

Wimborne Methodist Church

9th May 2021 Worship at Home Sheet

Call to worship - Psalm 100

Shout for joy to the Lord , all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his ; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

For the Lord is good and his love endures for ever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Hymn StF 11

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Prayers of Adoration & Confession

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty. Whose love is vast and measureless, wider than the universe, unlimited and infinite we bring you our praise. And in wonder and awe, we worship you today.

We praise you that your love reaches us just as we are. Meeting us in our joy and our struggles, in our working and our rest. Your loves reaches us in the quietest moments of contentment and bit also in moments of anxiety of uncertainty. Lord we thank you that you love each of us for who we are, for the person that you made us to be, and the person that you long to shape and define and to strengthen and encourage. Lord we thank you that we

can meet with you today, to listen to your encouragement, to know your love for us and experience your limitless grace.

We acknowledge Lord that we don't always live how you intended. And so we ask for your forgiveness for those times when we have doubted your love, when our actions haven't deserved your grace, and when we try to live life our own way. Lord we thank you that even though we turn from you, your grace finds us, it seeks to draw us back to you and the love that you demonstrated for all at the cross, restores our relationship with you, and we can know experience the freedom of your forgiveness in our lives.

Lord God, we praise you for the life changing presence of Jesus in our life. A presence that bring us life in all its fullness, that reassures when we are unsure and leads us to truth. We ask that you reveal your truth to us this morning. As we worship you and listen to your words, may your Holy Spirit breathe life into our lives, captivate our hearts as we see your love in action as we meet together.

Father God, whose love will never run dry, will never fall short, will never fail – in wonder and awe we worship you. Amen.

Bible Reading: John 15:1-17

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

Prayers of Intercession: Christian Aid Sunday

(prepared by Caroline Churcher with thanks)

God of abundant life, we see your goodness all around us and we thank you for every part of it; from the plants and animals which play their part in complex ecosystems, to the dry deserts and stormy seas which test the limits of life. We pray that in this time of climate

crisis and ecological emergency, you may help us to rediscover your love of creation and to reflect that in our own lives.

God, in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer

God who speaks through unexpected people, We thank you for contemporary prophets who are challenging us to act on climate change; for indigenous people and their invaluable knowledge of the land and sea where they live, for scientists dedicating their careers to warning us about changes to the planet, and for young people striking for their future. We pray that you will help those in power to hear their prophetic voices. Help them to see beyond short-term political priorities and business plans. and give them wisdom and courage when they face difficult decisions.

God, in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

God of second chances, we recognise the damage we have done to the Earth and the injustice we see in society every day, all of it fuelled by worship of profit and possessions. We pray for the coming of a better world with justice, kindness and humility at its heart. We ask that you guide us to be co-creators of this new world. Give us confidence to follow the prophetic voices to stand against injustice to people and to planet. So that together, in your strength, we stop this climate crisis.

God, in your mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

We ask all this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray together:

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.

Hymn StF 531

What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit,

O what needless pain we bear,

All because we do not carry

Everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations,
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged:
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness:
Take it to the Lord 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.

Sermon Notes: Greater Love

At the bottom of our garden is a lovely old Oak tree, which stands between our garden and the neighbour beyond. Over the years we watch as this oak tree grows and grows, and its branches spread further and further. But as magnificent as the oak tree is, it has one major downfall. Every autumn it drops every single leaf into our garden, which is ironic because the tree is not even in our garden!

But as annoying as this may be for me, it is a fact of life. For the tree to survive through the winter it must shed its leaves. As the days get shorter with less sunlight the leaves take energy from the tree rather than providing energy to the tree as it does in the summer. So, the tree abandons them to the wind and into my garden.

In this reading from John's gospel Jesus is teaching the disciples about the right kind of relationship that they need to maintain with God. He uses the well-known image of the vine and branches - a bit like the oak tree in my garden. Jesus is the vine, we are the branches and the only way that we can bear fruit, that we can be effective followers of him is to remain connected to him. But unlike the oak tree, Jesus does not cast off his branches or leaves, but perhaps they sometime abandon him.

According to Jesus the basis of fellowship with him is love. In verses 9 and 10 he says that because the Father loved him, he in return loves us. For us to remain in his love we need to listen to him and obey his commands, just as he obeyed his Father. The proof of our obedience to Jesus then is the love we have for one another. It is easy to *say* that we love God, but we *show* it by loving God's people. It's easy to say we love others, but the proof of that love come from the great challenge Jesus makes in v13. *Greater love has no-one than this that he lay down his life for his friends.* This is the ultimate proof of love, that there is nothing that we would not do for God, and for those whom we love.

Fallen Leaves

A few years ago, the BBC produced a drama series call Band of Brothers which documented the true storey of a group of paratroopers in the Second World War. It told the story of their training, their heroic actions on D-day, the horrors of fighting in Holland and Belgium in extreme conditions, and their triumphant entrance into Germany and the capture of Hitler's Eagles Nest. They shared everything with each other, experiences that you and I cannot contemplate, and they would do anything for each other.

Greater love has no-one than this that he lay down his life for his friends. When you consider the sacrifice of soldiers throughout all generations to this very day, perhaps we may take the love that they show for granted, that we do not fully appreciate the measure of their love by the sacrifice they make. Jesus calls us to love him and one another like he loved us, and he showed us his love on the cross. How far would we go to show our love for him?

The First Leaf

Jesus describes himself as the vine from which the branches grow. But we could also describe Jesus as a leaf that fell. In verse 13 Jesus speaks of a love that will lay down its life, and in these words, he is not challenging us to something that he has not already done himself.

There is no evidence in all the world of a greater love than that shown by Jesus on the cross. He laid down his life for all, even those who were once his enemies, and he names us as his friends. Quite often when we talk to children about Jesus, we describe him as the best friend we can have, and perhaps as we get older, we think that description is a bit too childish for us. But it isn't, Jesus is the best friend we could ever have, and we know this because in verse 14 Jesus calls us his friends. He is Lord and master of all, and he has every right to call us servants. Servants obey their master without question. But here Jesus calls us friends, how comforting and reassuring is that? We are not servants but friends. Through Jesus we are given an intimacy with God, he is not a distant stranger but the closest friend. This is not a message just for children; we are all God's children because he has chosen us. v16 tells us that he chose us, not that we chose him, he chose us to be a friend of God. In Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he writes that we are chosen to be Holy and Blameless in his sight.

Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, and so our whole lives become an offering to God. Every part of our lives, work, pleasure, interests, home relationships all become part of our offering to God, and therefore must be fit for him. We can't offer only part of our lives to Christ, just one hour on a Sunday morning, if we are his chosen people everything we do has to be fit for him; our work, our home lives, our leisure, everything, offered to him for his praise and glory.

We can only be Holy and Blameless if we seek to follow him, to listen to him and respond to his call on our lives, to be obedient to him through faith, not out of obligation, but through love. We must remember what Jesus did for us in suffering, dying, and rising again to rescue us and bring us freedom from sin. If we are to remain in Christ, we must remember everyday of our lives the love that Jesus showed for us on the cross so that we can call him friend.

A leaf out of His Book

The context of this passage is Jesus preparing the disciples to carry on his work after he has gone to be with his father in heaven. He urges them and us to take a leaf out of His book, just as he has done with His Father. He challenges them and us to follow the example that he lays down in v13. To love as he has loved us. To go out into the world and mirror the perfect love of Christ that has been shown and offered to each one of us and share it to an imperfect world. To lay down our lives for him, our friend. Not in literal sense, like a soldier may lay his life down. But to offer every part of ourselves and our lives in service to him. To give all that we have to offer and follow where he calls us.

As we step out in faith and show others the love we have in Christ, Jesus tells us we will bear fruit, the fruits of our faith. It is these fruits that others will see and hopefully will draw them close to us and therefore closer to God.

How do we measure up to this calling of love? Not in our own strength. If we seek to be obedient with our own thoughts, our own desires, to do it our way, we will get so far. But we will become weary, worn down and finally give up. Only through the power of the life of Christ in us, fuelling our every word and action can we share the love that has been shown to us through him.

The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the very power of God! He does not call us to go where he himself has not gone, nor where he will not go with us. The call may be daunting, but he will give us strength. How do we receive this power and strength? Through prayer.

We are chosen to be privileged members of the family of God. We can and must take everything to God in prayer and we must accept the answer that we receive from God. We may not understand it, it might not be what we wanted, but the answers come from Gods perfect wisdom and perfect love, and it is in those things that we must trust. The more that we love God, the easier it will be to do just that.

Greater love has no-one than this that he lay down his life for his friends. We have been called to live for our friends. To live out our faith and produce the fruits of our faith for others to share. There is still a commitment. There is still a cost, and it is not easy. But we are promised strength from the love of God when we obey his commands.

We have all been called to love and serve and offer our lives to Christ. May God help us to serve wholeheartedly and unreservedly and know the true worth of serving Christ.

A fallen leaf will perish, but those who serve in the name of Christ will never perish, because he gave his life that we might live forever with him.

Amen.

Hymn StF 566

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;

Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart - it is thine own;
It shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At thy feet its treasure-store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee.

Final Blessing

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore.

Amen