



~AT HOME WORSHIP~

20th September 2020

Service Theme:

I don't know what to choose - struggles



Preparation

As we settle to pray, let us remember those who are also joining us in their homes at this time.

Hymn/Song: Come down O Love Divine

<https://youtu.be/IZEpPol1moE>

Come down, O Love divine,
Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine
own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy
flame bestowing

O let it freely burn,
'Til earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in
its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the
while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become
mine inner clothing:
true lowlines of heart,
which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings
weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
with which the soul will long,
shall far out pass the power
of human telling;
for none can guess its grace,
'til He become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit
makes His dwelling.

Bianco da Siena, d. 1434; Richard F. Littledale, 1833-1890

Opening Prayer

Lord, you created and fashioned us,
you know us and search us out,
you abide with us through light and dark;
help us to know your presence in this life
and, in the life to come, still be with you:
where you are alive and reign,
God, for ever and ever.

Prayer for the Day

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit
upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:
grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel
that, always abiding in you,
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in serve;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Saying Sorry

Gracious God,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins

For turning away from you,
and ignoring your will in our lives;
Father forgive us.

For behaving just as we wish,
without thinking of you.
Father forgive us.

For failing you by what we do
and think and say
Father forgive us.

For letting ourselves be distracted
by the temptations of the world.
Father forgive us.

Absolution

May the God of love
bring us back to himself,
forgive us our sins
and assure us of his eternal love,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BIBLE READINGS



Matthew 20:1-16

The Workers in the Vineyard

20 “The Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a man who went out early in the morning to hire some men to work in his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay them the regular wage, a silver coin a day, and sent them to work in his vineyard. ³ He went out again to the marketplace at nine o'clock and saw some men standing there doing nothing, ⁴ so he told them, ‘You also go and work in the vineyard, and I will pay you a fair wage.’ ⁵ So they went. Then at twelve o'clock and again at three o'clock he did the same thing. ⁶ It was nearly five o'clock when he went to the marketplace and saw some other men still standing there. ‘Why are you wasting the whole day here doing nothing?’ he asked them. ⁷ ‘No one hired us,’ they answered. ‘Well, then, you go and work in the vineyard,’ he told them.

⁸ “When evening came, the owner told his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with those who were hired last and ending with those who were hired first.’ ⁹ The men who had begun to work at five o'clock were paid a silver coin each. ¹⁰ So when the men who were the first to be hired came to be paid, they thought they would get more; but they too were given a silver coin each. ¹¹ They took their money and started grumbling against the employer. ¹² ‘These men who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘while we put up with a whole day's work in the hot sun—yet you paid them the same as you paid us!’ ¹³ ‘Listen, friend,’ the owner answered one of them, ‘I have not cheated you. After all, you agreed to do a day's work for one silver coin. ¹⁴ Now take your pay and go home. I want to give this man who was hired last as much as I gave you. ¹⁵ Don't I have the right to do as I wish with my own money? Or are you jealous because I am generous?’”

¹⁶ And Jesus concluded, “So those who are last will be first, and those who are first will be last.”

Philippians 1:21-30

²¹ For what is life? To me, it is Christ. Death, then, will bring more. ²² But if by continuing to live I can do more worthwhile work, then I am not sure which I should choose. ²³ I am pulled in two directions. I want very much to leave this life and be with Christ, which is a far better thing; ²⁴ but for your sake it is much more important that I remain alive. ²⁵ I am sure of this, and so I know that I will stay. I will stay on with you all, to add to your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that when I am with you again, you will have even more reason to be proud of me in your life in union with Christ Jesus.

²⁷ Now, the important thing is that your way of life should be as the gospel of Christ requires, so that, whether or not I am able to go and see you, I will hear that you are standing firm with one common purpose and that with only one desire you are fighting together for the faith of the gospel. ²⁸ Don't be afraid of your enemies; always be courageous, and this will prove to them that they will lose and that you will win, because it is God who gives you the victory. ²⁹ For you have been given the privilege of serving Christ, not only by believing in him, but also by suffering for him. ³⁰ Now you can take part with me in the battle. It is the same battle you saw me fighting in the past, and as you hear, the one I am fighting still.

REFLECTION TIME



Short Reflection on the Philippians reading by Revd Lis Arnold **(audio available)**

For children: why not do the colouring sheet that is provided with the children's sheets.

“To be with Christ, which is far better”.

We often see this on graves and tomb stones, yet do we really think this?

So much of our lives today is focussed on countless efforts towards making life more comfortable and fulfilling which eliminates the threat of ageing and death.

We admire people who live to the full and are successful people in the world. Death is seen as a tragedy, which of course it is in certain cases, but after a life well lived, it is natural but so often resisted.

St Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison, in Rome. It was probably a house arrest situation under military custody but with certain privileges; he had visits from Timothy who helped him with this letter.

Paul is torn between wanting to be with or hear about the church at Philippi and the desire to be with Christ, in other words, to die. It's a loving, pastoral letter, full of concern and advice.

But his situation has certainly brought the prospect of his own death into focus. And here we see Paul's faith; for him, Christ is the centre of his life. Paul knows that death is going to be the time when he is united with Christ, therefore he is not afraid. Martyrs through the ages have held this belief.

With our own deaths, our belief in a resurrected Christ makes absolutely the biggest difference. The next step is the big adventure – being with Christ, which is far better.

Our attitude to life becomes a little lighter. We do not cling to it or to the physical trappings with which we surround ourselves because we know that Christ's resurrection has turned everything upside down. Our values are not what they were.

We know we live in the in-between time of waiting for the kingdom. And we also know that we live within the tension of this life and the next.

As Christians, we have the opportunity to reflect on these tensions, prayerfully and humbly, and without fear, knowing that the best is yet to come.

Amen.

Children's Reflection on the Matthew Reading **And/or you could do the Family Time Sheet together (separate sheet).**

What do you remember from today's reading?

A landowner went out to hire some workers for his vineyard. He took on new workers at the start of the day and three more times later in the day. He promised them all a fair wage.

The workers who arrived first expected to be paid more than the workers who arrived near to the end of the day. After all, they were hot and tired and had worked very hard all day, while some of the others have only worked for one hour.

How did the workers who had been hired first feel when they saw that everyone was being paid the same wage?

They thought it was unfair. They were angry and complained. *Do you agree with them? Why/why not?*

The landowner says that he has paid the first workers exactly what they agreed was fair at the beginning of the day. He says that they have no reason to be cross that he is generous to the other workers, that he can do what he likes with his own money.

Can you think of a time when you felt something was unfair? How did it make you feel? What did you do about it?

Who do you think the landowner in the story is supposed to be? What is Jesus trying to tell us?

Jesus is showing us that God's idea of fairness (sometimes we use the word justice), is different from ours. God's fairness is about making sure that every single person gets what they need, no matter what their situation.

God gives us what we need and not just what others think we deserve. God is generous and created a world with enough for absolutely everyone.

But do you think everyone in our world does have enough food and water? Why/why not? Do you think this is fair? Do you think this is what God wants?

How can we help make sure that all people get their fair share of the good things that God has given us?

We can try hard not to take more than we need and make sure we don't waste food, water or energy.

We can be generous with what we have, like the landowner in the story, sharing what we have with others.

And we can try to make a change to our world so that it is a fairer place for all people to live. Sometimes we can make a difference by ourselves. And sometimes we do this by writing to the Prime Minister or other people in power asking them to make the changes.

What will you do this week to try to help make sure that all people around the world get their fair share of the things that God has given for us all?



Family Song (optional)
https://youtu.be/b4_Jbqn8ri4

Time for Prayer

In a world of change and hope,
fear and adventure;
faithful God
- **glorify your name.**

In human rebellion and unrest
in our seeking and finding
- **glorify your name.**

In the common life of our society
in prosperity and need,
- **glorify your name.**

In our times of joy,
in our days of sorrow
- **glorify your name.**
Amen

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
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are yours
Now and for ever.
Amen.**

Hymn: All I once held dear
<https://youtu.be/S3blQouMBAo>

All I once held dear, built my life upon
all this world reveres, and wars to won
all I once thought gain I have counted loss
spent and worthless now, compared to
this.

Chorus
Knowing you, Jesus,
knowing you,
there is no greater thing
You're my all, you're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love you Lord.

Now my heart's desire is to know you more
to be found in you and known as yours
to possess by faith what I could not earn
all-surpassing gift of righteousness

Chorus

Oh, to know the power of your risen life
and to know You in Your sufferings
to become like you in your death, my Lord
so with you to live and never die

Chorus

Graham Kendrick

Closing Prayer

God of power,
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
may the gifts of your Spirit
equip us to serve and worship you,
now and always.
Amen.

Dismissal

Be in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

God bless you now and always

