

*This week's worship sheet has been put together by Chris Slade, who is a Local Preacher in this Christchurch and Wimborne Circuit.*

**Call to Worship Psalm 119: 105-108**

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. I have suffered much; preserve my life, LORD, according to your word. Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws.

Sing or read:

- 1 Lord, the light of your love is shining,  
in the midst of the darkness, shining :  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us ;  
set us free by the truth you now bring us —  
shine on me, shine on me.  
*Shine, Jesus, shine,  
fill this land with the Father's glory ;  
blaze, Spirit, blaze,  
set our hearts on fire.  
Flow, river, flow,  
flood the nations with grace and mercy ;  
send forth your word,  
Lord, and let there be light !*
- 2 Lord, I come to your awesome presence,  
from the shadows into your radiance ;  
by your blood I may enter your brightness :  
search me, try me, consume all my darkness —  
shine on me, shine on me.
- 3 As we gaze on your kingly brightness  
so our faces display your likeness,  
ever changing from glory to glory :  
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story —  
shine on me, shine on me.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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**Prayers of Adoration**

God of all life, of all ages of all places; God of all people, of all voices, of all accents; God of all signs, of all symbols, of all songs. God of all life, as we worship you this day, encircle us with the tenderness of your strength; embrace us with the sweet iron of your mercy, that within your love we might be touched by the wisdom of the ages and be beckoned by the spirit of tomorrow.

In you we place our trust and open our secret places. In you we dare the openness of worship. In you, past and future join hands in adoration. **Amen**

**Reading Romans 8: 1-11** Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.

The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

**Sermon:** The letter Paul wrote to the Romans has been called a bible in itself. It contains valuable information about the life a Christian should aspire to live. Its essence is captured in this reading set for today especially in those opening lines which says that if we believe in Jesus Christ there is no condemnation for us, we are free and will live with Jesus in eternity.

Paul is not saying that there is no point in the Law Jesus himself said (Matt 5:17) *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfil them"*. And yet when He was asked what was the greatest commandment? (Matt 22:37-40) Jesus replied: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

God's message to His people was one of love. He could, He can; look past their and our faults and imperfections and see what we are capable of if we can love one another if we can let Jesus into our lives. I do believe that most, if not all, of the problems we face in society today, pandemic included, could be addressed through these two commandments. The people of Israel had inherited or were given the Promised Land, the land God Promised to Abraham by the Covenant God made with him; the Law God gave to them, specifically in the form of the Commandments was to keep them in this covenantal status the coming of Christ when, especially His death and resurrection, ended the purpose of the Law (Gal 3:23).

The problem Jesus faced was that the people of the day would not let go of the Law because they had come to believe that only by keeping it, something they could not do, would they gain entry to Heaven. This could be the reason why the people of Jesus' day end up with so many additional "laws" as they tried to have a law to cover every possible situation because they need to know when they were acting or behaving correctly or if you like when they had gone wrong.

We can see such a problem today, people are fearful of coming out of the lock down without specific guidance that covers every eventuality, something that is virtually impossible to achieve. As Paul said earlier in his letter to the Romans (7:7) all the Law does is to convict you of when you have gone astray when you have sinned.

Jesus' life, death and resurrection completed the work that God had started with Abraham; there was now a route for all people to find salvation. God's Grace means that there is nothing we can do to make God love us more and nothing we can do to make Him love us less, all He is asking is that we believe in Him and accept Jesus into our lives. Then we can uphold those two commandments that Jesus spoke of to love the Lord our God with our whole being and to love our neighbour likewise. With Jesus in our life we can view God's original Commandments this way;

- Why should I want to have any other gods
- Why should I not honour my father and my mother
- Why should I not remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy
- Why should I want to make any graven image
- Why should I want to take the name of the Lord my God in vain
- Why should I want to kill
- Why should I want to commit adultery
- Why should I want to steal

- Why should I want to bear false witness against my neighbour
- Why should I want to covet

God has already, in our lives, provided us with all we need so all of the above questions are answered by Jesus.

Viewed from this perspective we can see why our country and this world need to know Jesus. That is not to say the task Jesus has given us is easy, there is as Jesus found a lot of opposition to His word, and life in Him is a challenge. Last week’s Bible reading emphasised this when Jesus said take my yoke (Matt 11), but He also promised to lead us, to guide us and to share the load. So we do have the Good News of Jesus Christ to spread as we have been commissioned to do. I am reminded of the passage from Isaiah when God said to him (Isaiah 55: 10&11) *As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.* So we can go out in confidence, knowing that we are redeemed, we are not condemned, knowing that Jesus walks with us and we can spread not a virus but God’s word.

The psalmist said as we read today from Ps119 *“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws. I have suffered much; preserve my life, LORD, according to your word. Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth, and teach me your laws”*. Amen

Sing or read:

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1 The Spirit lives to set us free,<br/>walk, walk in the light ;<br/>he binds us all in unity,<br/>walk, walk in the light.<br/><i>Walk in the light, walk in the light,<br/>Walk in the light, walk in the light of the Lord.</i></p> | <p>2 Jesus promised life to all,<br/>walk, walk in the light ;<br/>the dead were wakened by his call,<br/>walk, walk in the light.<br/><i>Walk in the light...</i></p>         | <p>3 He died in pain on Calvary,<br/>walk, walk in the light ;<br/>to save the lost like you and me,<br/>walk, walk in the light.<br/><i>Walk in the light...</i></p>        |
| <p>4 We know his death was not the end,<br/>walk, walk in the light ;<br/>he gave his Spirit to be our friend,<br/>walk, walk in the light.<br/><i>Walk in the light...</i></p>   | <p>5 By Jesus' love our wounds are healed,<br/>walk, walk in the light<br/>the Father's kindness is revealed,<br/>walk, walk in the light.<br/><i>Walk in the light...</i></p> | <p>6 The Spirit lives in you and me,<br/>walk, walk in the light ;<br/>his light will shine for all to see,<br/>walk, walk in the light.<br/><i>Walk in the light...</i></p> |

Damian Lundy (1944–1996)

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**Prayers of Intercession**

Father we pray for your world; for those who have responsibility for those plans and decisions that will affect the lives of many who are living now and those who are yet to be born;  
For those who shuttle around the world seeking to bring an end to conflicts and forge a pathway to peace;  
For those who will not talk except through the barrel of a gun or from the end of a knife;  
For those who work ceaselessly for peace and reconciliation.  
May they know the presence of the Prince of Peace

**Lord in your mercy hear our prayer**

Father we pray for our nation and its leader as we enter a challenging and decisive period as we come out of this period of lock down;

We pray for those communities where there is racial tension and disharmony and ask that such groups realise the value in all lives;

For places where the fear of crime imprisons people in their homes and for those mindless act of vandalism that create ugliness and areas of bitterness and hate;

For those engulfed by the rising tide of emptiness and for those whose lives are filled with a sense of futility, so we pray for those who have been greatly affected by this pandemic;

For the deepening backwash of pessimism that flows from a well of godlessness that cause many to sink into depression. May the Saviour of the world touch our nation

**Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.**

Father, we pray for those for whom time is a burden, for those with time on their hands with skills in their lives and nowhere to use them;

For those with time to laugh and time to cry, to plan and to do many things but no one now to share it with;

For those with too little time, for those whose lives are one mad rush from one activity to another;

For those on whom the ever increasing demands of their employer, the needs of their family and their sense of duty to others leave them precious little time to just be.

May the Grace of God and the presence of Christ hold them still.

**Lord in your mercy hear our prayer**

Father, we pray for ourselves. We make our promise to worship you and to live for you. We are so full of our genuine, good intentions that come to nothing. We pray for ourselves and our longing to use each day to the full, but still to ensure that we live it for you and for your glory;

For our need to be more open to your will and your Holy Spirit and to be ever aware that though you and the Good News never changes you are calling us to discover new ways of declaring it.

May the power of the Holy Spirit equip us and fill us for life and for living.

**Lord in your mercy hear our prayer. In Jesus name we pray Amen**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

The Blessing

Father take hold of our lives, fill us with your Holy Spirit and send us out into your world as examples of your grace and witness to your love. In Jesus name we pray. **Amen.**