

Order of Service 15 November 2020

Call to Worship

Jesus Christ, you are our dwelling place. We rejoice that you are our Saviour and the one who calls us to love as we are loved. Be present with us in our worship and help us to hear your voice and be encouraged by your care for us. Thank you for revealing God and the Holy Spirit to help us to serve you. Amen.

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 hallelujahs 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. *Refrain*

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 sent His Holy Spirit
To show by works of power that Jesus is Lord. *Refrain*

Prayer

Today is a day of celebration. We recall the acts of God: the creation of the world, breathing life into all living things. The resurrection of Jesus, who bought us closer to us and the world. The coming of the Holy Spirit, into the lives of the disciples and all that have faith in God. We celebrate the goodness of God. We focus ourselves, sing praises and offer prayers; opening our hearts to God's word and seeking God's purpose for us. Amen **Lord's Prayer**

Reading: Matthew 25 v 14 – 30

'This is what it will be like,' Jesus went on. 'It will be like a man who was going off on a journey. He summoned his servants, and handed over control of his property to them. He gave five talents to the first, two to the next, and one to the last, each according to his ability. Then he left. 'Straight away the man who had been given the five talents went out and traded with them, and made five more. Similarly, the one who had received two talents went and made another two. But the one who received a single talent went and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. 'After a long time, the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five talents came forward and gave him the other five talents. "Master," he said, "you gave me five talents. Look: I've made another five!" "Well done indeed," said his master. "You're an excellent servant, and loyal too! You've been trustworthy with small things, and now I'm going to put you in charge of bigger ones. Come and join your master's celebration!" 'Then the man who had had the two talents came forward. "Master," he said, "you gave me two talents. Look: I've made another two!" "Well done indeed," said his master. "You're an excellent servant, and loyal too! You've been trustworthy with small things, and now I'm going to put

you in charge of bigger ones. Come and join your master's celebration!" 'Then the man who had had the one talent came forward. "Master," he said, "I knew that you were a hard man. You reap where you didn't sow, and you profit from things you never invested in. So, I was scared! I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is: it's yours, you can have it back." "You're a wicked and lazy servant!" answered his master. "So! You knew that I reap where I didn't sow, and profit from investments I never made? Then you should have put my money with the bankers, and when I returned, I would have received back what I had with interest! "So, take the talent from him," he went on, "and give it to the man who has ten talents." (If someone already has something, you see, they will be given more, and they'll have plenty. But if someone has nothing, even what they have will be taken away from them.) "But as for this useless servant, throw him outside in the dark, where people weep and grind their teeth."

Prayer of Confession

Caring God, your word reminds us that we, as disciples, need your constant love to keep us focussed on you. You graciously forgive us, and create a new heart within us. Our spirits are lifted and we have new hope in you. Thank you, compassionate God, for your gracious love. Amen

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,

Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love!

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small Voice of calm.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
Beside the Syrian sea
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow Thee.

Message

A few weeks ago, we looked at the parable of the sower and now we have another parable to fathom. The parable of the talents. We can see a connection between the two parables because they concern growth; the growth of seeds or money. God expects us

to work to the best we can, with the energy, health and stamina and faith we have. When we fail, God forgives us, picks us up, dusts us off, and sets back on the road of discipleship. Do you find that kind of forgiveness in the man who left his money in the hands of servants? He left them to make decisions about the money and which options they had for growing its potential. It must have been hard work to double the money, considering they did not know how long they had to achieve the task.

Two servants, made plans and set out to achieve their objective. The third servant was fearful of his master, and took, what we might think, was the easy option. He buried the money.

When the man returned, there was a reckoning of how things had gone in his absence. The stories were told by the first two servants and the man was pleased with the additional funds he had gained. The third servant brought the original sum given and stood before the man. If he was fearful of his master before, now was the day of judgement for his actions. Did he regret his original decision? As he stood there, did he wish things were different? He returned the man the money, with no interest or profit. The man was incredibly angry. We might say that the man was greedy to expect each person to create a profit for him. He admonishes the servant for not using all his skills to make his money grow.

When we act out of fear, whatever the situation, our thoughts are crowded out by the presence of fearful thoughts. Depending on what the situation, our first reaction is to blank out, trying to forget. Normally we are numbed or shocked by the situation. Our instinct is to shut everything out. Maybe that is how the servant feels. He has to face up to his actions. God is very different from the man, and his attitude. God gives us forgiveness for the things we have done, even if we act out of fear. God knows human beings so well. There are 365 times that the bible says, "Do not fear", or "Do not be afraid". It is something we really need to hear from God, especially, in these strange times we are living through. When we act in fear, we divest ourselves of the richness of life. It limits us. In times of fearfulness we need to put our trust in the God who loves us, unconditionally. With God's help we can achieve all we want and need to. This give us a reassurance that the third servant didn't have. He acted out of fear and damaged himself in the process. His life was deeply affected by his decision. We, like the third servant, have a choice. We can act in fear; maybe because life is difficult and confusing, or we can choose life; the abundant life that God invites us to live. Our state of mind and our ability to be positive is affected by fear. The Bible says, "Perfect love (of God) casts out all fear. (1 John 4: 18). I pray that you will know the closeness of God during this second lock-down and know that God loves you, each and every day. Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Now abide in my love" (John 15:9). Amen.

Prayers Caring God we take a moment of silence to think of the people we have met or spoken to this week. We give thanks to you, God for their care to us and our care for them. Loving God, we pray for all people who work in the NHS. We ask that you give them strength

to deliver care to people. Assure them of your care for them. We pray for all essential workers in other areas of emergency services. Hold them in their tiredness and determination to work efficiently and well. Keep our families, friends and neighbours safe and secure in your love. Be all that they need, at this time, to be able to live well, despite current restrictions. Thank you for hearing our prayers and for the answers we will receive from you, through your love and care. Amen.

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.*

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.
Refrain

Come, see his hands and his feet,
The scars that speak of sacrifice,
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered.
Refrain

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.
Refrain

Prayer

Help us to live in the faith of Jesus Christ, all the days of our lives, looking and listening for people who need your help, through our hands. Amen.

Blessing

May God hold you in love. Be assured that you are important to God. Realising that together; Creator, Saviour and Spirit and our hearts will be lifted and blessed by their presence with us. May God's blessing surround you and hold you. Amen.