

Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit

Sunday Worship Sheet – Sunday 7th August 2022

Our worship for this week was written by Howard Jackson,
a Local Preacher and Member at St. John's Bangor.

Opening Prayer: Reconciling God, we come to worship you, to affirm you, not only as the God of love, but as the God who understands our hurts and our divisions. As we come to worship you, help us to forgive those who have hurt us, to bridge our divisions, and to respect our differences. As we come to worship you, may we welcome the stranger among us, and celebrate your presence with us.

Based on Roots on the Web: Call to Worship.

Hymn: 20 Be still for the presence of the Lord

Prayer of Adoration: Everyday God, we come to worship you. We come from the busyness of work, the enjoyment of leisure, the challenge of school, and the responsibilities of home. We come to meet with you and to acknowledge you as the Creator who bothers about each one of us. We are amazed that you have such a concern and a care for this world, which is so small in the vastness of the universe. For us you took the incredible step to be with us in your Son. He gave his life for us and lives in us today through the Spirit. We bring you astonished adoration, wonder and praise. We are silent before you as we reflect upon what you have done. To you be glory for ever! Amen.

From Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary.

Prayer of Confession: Challenging God, you call us into the way of Jesus to be renewed in mind and spirit. We admit that in what we say and what we do we fail you. When we are more ready to tell lies than speak the truth: When we are angry, and continue to bear a grudge: When we are not as honest as we lead others to believe: When we lose our temper and insult one another: When we are selfish and unwilling to forgive: Challenging God, we desperately need your forgiveness. Renew us by your Spirit, so that by what we are and what we do we may show that Jesus lives in us. We make our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen. *Based on Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary.*

The Lord's Prayer:

Old Testament Reading: 2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33

Psalm: 130:

Hymn: 565 Only by grace can we enter

New Testament Reading: Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2

Reflection:

Absalom, King David's son wanted to be king and decided on open rebellion. Absalom was so popular that he was able to raise a large army in Hebron, just south of Bethlehem. Our Old Testament reading today is the story of the battle in the forest of Ephraim, north of Jerusalem, when David's army won a decisive victory. Absalom himself was killed when his luck ran out as he fled the battle scene. Absalom had rebelled against his own father. Even so, David still loved him and mourned over his death. This is a moving illustration of how much God loves us. Psalm 130 is an echo of that. *"If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we revere you."*

St. Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus contains advice about what living as a Christian means in practice. He summarises his advice by saying *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."*

The key words in this are that as his beloved children we are to copy what God does. David is a perfect illustration. He did just that and forgave his son. He gave orders to his army that they were to avoid harming Absalom if at all possible. What was behind this? David evidently hoped for eventual reconciliation with his son, in spite of the rebellion causing division across the nation. When he heard Absalom had been killed, David went into mourning and openly lamented his loss.

David's loss of his son was bad enough. One thing made it far, far worse. All hope for reconciliation had been shattered. There could be no possible closure on that. Ever. In this world, at least.

This should prompt you and me to think about broken relationships with close relatives and people who were once friends. My experience is that these fractures often occur for the most insignificant reason. Yes, it seemed important at the time, but on sober reflection later, it looks like an over-reaction. But maybe it was something really serious that happened. Something that cannot ever be put right. That could rule out any approach. However, if there is even the faintest possibility of reconciliation, are we content to let the situation continue, maybe fester, until it is too late to act? Look again at Paul's letter to Ephesus. Through this, he is exhorting us to be kind and compassionate, forgiving each other. In this way we will be copying what God does to us. Acting as his beloved children. Maybe sacrificing our pride. Perhaps accepting our hurt feelings as the price for restoration. Certainly risking the other's rejection and refusal to try and repair the relationship. Remember this, we can rely on God's help to succeed, if now is the time to act.

Pause for Thought:

Prayer of thanksgiving: For faith to see through the mist of our temporary problems and glimpse the life beyond, we give you thanks.

For faith to understand the reason behind conflicts we encounter, and wisdom to put them right, we give you thanks.

For faith under persecution from those who would deny the one we serve, and strength to carry on, we give you thanks.

For faith to claim your promises, embrace them with our hearts and express them in our lives, we give you thanks. Amen.

From The Act of Prayer, Year C, Proper 14

Prayer of intercession: Lord God, giver of all good gifts, we thank you for all that satisfies and sustains us, for all the love you have given to us. We pray for the right use of talents within your church, that gifts and possessions may be neither hoarded nor squandered; that the young may be given a good example to follow. Lord, make us a gracious people, a generous people.

Lord our God, you are our hope and our strength.

We give thanks for all who labour to provide for us; we pray for any whose work is hard or tedious. Guide all who influence the well-being of the earth. We pray for workers in industries, factories or mines; for ecologists and all who work in conservation, for the protection of the rain forests.

Lord our God, you are our hope and our strength.

Lord of all beauty, we pray for areas defaced or destroyed; we remember people in wretched dwellings and slums, all who are in areas deprived of beauty, or whose lives are in danger. Lord, be with us in our homes and with our loved ones.

Lord our God, you are our hope and our strength.

Father, the protector of all, we pray for any deprived of work, of their homes, of their well-being.

We remember all whose land has been ravaged by war, all places that have been pillaged through greed. We pray for all whose harvests will fail this year. We remember also all who have become ill, especially...

Lord our God, you are our hope and our strength. Amen.

Collect for today, Trinity 10: God of our pilgrimage, you have willed that the gate of mercy should stand open for those who trust in you: look upon us with your favour that we who follow the path of your will may never wander from the way of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: 655 We cannot measure how you heal

Blessing: Live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us; let us give ourselves for each other's good; and may God the Creator guide you in all that you do, Christ the Saviour protect you in every journey and the Spirit of God give you strength for each day.

Hymn 20

- 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)

Hymn 565

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

Hymn 655

- 1 We cannot measure how you heal
or answer every sufferer's prayer,
yet we believe your grace responds
where faith and doubt unite to care.
Your hands, though bloodied on the cross,
survive to hold and heal and warn,
to carry all through death to life
and cradle children yet unborn.
- 2 The pain that will not go away,
the guilt that clings from things long past,
the fear of what the future holds,
are present as if meant to last.
But present too is love which tends
the hurt we never hoped to find,
the private agonies inside,
the memories that haunt the mind.
- 3 So some have come who need your help
and some have come to make amends
as hands which shaped and saved the world
are present in the touch of friends.
Lord, let your Spirit meet us here
to mend the body, mind, and soul,
to disentangle peace from pain
and make your broken people whole.

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