busy with the preparations for her special guests (Jesus and the disciples) but at some point they appear to overwhelm her and it is when, perhaps in frustration, she requires her sister Mary, who is sitting listening at the feet of Jesus, to also take up the preparations that they both (Mary and Martha) get a discipleship lesson from Jesus about reverence, devotion, worship and service. Jesus knows all, and when he tells Martha "you are worried and upset about many things" we are unaware of what else was distracting Martha, perhaps a broken relationship, fears or anxieties? How often do we exhibit symptoms of being upset about something but the trouble lies deeper and in another area of our lives?

"Martha, Martha", the repetition of the name of a person or place normally indicates the coming of a message of special importance and of love and compassion for the person or place. To confirm this fact look at those who are addressed as such: Abraham (Gen 22:11); Moses (Ex 3:4); Samuel (1 Sa 3:10); Jerusalem (Mt 23:37) Simon (Peter) (Lu 22:31) and Saul (Paul) (Acts 9:4, 22:7, 26:14).

All of this is entreating us, today, to understand that whilst much is considered important, in truth, "few things are needed", in fact "only one", which is the devotion to God exemplified by our discipleship -following Him and coming under His teaching. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33), we would do well to put this verse into practise. Dr Vance Havner the American revivalist and renowned preacher gives an excellent summary, "Our sole business is to live in constant, abiding fellowship with Christ. If we become more interested in what we are doing

for Christ than in what He is doing for us, we have reversed things and we shall end up as did Martha at this moment, distracted instead of devoted. But one thing is needful for the believer, to stay spiritually at His feet, hearing His word. Our hearts can sit at His feet while our hands work in the kitchen."

At all times, Jesus was taking every opportunity to teach and speak by example and we can consider that He is continuing to do this for us today. As we have journeyed through Luke's gospel in chapters 9 and 10 Jesus has been teaching us what it is to be followers, disciples, learning and putting into practise what He is teaching us. To do otherwise means we are lacking the "one thing" that Jesus says is needed - devotion to and love of God, Father, Son and Spirit. **Amen** Written by Phillip Dixon

**Song: When we walk with the Lord SoF 599**

Sing/read /pray/ proclaim the words.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQB\\_rYBz2pE&ab\\_channel=BESTWorshipSongs-OFFICIAL](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQB_rYBz2pE&ab_channel=BESTWorshipSongs-OFFICIAL)

When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word,

What a glory He sheds on our way!

While we do His good will, He abides with us still,  
And with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Not a shadow can rise, not a cloud in the skies,  
But His smile quickly drives it away;  
Not a doubt or a fear, not a sigh or a tear,  
Can abide while we trust and obey. *(Refrain)*

Not a burden we bear,  
not a sorrow we share,  
but our toil he doth richly repay;  
not a grief or a loss,  
not a frown or a cross,  
but is blest if we trust and obey. *(Refrain)*

But we never can prove  
the delights of his love  
until all on the altar we lay;  
for the favour he shows,

for the joy he bestows,  
are for them who will trust and obey. *(Refrain)*

Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at His feet.  
Or we'll walk by His side in the way.  
What He says we will do, where He sends we will  
go;  
Never fear, only trust and obey.

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way  
To be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

John Henry Sammis

### **Prayers of Intercession:**

*God is our refuge and strength,  
always ready to help in times of trouble. Psalm 46:1*

Heavenly Father we praise you that we can come before you in confidence. Keep us under the shadow of your love in this time of uncertainty, be with all those who feel anxious or afraid, be with those who feel isolated and help them to know the promise that you will never leave them nor forsake them. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who care for the sick and dying, those in hospitals, hospices care homes and in their own homes, Lord give those who provide care the skill, strength and sympathy they need. We thank you for all those who volunteer in vaccination centres helping people get their Covid-19 injections. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the leaders of nations around the world, help them to seek fairness and justice for all whom they serve, we pray for the United States as divisions are highlighted by the impeachment process, bring reconciliation and peace Lord. We pray for Boris Johnson and the members of our government, give them wisdom as they seek for ways to ease lockdown measures with both freedom and safety uppermost in their plans. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for places where there is unrest and violence, we name Myanmar as a place in particular need. We pray for the strengthening and for courage of our Christian brothers and sisters who are persecuted and discriminated against for their faith in you Lord Jesus, we stand with them. We pray for your blessing on the work of organisations like Open Doors and Barnabas Fund who highlight and provide us with practical ways to support persecuted Christians. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own homes and families, for those in our families who do not yet know you as Lord and Saviour. We pray for our local schools and colleges and the staff who work so hard in very difficult circumstances, Lord help the parents as they seek to home school their children yet at the same time themselves working from home. Help them to find all the resources they need and Lord we pray particularly for the protection of young people as they spend more time on-line and also Lord for their mental health. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are finding it difficult to feed their families in these difficult times. Bless the work of the foodbanks and be with the families of those who receive food parcels from our local churches. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are grieving, be with them and provide comfort Lord. May they know your loving arms around them as we seek to support them with our prayers and in whatever way we can whilst under physical restrictions. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father as we begin the season of Lent this week we pray that you will help us to make the right choices, in the busyness of our lives help us to make time to sit at your feet, to listen, to pray and to follow you. Guide us by your Holy

Spirit to serve you in this hurting and broken world.

We ask this all in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. **Amen.** Written by Jenny Hutchins,

**Closing Song chosen especially for St Valentine's Day: Love Divine StF 503**

Sing/read or proclaim the words.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sw5ZCZeS32M&ab\\_channel=philipstopford](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sw5ZCZeS32M&ab_channel=philipstopford)

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 sinless 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)

**Benediction:** The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. May the blessing of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit remain with you and all those you love, now and always. **Amen**

**Notices:** Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of Lent and on Sunday morning and every Sunday leading to Holy Week and Easter we will be considering those blessed individuals who encountered Jesus and whose lives were changed forever by doing so. We will be using John's gospel and the first week is the early disciples from John 1: 35-51. Rev'd Pauline Crispin, our Circuit Superintendent, will be preaching and writing the accompanying notes for these sheets.

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> at 6pm we will host an on-line Circuit Service to mark the beginning of Lent 2021. The evening will begin at 5.30pm with a prayer meeting on Zoom and the service itself will begin at 6pm. Martin Keenan is preaching on Matthew 6: 1-6 and 16-21 and musicians/singers from around the circuit are leading us in worship. Links and instructions for YouTube, Facebook and Zoom will be distributed by email. For those not on-line a paper version will be distributed and if there is a prayer that you want to write for the prayer meeting please forward it to me by post or by phone, alternatively you can pray at home at the same time knowing that spiritually you are joining your prayers to the gathering. The intention is for this service to connect us all at this important time in the life of our churches and our circuit.

Thank you to those who have requested to participate in the Discipleship Explored course. Having reviewed all of the content I feel sure that this course is exactly right for anyone (near or far, member or non) who desires to connect more fully with Jesus and the new life He offers. It is perfect as a Lent course and I am so looking forward to sharing in it with you. Phillip Dixon

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.