

Wimborne 14th March 2021

Call to Worship Ps 107:1-3

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.

Trust and Obey [Trust and Obey - YouTube](#)

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 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.

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

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.

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

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.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Father, we thank you that we can come to you in the knowledge that we are not only loved but that there is no one who will love us more. We come with a sense of gratitude that wells up within us and overflows in thankfulness and joy. We thank you that we can come as we are; that we can come without any need to persuade you to love us; that we can come knowing that we are already accepted; that we can come at all. We love you for setting us free from all that fills us with a sense of guilt and from those things that make us ashamed. We thank you for the knowledge that we are your children, not by right but by grace alone So we bring our love and our praise in the name of our saviour and your Son Jesus Christ.

Amen

And yet Father we know that we have not always been the people that you want us to be, we have not loved as you want us to love, we have not care as you want us to care, we have not spoken as you want us to speak we have not acted as you want us to act. Forgive us Father because we recognise, as we have just sung, that we need to trust and obey. So set us again on a new true course where we can reflect your love and your compassion so the world may see your grace flowing through us. In Jesus name we pray. **Amen.**

Love divine [Love Divine All Loves Excelling - YouTube](#)

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heav'n, 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 ev'ry trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into ev'ry troubled breast.
Let us all in thee inherit, let us find the promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be.
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver, let us all thy life receive.
Suddenly return, and never, never more they 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; true and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee.
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love and praise.

John 3:14-21

¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. ¹⁹ This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were

evil. ²⁰ Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. ²¹ But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Sermon

If you had to pick just one paragraph or sentence to explain your faith the opening words of today's Gospel reading might well be one you choose. In verses 16 to 18 John summarises for me what it means to be a Christian, I know there is a lot more to Christian faith than that but these words are at its core. To believe in Jesus Christ, God's only son, who came to this world so that through His death and resurrection all who believe in Him might be saved. Isn't that what we are about? Isn't that the Good News that we should be telling other people, especially those people we know who have not yet met with Jesus. Because if we believe in Jesus Christ, who He is and what He did and why He did it then the rest our Christian living will follow and people around us will notice.

Believing in Jesus means more than just recognising that He lived, James in his letter said (James 2:19) *You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.* We need to understand and accept that there is a consequence for us for being saved. If you followed the virtual Lent service that the circuit produced a few weeks ago you would have heard Martin Keenan, the minister at Barton say that the Beatitudes are the outpouring of a Christian life. They are not a set of tick-boxes to be aim for, they are what a Christian life is. This is what James was saying in the sentence before the one I have just quoted (James 2:18) *But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.* Again just before this in verse 14 he says *"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?"* and then in verse 17 *"In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead"*. If we believe in Jesus Christ then it will be seen in our actions in life, by what we say and by what we do because of the Holy Spirit, living within us and Jesus promised this would happen if we believed in Him, (Rev 3:20) *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me"*, Jesus will come into our life in the form of the Holy Spirit and then the Holy Spirit will effect the changes in our life. Again as Jesus promised us that if we believed in Him we would do greater things than He had done, John 14:12 *"Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father"*. Christian life should be a life in action as we live out what Jesus has taught us and follow the Holy Spirit's guidance, but that is not to say that we can be saved just through our actions Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 2:8-10) stated that when he said *"For it is by*

grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” Because we believe in Jesus, because we have been saved by His death and resurrection we will do as Paul says good works. Those good works that God has planned for us in advance, I think in part was what Jesus meant when He said, as I quoted before that we will do greater works than He had done, we will do the very things God has already equipped us to do.

The consequence of not believing in Jesus has been plainly stated in the Bible. Again in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 2:1-2) he clearly states that *“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. And in Romans 6:23 he says “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”.*

This then ties in with what Jesus said in the passage we read today *“but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son”*

Sadly there are many who will not believe despite all of the chances and opportunities that God will give them and Jesus will lament over them. In Matthews Gospel (Matthew 23:37) Jesus says *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing”.*

Jesus would love to gather us all together as a mother hen gathers hers chicks to herself. Which is a fitting link into my last point as today is Mothering Sunday, which has now been commercialised as Mother’s Day, the two are not actually related. Although I suspect that the mothers here will not refuse the cards and flowers or gifts that come their way on this day. However, Mothering Sunday began as an explicitly religious event of the 16th Century, with no connection to mothers at all. The word "mothering" referred to the "mother church", which is to say the main church or cathedral of the region. It became a tradition that, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, people would return to their mother church for a special service. This pilgrimage was apparently known as "going a-mothering", and became something of a holiday event, with domestic servants traditionally given the day off to visit their own families as well as their mother church. So although we are not gathered in church today we are united in Christ so in one sense Jesus has gathered us under His wing today, we have His protection and guidance provided we believe and trust in Him.

Prayers of Intercession

Living and loving God once more we have brought you our praise and worship as we acknowledge you as our God. Draw near to us now through your Holy Spirit and grant us the prayers we offer for those we know who need your love and comfort.

So Father we pray for all those who are weighed down by the stresses and strains of daily life, those who long for peace of mind, who crave rest for their souls but cannot find it. We pray that eyes of their hearts may be enlightened in order that they may know the hope to which You have called us all. Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

We pray for those in distress either through illness or loss especially those who have suffered because of Covid 19, we pray for those who have been deprived of love through neglect or selfishness and those who plod wearily through life. We pray that they will come to know that we have all been reconciled to you by Jesus' death and resurrection such that we are all holy in your sight, without blemish and free from accusation Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have no time for you. No interest in anything other than themselves and their daily routine, no awareness of their need for you, those who have not heard of the great challenge of the Gospel. Gracious God open their eyes to your son Jesus Christ and through His great work here on earth let us all see your wonder and majesty. Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for ourselves. In all the challenges and changes we face we thank you that you are a God we can depend on, always loving always good. We thank you for the assurance that whatever we may be confronted with your love will go on reaching out, your hand will go on supporting us and your purpose will go on fulfilling our lives. Lord in your mercy hear our prayer. All these prayers we offer in and through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

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, forever and ever. Amen.

And can it be [And Can It Be That I Should Gain - YouTube](#)

And can it be that I should gain An int'rest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Amazing love! how can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies! Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries To sound the depths of love Divine!
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore, Let angel minds inquire no more.
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore, Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above, So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love, And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free; For, O my God, it found out me.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free; For, O my God, it found out me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head, And clothed in righteousness Divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ my own.
Bold I approach the eternal throne, And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Blessing

Let us close our worship with this Traditional Gaelic blessing.
May the raindrops fall lightly on your brow, May the soft winds freshen your spirit,
May the sunshine brighten your heart, May the burdens of the day rest lightly upon you
And may God enfold you in the mantle of his love. Amen

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all ever more. Amen