

Worship at Home - 21st June 2020

(The words of the hymns are printed in this Order of Worship. The Readings will require your own copy of the Bible)

Welcome to Worship -

One characteristic of Christian Discipleship is of our "being together". When Peter and the other disciple rushed to the empty tomb, we read in Scripture that they ran "together". When Peter preached at Pentecost all who believed went off to the Temple. In Scripture we read they attended-"together".

For this opportunity of our "together" sharing in worship - we give thanks to God.

Together we turn to **StF No 14**

This is our prayer of Adoration

1. Sing to him in whom creation found it's shape and origin;
Spirit, moving on the waters troubled by the God within;
Source of breath to all things breathing,
life in whom all lives begin.
2. Pray we, then, O Lord the Spirit
on our lives descent in might;
let your flame break out within us,
fire our hearts and clear our sight,
till, white-hot in your possession,
we, too, set the world alight.
3. Praise, O praise the Holy Spirit,
praise the Father, praise the Word,
source, and truth, and inspiration,
Trinity in deep accord;
through your voice which speaks within us
we your creatures own you Lord.

Copyright Michael Hewlett (1916-2000)

For some of us these words are wonderful. For others of us perhaps they don't match our mood.

There were times when the Israelites too would have found it hard to sing of the One "in whom creation found it's shape and origin.".. Their families had been separated. Some had been carted off from Jerusalem into exile in Babylon.. It was a struggle being in a strange land. They questioned the future. They questioned

"How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"-

In **Psalm 137 vv1-9** we read their words.

The Israelites were a people "robbed and plundered," They had become a prey with no one to rescue them, no one to say "restore! They questioned - "Who was it who gave Israel to the robbers? "

Some of us may be saying something similar about our pandemic.

But we come to worship seeking light in the dark places. We would hear again of the God who in Jesus enters our world. -the one who stays alongside us in our emptiness.

In his imprisonment Dietrich Bonhoeffer came to this awareness. His are the words in the next hymn

StF No. 640

1. We turn to God when he is sorely pressed;
we pray for help, and ask for peace and bread;
we seek release from illness, guilt and death;
all people do, in faith or unbelief.
2. We turn to God when he is sorely pressed,
and find him poor, scorned, without roof and bread
bowed under weight of weakness, sin and death:
faith stands by God in his dark hour of grief.
3. God turns to us when we are sorely pressed,
and feeds our souls and bodies with his bread;
for one and all Christ gives himself in death;
through his forgiveness sin will find relief.

Copyright Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945)

Now a prayer of forgiveness -

Holy God for times when we have not recognised your Christ coming alongside us.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

In the silence we make confession too for our world.....

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

We make confession for our Church

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

We would hear again God's declaration of forgiveness.

To all who truly repent Jesus says -
"You are forgiven "

Thanks be to God.

So we repeat the Collect given us for today.

Creator God,
in the beginning
your word subdued the chaos
and in the fullness of time
you sent Jesus, your Son,
to rebuke the forces of evil
and to make all things new.
By that same power
transform our fear into faith
that we may have courage to follow
in the way of your kingdom;
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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Stf No. 499

1. Great God, your love has called us here
as we, by love, for love were made.
Your living likeness still we bear,
though marred, dishonoured, disobeyed;
we come, with all our heart and mind,
your call to hear, your love to find.
2. Great God, in Christ you call our name,
and then receive us as your own,
not through some merit, right or claim,
but by your gracious love alone;
we strain to glimpse your mercy-seat
and find you kneeling at our feet.
3. Then take the towel, and break the bread,
and humble us and call us friends;
suffer and serve till all are fed,
and show how grandly love intends
to work till all creation sings,
to fill all worlds, to crown all things.

Copyright Brian Wren (B. 1936)

We read now the Gospel of Christ -

Glory to Christ our Saviour

St Matthew chapter 10 v 34-39

This is the Gospel of Christ

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Matthew 10 v 37 "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.. and he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me".v 38.

Here's another of Matthew's uncomfortable reportings!! It's made all the more stark as we recall today is a day set aside as -Father's Day!!!.

The call of Christ however is not to sever the bonds of family. Surely Jesus isn't setting love of himself over against love of family. The love about which Jesus is speaking is not like a commodity to be packaged out -as if in short supply! In responding to Jesus' invitation to follow him there's no hidden agenda that we love our family any the less.

Through the ages though, disciples have found that in following the Christ there are "crux" moments- moments of crisis when the demand to follow Christ does take priority even over family. In such moments it's as though we are "set"-v 35 " against... father....against mother" Isn't this part of our taking up the cross ? (v 38)

Matthew has Jesus saying it's in such awkward moments we're aware of becoming part of a much larger family group - "the biggest on earth", according to one song writer. In these moments Jesus refers to God as "Father"v32 and as part of this bigger universal, cosmopolitan family, together we say- "**We** believe in one God. **We** believe in one Lord Jesus Christ. **We** believe in the Holy Spirit. And the same is true in the Lord's Prayer.-No other prayer opens in a more explosive way than "**Our** Father." Nothing individual here. It's all corporate. Isn't this part of our on the one hand"losing " - but on the other of "finding a bigger family?" (v 39)

This wider sense of "belonging" is ours in "following" the Christ.(v 38) "Following" Matthew describes as putting one foot in front of the other and - healing, cleansing, casting out.v 8. All this is done in the name of the Christ who "commissions" us. This is quite distinctive from pursuing values such as Truth and Goodness and Beauty-however laudable that might be. Discipleship involves "following",- being sent to act in the name of Christ - the One in whom all things are 'held together'.

Now we bring our prayers on behalf of the world

Holy God, hear our lament. We cry to you for an exhausted people. We remember all who have carried us through this pandemic. They have been made anxious too long. Many have seen too much death. They are a battered people. We pray in the power of the Holy Spirit grant to these renewed strength

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray too for our own family and friends.....
..and for ourselves.

Lord in your mercy , hear our prayer.

All these prayers, and prayers lying too deep almost to find utterance, we make in Jesus' name and for his world's sake. Amen.

Our concluding hymn **StF No. 459**

1. Captain of Israel's host, and Guide
of all who seek the land above,
beneath your shadow we abide,
the cloud of your protecting love;
our strength, your grace; our rule, your word;
our end, the glory of the Lord.
2. By your unerring Spirit led,
we shall not in the desert stray;
we shall not full direction need,
nor miss our providential way;
as far from danger as from fear,
while love, almighty love, is near.

Copyright Charles Wesley (1707 - 1788)

Together over our whole neighbourhood we repeat the words of the Grace -

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God and the
Fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, evermore. Amen.