

WORSHIP AT
HOME
SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 5TH
2021



This short act of worship has been prepared for you so you can spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Father God,

We unite ourselves with all who worship today, both in churches and people's homes. Nothing can separate us from your love and we rejoice that we can celebrate together, giving thanks for all your mercies. Bless our worship today and may we be strengthened and uplifted. Amen.

Hymn: King of Glory, King of Peace

Singing the Faith 56

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here <https://youtu.be/tSESknkhPd0>

King of Glory, King of Peace,
I will love thee;
and that love may never cease
I will move thee.
Thou hast granted my request,
thou hast heard me;
thou didst note my working breast,
thou hast spared me.

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
and the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.
Though my sins against me cried,
thou didst clear me;
and alone, when they replied,
thou didst hear me.

Seven whole days, not one in seven,
I will praise thee;
in my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.
Small it is, in this poor sort
to enrol thee:
e'en eternity's too short
to extol thee.

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Let us pray together

Lord God, we praise your holy name and come before you with awe and wonder. You bless us in many different ways and for that, we give you thanks and praise. We have not always appreciated your gifts and have often abused them. In your mercy, forgive us Lord. We pray that you will help us to keep to your paths and to resist those things that would lead us astray, for you are the rock of our salvation. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 7:24-37

Time to Reflect

If you have time, look at the other lectionary readings for today i.e. Psalm 25 and James 2:1-10. There is a common theme in all of these and it is that God cares for everyone and has a particular heart for the needy and oppressed. God's compassion is not just for those who love Him but reaches out into the wider world. People can be in desperate situations, through no fault of their own, and they need help and support. Yet, there are often barriers that restrict this.

The story in Mark 7 reminds us of prejudices that existed between Jew and Gentile. A Gentile woman; who was also a Canaanite- approached Jesus seeking healing for her daughter as she believed that He was the Messiah. (Note: Canaanites were particularly shunned by Jews). In the story, the word dogs is mentioned, which was a common term for Gentiles. Jesus referred to dogs so was He highlighting this prejudice? The woman responded by saying that even she deserved mercy and Jesus responds by healing her daughter. Despite the barriers before her, the woman persevered and asked for basic care and compassion.

We live in a world of many prejudices based on such things as religion, status, race and gender. Governments may legislate against such things e.g. The UK Equality Act of 2010, but it is often the hearts of people that need to change.

Jesus came to save the world; even those we may feel are undesirable. He is the way to a new life and who are we to put barriers in the way of this? Rather; we should be showing God's love and helping people to see the nature of God, and encourage them to find salvation through Jesus.

And to those of us who have accepted Christ as Saviour, how has this changed our perception of the world and those around us? Covid-19 has thrown up many challenges; one being our concern for those less fortunate than ourselves. Let us take a few moments to reflect on what our response has been, and whether barriers – from ourselves and governments - are preventing some people from receiving basic care and compassion.

Amen

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

God of compassion and mercy, we come before you in our prayers as we bring to you the needs of the world and ourselves. We often feel overwhelmed by the needs around us, but you are a great God and we put our trust in you. Show us what we can do to make this world a better place.

Where there is poverty, may we share our riches.

Where there is war, may we bring peace.

Where there is division, may we bring unity.

Where there is despair, may we bring hope.

Where there is apathy, may we challenge and stimulate people to action.

Where there is hatred, may we show love.

We bring before you those known to us personally who have suffered loss and hardship. Visit them and give them all that they need to comfort and sustain them in their time of need.

Strengthen and guide us as we seek to do your will and make this world a better place in which to live for all people everywhere. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to Beauty for Brokenness on www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxfBh9ay8gE
[If you're able to, watch also the pictures on YouTube that go with this song – they are particularly moving and appropriate images, especially at this time of turmoil in Afghanistan.]

A prayer of blessing

Bless our worship today and may that which we have received enrich and bless our lives in the coming days. To that end, may the peace and blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.

Original Materials by John Roughley

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WORSHIP AT HOME SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 12TH 2021



This short act of worship has been prepared for you so you can spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Wherever we are, you are with us, Lord. Make us aware of your loving presence with us now. Grant us your peace, and fill us with wonder and joy. AMEN

Hymn: Jesus – the name high over all Singing the Faith 357

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here: <https://youtu.be/vTYRFT34dAc>

Jesus -- the name high over all,
in hell, or earth, or sky!
Angels revere, and nations fall,
and devils fear and fly.

O that the world might taste and see
the riches of his grace!
The arms of love that compass me
would all the earth embrace.

Jesus -- the name to sinners dear,
the name to sinners given!
It scatters all their guilty fear,
it turns their hell to heaven.

His only righteousness I show,
his saving grace proclaim;
'tis all my business here below
to cry: 'Behold the Lamb!'

Jesus -- the prisoner's fetters breaks,
and bruises Satan's head;
power into strengthless souls it speaks,
and life into the dead.

Happy if with my latest breath
I might but gasp his name;
preach him to all, and cry in death:
'Behold, behold the Lamb!'

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us pray together

Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all your people on earth, with all the company of heaven and with all creation, we praise and adore you.

You are the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and yet you come to us and invite us to approach you as our loving Father.

We acknowledge our failure to love you as we should, the weakness of our faith and the half-heartedness of our service, but we recognise that, through Christ, we are forgiven

and made welcome.

So we come in his name to worship you, and pray your Holy Spirit will guide us and empower us to become the people you created us to be. AMEN

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 8: 27-38

Time to Reflect

According to the Gospel writers, Jesus asked many questions; many more, in fact, than he answered! This was one of the things that made him an effective teacher. Rather than giving people simple answers that required no further thought, he asked questions that made them think for themselves. Not only did this help them find the answers to their own questions, it made them reflect more deeply about their relationship with God.

In our reading today, Jesus asked his disciples two questions. The first one was easy to answer: "Who do people say that I am?" The disciples must have had many conversations with folk they met who had their own ideas about Jesus. They were able to report that people thought perhaps he was John the Baptist reincarnated, or Elijah, or one of the prophets.

The second question was much more challenging: "But who do you say that I am?" The answer to this question required faith and commitment. Peter was the first to answer: "You are the Messiah", that is, the anointed one sent by God to save his people. Peter had perceived the truth about Jesus, but still had much to learn about its implications, as we see in the following verses.

"Who do you say that I am?" is a question all of us need to consider. The answer we give will have an impact on everything else in our lives.

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Think of people and situations, near or far, that particularly need our prayers today, as we use this intercession from the Methodist Worship Book Covenant Service:

Loving God, hear us as we pray for your holy catholic Church: make us all one, that the world may believe.

Inspire and lead all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world: establish justice and peace among all people.

Have compassion on all who suffer from any sickness, grief or trouble: deliver them from their distress.

We praise you for all your saints who have entered your eternal glory: bring us all to share in your heavenly kingdom.

Lord our God, you have helped us by your grace to make these prayers, and you have

promised through Christ our Lord that when two or three agree in his name you will grant what they ask.

Answer now your servants' prayers according to their needs; in this world grant that we may truly know you, and in the world to come graciously give us eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: He is Lord Singing the Faith 348

Listen to or sing along with www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Yq8MPYFEvk

He is Lord, he is Lord;
he is risen from the dead, and he is Lord;
every knee shall bow, every tongue
confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He is love, he is love;
he has shown us by his life that he is
love;
all his people sing with one voice of joy
that Jesus Christ is love.

He is King, he is King;
he will draw all nations to him, he is
King;
and the time shall be when the world
shall sing
that Jesus Christ is King.

He is life, he is life;
he has died to set us free and he is life;
and he calls us all to live evermore,
for Jesus Christ is life.

Anonymous

A prayer of blessing

May the love of the Lord Jesus draw us to himself; may the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen us in his service; may the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our souls; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, be with you and abide with you always. AMEN

(Words by William Temple, 1881 – 1944)

Original Materials by John Barnett

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WORSHIP AT HOME SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 19TH 2021



This short act of worship has been prepared for you so you can spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Lord and Father of all
Jesus taught us that greatness
is not as the world sees it,
but comes when we humble
ourselves in service to others.
Help our minds and hearts be open to your teachings today. Amen

Hymn: Meekness and majesty Singing the Faith 362

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yW5NMGQI5LM>

Meekness and majesty,
manhood and deity,
in perfect harmony --
the man who is God.
Lord of eternity,
dwells in humanity,
kneels in humility
and washes our feet.

Father's pure radiance,
perfect in innocence,
yet learns obedience
to death on a cross:
suffering to give us life,
conquering through sacrifice --
and as they crucify,
prays, 'Father forgive.'

Oh, what a mystery --
meekness and majesty:
bow down and worship,
for this is your God,
this is your God!

Wisdom unsearchable,
God the invisible,
love indestructible
in frailty appears:
Lord of infinity,
stooping so tenderly,
lifts our humanity
to the heights of his throne.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Let us pray together

Lord God, we give you thanks and praise for your Son Jesus who showed us, that true greatness is known in serving others.

The way of wisdom is found in childlike humility, with hearts lifted high, we offer you our thanks and praise for loving us and showing us the way to be your disciples. **Amen**

Confession

Loving Lord,

We know that in your eyes, it is not social status, or wealth or reputation that count.

Forgive us, we pray, when our lives are taken over by these worldly values. **Amen**

Here is the good news for all who put their trust in Christ. Jesus says your sins are forgiven. **Amen**

Today's Reading: James 3:13 to 4:3 & 7-8a

Today's Gospel Reading: Mark 9:30-37

Time to Reflect

The media is full of people who claim that they are great, but what really makes a person great? The media uses it to say what people have done or said, and sometimes they promote a person to idol status.

Mohammed Ali used to have a saying that he was the greatest, because he could beat anyone in the boxing ring.

In our readings today Jesus teaches the disciples about greatness. The disciples had been having an argument as they were walking along the road. Not about what they heard, or where they were going, but about who among them was the greatest. I did wonder how they were measuring their greatness, perhaps it was

- The one who learnt the most, or
- The one who had provided the most or
- The one who had brought the most people to Jesus.

They all felt they had reasons for thinking that they were the greatest.

In his letter, James was addressing the churches about this kind of rivalry, which was happening in the churches. He says it stems from the desires that are within them and, when they do not get what they want, they fight and quarrel.

We can see the same in our churches today.

When I started attending church, I sat on the back pew next to someone I knew. On the 4th week I was there, a woman came and stood in front of me and said I was in her place, and then lectured me on how she had worked her way up from the front pew to the back to earn that seat. What I eventually found out was that, in winter, the pew was a warmer seat because it had a heater behind it.

Jesus wanted the disciples to understand that the role of discipleship is not about power and status, but about serving. Jesus called a child over to help Him explain.

A child in their culture had nothing to offer, he or she had no status. A child would be at the beck and call of the adults and was expected to be obedient and serve the adults.

Jesus told the disciples that one who serves those who can offer nothing in return will be the greatest.

Today Methodists, along with other churches, are learning this way of discipleship with Nightstop, Foodbanks and charity groups that help the vulnerable people in their towns and villages across the whole of Britain. The vulnerable people are those perhaps who, through no fault of their own, have come to the edge of society. They may have been made redundant, or their benefits have not been

paid and, in some cases, they have sold everything they have to settle their debts and are left with nothing. With this work, people are now beginning to revise their opinion of those who go to church. They no longer see us as a load of goody goodies, but as a group of people who care for others in our community.

The people who we help ask 'are we getting paid for the work?'. After all, a lot of the people who they meet, would not do work for nothing. When our answer is 'No', they want to know why do we do it? The answer is: because our faith teaches us to love and care for our neighbours.

A time of prayer: - Let us offer our prayer with all God's people through Jesus Christ our Lord who ever lives to pray for us.

We pray for the needs of the world...

We pray for the Church...

We pray for all in trouble or distress...

We pray for all who make a new beginning today...

God of compassion and mercy

Listen to our prayer

May what we ask in Jesus' name be done according to his word Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: From heaven you came helpless babe Singing the Faith 272

Listen to or watch at www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCAdWs-ZyEk

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled,
not to be served but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.

Come see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

So let us learn how to serve
and in our lives enthrone him,
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

There in the garden of tears
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours,' he said.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

A prayer of blessing

May God our Father, strengthen us,

May Christ Jesus show us the way to serve,

May the Holy Spirit make us fruitful in all we do. And May the peace and love of our God

be always with us. Amen

Original Materials by Linda Ashworth

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WORSHIP AT
HOME
SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 26TH
2021



This short act of worship has been prepared for you so you can spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Words (Psalm 19:7-8)

The Law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes.

Hymn: Faithful One Singing the Faith 628

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PjSO5IhI0M>

Faithful One, so unchanging,
Ageless One, you're my rock of peace.
Lord of all I depend on you,
I call out to you again and again.
I call out to you again and again.
You are my rock in times of trouble.
You lift me up when I fall down.
All through the storm your love is the anchor,
my hope is in you alone.

Brian Doerksen (b. 1965)

Let us pray together

Faithful One, we gather again in an act of Worship at home. You have been with us all these months, through the storm of Covid and you truly have been our anchor. We put our hope and trust in you. Whatever we face in the future, we do not face it alone. Your Holy Spirit is with us to pick us up again, set us on our feet, and we go forward in and with the love of our precious Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: [Esther 7: 1-6, 9-10; 9: 20-22](#)

Gospel Reading: [Mark 9: 38-50](#)

Reflection

At this second feast, Esther reveals to her husband, King Ahasuerus, the wicked plot of Hamaan. Uprightness prevails and the gallows that Hamaan built to hang Esther's Uncle Mordecai are now used to hang the King's regent. Yet this justice is not the end because a decree for the destruction of the Jews has already gone out from the palace of this Persian king. A new decree is delivered throughout the land which now gives the Jews the right to defend themselves. Although Esther 9:5-10 does suggest an indiscriminate slaughter as some commentators suggest. Nevertheless, Esther 9:22, tells us that the Jews gained relief from their enemies and their sorrow was turned into gladness and their mourning into a holiday. What ensued was "days of feasting and gladness, days for sending gifts of food to one another and presents to the poor" (9:22).

Isn't this what we have missed during Covid – meeting with family and friends where we can eat together, and join in days of gladness? If you are like me, we have done our best to safely visit one another – often by Zoom, Skype, or some other technical means. Even at our coffee times online, we have had to bring and make our own coffee. Our hugs have been virtual with blowing of kisses over a screen or through a window to our children and grandchildren.

To me it seems that spiritually our coronavirus has been hanged by a vaccine and now it is up to us to fight back and to gain relief from this enemy so that our time of mourning might be turned into time of joy. Many rejoice at the lifting of restrictions, but it has been a poignant reminder that we have been under enemy attack.

Esther's story has served Judaism for many years and is a story of hope amid despair. Notice how the Jews send gifts to one another but they do not forget to give presents to the poor. It is a lesson for us to remember those who have not fared as well as some of us. Rob Lacey in 'the Word on the Street' reminds the reader that "in the whole book of Esther, God doesn't even get a mention – not by name. But the sheer number of 'coincidences' make it obvious that he's around, working things behind the scenes, protecting his people..." (Rob Lacey, *The Word on the Street*, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2003, p.127).

In contrast to God's name not being used in Esther, we find John criticising a man who used Jesus' name to expel demons. Jesus says, "Don't stop him. No one can use my name to do something good and powerful, and in the next breath cut me down. If he's not an enemy, he's an ally. Why, anyone by just giving you a cup of water in my name is on our side. Count on it that God will notice" (Peterson's, *The Message*).

So, whether we use God's name, or Jesus' name, or whether we do acts of kindness without using either name, we can count on God noticing what is going on. Wherever believers in Jesus Christ are looking after the needs of others, especially the poor, then because we bear the name of Christ, we will receive our reward from Him (Mark 9:41).

Take time to sit quietly.

A time of prayer

We represent God, the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour. We pray today for those struggling in the aftermath of the pandemic with mental health, bereavement, economic downturn, and ... (name your situation). We have lost family members and friends and, as a nation, we have lost any economic stability we thought was possible.

May we be salt to those around us. **In the name of Christ.**

We pray for the results of global warming throughout the world: forest fires, mud slides, flooding, higher than usual temperatures, and much more.

May we be salt to those around us. **In the name of Christ.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to 'There is Power in the Name of Jesus'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkR33OsvJSs>

A prayer of blessing

Peace to you - to all who walk in Christ's ways. **Amen.**

Original Materials by Heather Wilson

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