

Service for Sunday 16 August 2020 - Revd Pauline Crispin

We gather in our homes, Lord,
ready to focus totally on you.
Help us to be brave enough, like Peter,
to ask the questions that we would like to ask,
and open enough to hear your answer.
In our worship today, speak to us, Lord.
We are listening. Amen.

Lord God, as we come before you now,
we open our hearts to you.
Help us to see that we can learn so much from others,
even from those with whom we think
we may not share much in common.
Make us willing to stand out from the crowd,
to hear your voice, and act upon it. Amen.

Sing or read:

Come, now is the time to worship.
Come, now is the time to give your heart.
Come, just as you are to worship.
Come, just as you are before your God, come.

One day every tongue
will confess you are God,
one day every knee will bow.
Still, the greatest treasure remains
for those who gladly choose you now.

Come, now is the time to worship ...

Brian Doerksen (b. 1965)

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Prayers of confession

Lord, sometimes we look as though we are listening to others.
We may even make all the right noises!
But we confess that our attention is often anywhere but
where it is supposed to be.
Forgive us, Lord, **for missed opportunities.**

Sometimes we are too distracted by our own concerns.
We care only for ourselves,
and listen only to those who say what we want to hear.
Forgive us, Lord, **for missed opportunities.**

Sometimes we don't listen to people
because we don't like them,
or because they are different from us.
Sometimes we have bad or unhelpful thoughts.
Forgive us, Lord, **for missed opportunities.**

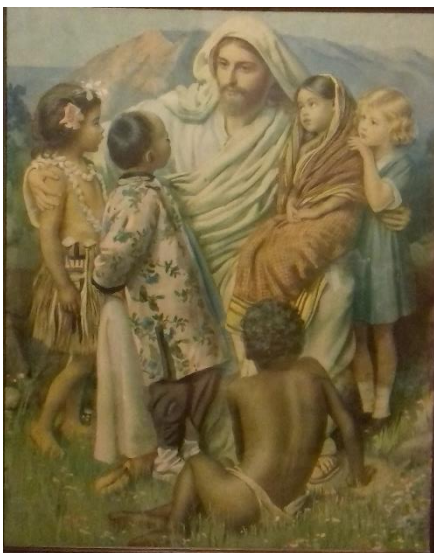
Sometimes we don't listen to you, Lord,
because we are too busy,
or a bit frightened about what you might say to us.
Forgive us, Lord, **for missed opportunities. Amen.**

Reading Matthew 15: 10 – 28

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

"Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong. They are weak but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me...."



Most of us know that song well. For many of us it describes the Jesus of our childhood, the Jesus of our growing up. It's simple. It's easy. When I was very young and going to Sunday school, there was a picture on the wall in the room where we met. I used to sit listening to the stories of Jesus, while I examined the picture. I would imagine that I was the little girl in the blue dress. It conjures up images of a sentimental faith and a sweet, cuddly Jesus. Those are images many still cling to. That's how we want the world to be, the way we want to live, and who we want Jesus to be. The problem is that that kind of faith encourages a naiveté about God, life, and the world.

Many of us have grown up since the days of singing "Jesus love me" but has our faith

grown up? Yes, Jesus loves us but faith is not about sentimentality and Jesus is not always soft and cuddly. Just ask the Canaanite women in today's gospel. Many have tried to explain this passage away. They offer excuses trying to justify Jesus' behaviour. None are really convincing. Maybe Jesus was teaching his disciples something. Maybe Jesus didn't understand the full extent of his

mission and ministry. Some have said that he did not call her a dog, but that he called her a pet puppy! I suspect all the many excuses only highlight how embarrassed we are by this text. Regardless of why Jesus did what he did we don't like it. It makes us uncomfortable. That's not the Jesus we want but that's the Jesus we get in today's gospel. This account isn't about teaching the disciples a lesson, nor is it about Jesus' mind being changed. It is about what comes out of our mouths showing our true heart. What came out of the Canaanite woman's mouth showed her true heart of faith. She understood that Jesus's power could be beyond the children of Israel. She knew too that this power is so great that all she needed was a small crumb. Is your faith and understanding of God's power enough that you know a small crumb is sufficient for your needs?

Lord, the Canaanite woman sought your help. She loved her daughter so much, she was so desperately in need, that she wouldn't give up until she had her answer.

We pray in faith.

Hear us and answer our cry, blessed Lord.

Lord, may we learn from this woman, to wait on you expectantly, patiently, persistently, doggedly. Grant us the courage of our convictions when we truly believe we are doing your will.

We pray in faith.

Hear us and answer our cry, blessed Lord.

We pray today for those who feel excluded, whatever their situation, whatever the reason: for prisoners, refugees, the homeless; for the sick, the mentally unstable; for any who feel that they are outsiders.

We pray in faith.

Hear us and answer our cry, blessed Lord.

We pray for ourselves when our faith is weak, or we feel that we don't belong.

We pray in faith.

Hear us and answer our cry, blessed Lord.

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.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Sing or Read:

- 1 And can it be that I should gain
an interest 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?
- 2 'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
let angel minds enquire no more.
- 3 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!

- 4 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.
- 5 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.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

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**We go out today,
renewed and strengthened in faith,
ready to serve you, Lord,
and find you in the people we meet.
We go out to follow you, be in our hearts.
Lead us, good Lord.
Amen.**

The Blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with you, with those you love and with those you ought to love this day and for evermore. Amen

