



## Ripon and Lower Dales Methodist Circuit

with God, in the City, Towns, Villages, and Rural Areas

O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,  
make known his deeds among the peoples.

Sing to him, sing praises to him;  
tell of all his wonderful works.

Psalm 105:1-2

### **HYMN: StF 353**

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,  
for by his power each tree and flower was  
planned and made.

Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it  
sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: 'Jesus is  
Lord!'

*Jesus is Lord, Jesus is Lord!  
Praise him with alleluias, for Jesus is Lord.*

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal  
in flesh he came to die in pain on Calvary's  
tree.

Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding  
yet gave his life a ransom thus setting us  
free.

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror;  
from death he rose and all his foes shall own  
his name.

Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit  
to show by works of power that Jesus is Lord.

### **PRAYER**

We cry Jesus is Lord. God who created all  
things from nothing, we worship you. Holy  
Spirit, who is ever present we, welcome you.

Lord, you who are the source of all things, are  
present in everything and to whom the  
universe turns in wonder at the magnificence  
of your love and your attention to detail  
including the detail of our lives we worship  
you.

We worship you, as we sit in your presence,  
as we seek to learn more of your nature,  
more of your glory and of your love for us.

We come with our own thoughts, motivations,  
struggles and strengths and place them at  
your feet, asking for your forgiveness for  
those things that fall short of who and what  
you call us to be, and that we may walk with  
you clothed in your love.

We offer this prayer and this, our act of  
worship, to you. In and through you all things  
are possible so we ask that you open our  
eyes to the way you would have us journey.  
We know that through Jesus, his life, death  
and resurrection you opened a pathway to  
yourself, and we thank you that your love  
surrounded us and drew us back into  
relationship with you. We thank you that we  
are freely able to worship you.

We come before you now, at this time, in this  
place and worship you, creator of all things,  
eternal God.

Amen

### **HYMN: StF 356**

Jesus shall take the highest honour  
Jesus shall take the highest praise  
Let all earth join heaven in exalting  
The Name which is above all other names  
Let's bow the knee in humble adoration  
For at His Name every knee must bow  
Let every tongue confess He is Christ,  
God's only Son  
Sovereign Lord we give you glory now

For all honour and blessing and power  
Belongs to You, belongs to You  
All honour and blessing and power  
Belongs to You, belongs to You  
Lord Jesus Christ Son of the living God

### **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Lord, through all the storms of life we pray  
that we may turn to you and that in our

weakness we may find your strength. Give us, your church, a renewed vision of yourself and of your saving power that we may proclaim your love both in our words and our actions to our families, friends, neighbours and to those strangers that we encounter.

We pray our own prayers for:

the church and all who serve in the proclamation of God's kingdom

areas where there is hunger, poverty, oppression, violence, disaster and war

our families, friends and neighbours

those who have supported us in times of trouble, that we too may support them

those who are unwell, unable to help themselves, the weary and fearful

those who care for others

decision makers

and finally for ourselves.

We ask that you will hear our prayers as we come to you with the situations that are on our hearts and ask that you will show us your mercy and grant us your salvation for we ask in and through Jesus, our Lord

Amen

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 forever. Amen

## READING: Matthew 14:22-33

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. <sup>23</sup>And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup>but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. <sup>25</sup>And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. <sup>26</sup>But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup>But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

28 Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' <sup>29</sup>He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' <sup>31</sup>Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' <sup>32</sup>When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup>And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

## READING: Romans 10:13-15

<sup>13</sup>For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

14 But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? <sup>15</sup>And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'

## REFLECTION

The most obvious statement that can be made is that in order to walk on water you have to get out of the boat. It's a statement that has been around for many years, you may be familiar with it, or this might be the first time you've read it. No matter which camp you're in I think it's fair to say that it has

been used as a criticism as well as an encouragement.

I prefer the encouragement and here's why!

Jesus walked on water, he did so to reach his disciples where they were, in the middle of a storm. He had sent the disciples off in the boat to have some alone time with his father, God. When evening came, he was alone and the boat was far from land, then notice it was 'in the early morning he came walking towards them'.

I guess he could have stood on the edge of the water and waited for them to reach him, for them to work it out and get to him. However, I don't think that's the compassionate Jesus we read about and know. There was time for them to try going it alone, without help, depending on their own resources, how often do we take that option?

Jesus could have stretched out his hands and commanded the wind to cease but then would Peter have stepped out of the boat and shown the faith and trust that he did.

In verse 26 we see that the disciples didn't know, they couldn't make out who, or what, it was that they were seeing as they began to make out something approaching them. And, I'm deducing from their reaction that they certainly weren't expecting it to be Jesus ... I think we can safely suggest that it wasn't an everyday occurrence, and they were frightened!

Yet, as we read on, Jesus clearly realises what is going on, he knows ... he knows us better than we know ourselves and he speaks, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid'. I love that Jesus sandwiches assurance of who he is in the middle of acknowledging how the disciples are feeling. He's right there and he understands but he also needs them to understand just who he is.

The account doesn't end here, it gets so much more interesting.

Peter walked on water too! His response to hearing his Lord's voice is simply if you can do it and you command me to, so can I. 'Come', is Jesus' response and so Peter

steps out of the boat and walks towards Jesus.

Can you imagine the scene? Peter who has responded in the moment suddenly realises what is happening and he wavers ... and when he wavers, he begins to sink. As he sinks, he cries out to Jesus asking to be saved, Jesus takes hold of him, and all is well.

Take a moment to ponder on what happened. I wonder in a similar situation would we step out of the boat? It's easy to think that Peter was at fault as he began to sink. Yet, consider the courage it must have taken to step out of that boat, the trust that Peter placed in Jesus that it was going to be alright.

We see Peter, in the middle of a storm, fixing his eyes on Jesus and, in faith, stepping out of the boat, knowing that Jesus is with him. What happens next is that as soon as he takes his eyes off Jesus, he begins to see what is going on around him, the wind, the waves, perhaps he becomes distracted and begins to overthink. Whatever goes on in his head he begins to sink. As fear overtakes him, he cries out 'Lord, save me!' and immediately Jesus catches him. Jesus doesn't wait just in case Peter regains his composure, perhaps recentres his eyes on him and climbs out of the water himself – no he immediately reaches out.

Then, surely the third part of the account is that Jesus calms the storm. When Peter and Jesus reach the boat and get in, the wind ceases. And the reaction of those in the boat is to worship. 'Truly you are the Son of God' is their response.

I think this reminds us that it takes courage to step out of the boat, to move out of our comfort zone, to try something different, to listen to the calling of the Holy Spirit and to respond. But, through this account we are reminded where Jesus is, there is peace. No matter the storm going on around us, if we keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, then together even in the scariest of storms, we can find peace and reassurance as we hear Jesus words, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid'.

Now, as never before, we need to fix our eyes on Jesus, take courage and step out of our boat. Because, as we read in Romans 10, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'

I pray that we may have the courage to step out of the boat, to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, and to be those with beautiful feet bringing the good news to a world that so desperately needs it!

Amen

#### **HYMN: H&P 440**

Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I'm found  
Was blind but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed

Through many dangers, toils, and snares  
I have already come  
This grace that brought me safe thus far  
And grace will lead me home

When we've been here ten thousand years  
Bright, shining as the sun  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we first begun

Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I'm found  
Was blind but now I see  
Go forth and tell! O church of God, arise!  
go in the strength which Christ your Lord  
supplies;  
go till all nations his great name adore  
and serve him, Lord and king for evermore

## **BLESSING**

May the Lord keep our minds in perfect peace as we fix our eyes upon him.

And may, the amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, the extravagant love of God, the intimate friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Amen

