

Worship at Home
10th October 2021

What's knot to love?

In today's service we meet a rich young man who is so keen to follow Jesus - until he he realises what it will cost him. Do you sometimes feel the same?

Call to worship

Come before God in the spirit of sacrifice. Leave everything behind, and offer all that you have, and all that you are to the Lord who saves us.

A gathering prayer

As we gather here today, what does it mean to us? Is it our duty done for the week? Another deed achieved to fill us with satisfaction, to ensure our salvation? Correct our wrong thinking, Lord we pray, And in love and compassion, Teach us to come before you. Amen.

Hymn (StF) 20 Be still

- 1 Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here ; come bow before him now with reverence and fear : in him no sin is found — we stand on holy ground. Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.
- 2 Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around ; he burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned : how awesome is the sight — our radiant King of light ! Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.
- 3 Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place ; he comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace : no work too hard for him —

in faith receive from him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place.

David J. Evans (b. 1957)

Prayers of adoration

To whom shall we lift our praises except to you, Creator God, who fashioned this world from the fabric of space and filled it with such beauty for us to enjoy. Lord, your name is exalted
And we shall sing your praises.

To whom shall we lift our praises except to you, Eternal God. From the dawn of time we were part of your plan and to the end of time we are held in your hand. Lord, your name is exalted
And we shall sing your praises.

To whom shall we lift our praises except to you, Almighty God, who grants us freedom from the burden of sin and, as shepherd, brings us safely home again. Lord, your name is exalted

And we shall sing your praises. Amen

Bible Reading

Mark 10: v17-31

17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" 20 "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." 21 Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." 22 At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. 23 Jesus looked around and said to his

disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 26 The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God." 28 Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!" 29 "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields— along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Word

A rich young man came to see Jesus. Jesus looked at him, smiled, and loved him. Jesus saw a man who thought he was doing good, "I'm following the Commandments, have done so since a boy", he'd said. And he seemed willing to follow Jesus. He wanted to know what else he could do. But when Jesus said "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, then you will have treasure in heaven"; the man's face fell. He couldn't do that, and Jesus had to sadly watch him walk away. Jesus tells his disciples "It is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for the rich to enter heaven".

What a strange saying is that? Who in their right mind would want to push a camel through a needle? Camels aren't aggressive, just a bit anti-social, so I bet one would spit at me if I tried to push it through a very small hole. And if I try another way, and pull a piece of his hair out, and put that through instead, well I've got a bit of the camel through the

hole, but I expect I would still have been spat at for hurting him!

Where does this saying come from? Was it a common one of those days, just as we might say "You can't find a needle in a haystack".

When I was a child, I heard preachers say "there's a gate in the wall, a small gate that you can still enter the city by, when the main ones are closed for the night. Only, if you were a camel merchant with your beasts laden down, you'd have to unpack them first and carry the load in yourself before they could enter. Unfortunately, there is no record of such a gate existing. But in recent years there has been another suggestion, one I'd like to share with you as a modern analogy of what Jesus might have said.

When Mark wrote his Gospel, he was collecting the spoken stories that people told about Jesus and the Greek word for camel is *kamelos* and their word for rope is *kamilos*. The only difference is the "e" or "i" in the middle. Just try saying those two words yourself, they are so similar in sound. And apparently the same is true with the Aramaic word of *gamla*. It can also be camel or rope. It is suggested that the words are so alike because rope would have been made from camel hair.

Doesn't it now make more sense if you consider Jesus saying "you can't pass a rope through the eye of the needle."?

But there is a way I could put rope through. I could unravel it into separate strands and pass them through the needles' eye.

Pause, and go and find yourself a piece of string.

Pick it up and hold it. I want you to think of that bit of string being you. You are looking at the strands of your life. You are made up of lots of separate strands. You started out as the single strand that God made, but over your life more strands are added, as people and places and experiences affect who you are. Have a go at unravelling your piece of string, roll it in your fingers to separate the strands.

Just for a short while, think about those strands of your life, the really important things in your life.

You may think of your mother, who loved and nurtured you,
your father who taught you the values of life,
a grandparent who shared their vast wisdom,
a teacher who inspired you,
a friend who brought you to Jesus,
the career you followed,
an experience that made such an impact on your spiritual journey.

Pause for reflection

Thanksgiving and Confession

Lord God, as we think about the strands of our lives,
we thank you for giving us the gift of life.
We thank you for the people who have been entwined in our days,
for those who cared and care for us,
for those who taught us and inspire us,
those who led us to know you, Lord.

We thank you for the places we have known,
those that made us delight in your creation,
those that provided our education
and those that guided our spiritual development.

We thank you, Lord, for all those strands that make us into the person you want us to be.
But, Lord, we know there are strands wrapped around us, weaved throughout us, choking us, strands that we do not need, that we should remove.

Help us, Lord, to pull out those strands of envy, of greed, of anger, of self-centred thinking.

Forgive us, Lord, when we focus too much on the material things of life,
wanting the latest gadget
or wasting money on trivial things;
when we spend too much time on leisure pursuits, and ignore the needs of people whom we could help.

Dear Lord, remove from our hands the strands of our life that prevent us from

receiving you into our hearts.

Help us to see that it is by your grace and not through our merit that we follow you. Then by your love and not through our power we will come to eternal life in you.

In you, O God, is our giving and our blessing,
in you, O God, is the assurance of forgiveness and our entry into your kingdom is through an eye of a needle we can travel through.
Therefore, Holy God, all glory be given to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn 565 Only by grace can we enter

Only by grace can we enter,
only by grace can we stand ;
not by our human endeavour,
but by the blood of the Lamb.
Into your presence you call us,
you call us to come.
Into your presence you draw us,
and now by your grace we come,
now by your grace we come.

Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand ?
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.
Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand ?
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.

Only by grace can we enter ...

Gerrit Gustafson

Prayers of Intercession

Heavenly Father, we live in a world that seems so materialistic;
what we have in the bank, what TV or mobile phone we own, what car we drive seems to determine our worth in society.
And those who have nothing are looked down upon or ignored.

Lord, we pray that those who have wealth will consider how they should use it,
that they will not be arrogant
nor to put their hope in wealth but help them to be generous and kind
with the money and possessions they have
and place their hope in you, the God who provides us with everything we need for

our enjoyment.

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for the wealthy countries of the world, may their governments seek ways to support and help the poorer nations; we pray for the charities that work to improve the quality of life of those living in poverty, for those effected by disease and we thank you for all those who are generous in their giving to those charities. Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for those who give their time freely; to care for others, to teach at Sunday Schools, youth clubs, scout and sport groups. For those who willingly help a neighbour, or even a stranger. We pray for those whose spare time is spent working with the homeless, supporting Foodbanks with donations or collecting for the refugees, working in a charity shop, visiting the sick. Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for refugees, in Afghanistan and many other areas of our world, so many people on the move, seeking to find shelter and a place to call home.

We pray for those we know, who are experiencing grief at this time and also those who are ill ... May they feel the touch of your love. Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for ourselves. Lord, help us to be rich in good deeds, to be generous with our time, to be willing to share what we have, to be aware of the needs of others and eager to help, so that they will see within us the treasure of your holy kingdom. We ask these prayers in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray ...

Lord's Prayer

Hymn 673 Will you come and follow me

- 1 Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name ?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same ?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me ?
- 2 Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name ?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same ?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare ?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me ?
- 3 Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name ?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same ?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me ?
- 4 Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name ?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same ?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me ?
- 5 Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)

Blessing

Go, in the Spirit of sacrifice.
Consider what God may be asking of you.
Give yourselves up to Jesus,
and go, follow him.

May the blessing of God, the Father, the Son
and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain
with us always. Amen

Kathy Lowrie