



Jersey Methodist Circuit

Sunday 16th May 2021

Deacon Sally Wheadon, "*Jesus prays for us ...*" (6th of Easter)

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use as a supplement for the On-Line services that others may join with you..

Call to worship:

You who are passing through hard times: come!

You who need strength to support those who are suffering: come! You who are full of happiness: come!

You who are burdened and busy: come! Come; let us unite in our worship of the one who offers us protection, comfort and joy.

A gathering prayer:

We come to you, Lord,
ready to worship,
ready to learn, ready for prayer,
ready for action.
May our worship here spill out into
our every day. **Amen.**

Hymn: StF 175

1 Light of the world,

You stepped down into darkness,
opened my eyes, let me see
beauty that made this heart
adore You,
hope of a life spent with You.

*So here I am to worship,
here I am to bow down, - here I
am to say that You're my God;
and You're altogether lovely,
altogether worthy,
altogether wonderful to me.*

2 King of all days,
oh so highly exalted,
glorious in heaven above.
Humbly You came
to the earth You created,
all for love's sake became poor.

*And I'll never know how much it
cost - To see my sin upon that cross.*

Tim Hughes (born 1978)

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A prayer of adoration

God of yesterday, tomorrow and
today, we are children of the world
you love and care for.

We praise you, heavenly Father,
for calling us into relationship with
you. We praise you, Lord Jesus,
for the power of your name and the
protection of your prayers.

We praise you, Holy Spirit,
for your guidance and gifts that
enable you to draw others to you
through us.

For you are faithful in times of
uncertainty, strong when we are
weak, and the breath of all our
being, the energy of all our doing
and the peace of all our resting.

Amen.

A prayer of confession and an

Assurance of forgiveness

Forgive us, gracious God,
when we have turned away from
your word and immersed ourselves
in the distractions of the world.
Forgive us, when we have sought to
belong to the world and
compromised your truth to fit in.
Forgive us, when we have bickered
among ourselves and not shown the
world that we are one.
Forgive us, when we have distanced
ourselves from those you have
called us to serve.
Forgive us, O God; protect us and
unite us. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

Gracious God,
we thank you for the enduring
prayer of Jesus for his disciples
which reaches and reassures us
today as we walk in their footsteps,
reminding us that we are not alone
but protected, empowered,
forgiven, and surrounded by your
grace every step of the way. **Amen.**

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

Lord Jesus, as your disciples in the
world today, we thank you that your
word of truth, your prayer of power
and your heart of love, continue to
protect, inspire and unite us as we
live out our faith, build up our
relationships, and hold the world
before you in prayer. **Amen.**

Song for 'Grown-up' Kids!

Every move I make, I make in you
You make me move, (Jesus)
Every breath I take I breath in you
Every step I take, I take in you
You are my way (Jesus)
Every breath I take I breath in you

*Na, Na Na Na Na Na Na
Na Na Na, Na Na Na Na Na Na*

Every move I make, I make in you
You make me move, (Jesus)
Every breath I take I breath in you
Every step I take, I take in you
You are my way (Jesus)

Every breath I take I breath in you
Waves of mercy Waves of grace
Everywhere I look I see your face
Your love has captured me
Oh my God, this love, how can it be?

*Na, Na Na Na Na Na Na
Na Na Na, Na Na Na Na Na Na*

Every move I make, I make in you
You make me move, (Jesus)
Every breath I take I breath in you
Every step I take, I take in you
You are my way (Jesus)

Every breath I take I breath in you
Waves of mercy Waves of grace
Everywhere I look I see your face
Your love has captured me
Oh my God, this love, how can it be?

*Na, Na Na Na Na Na Na
Na Na Na, Na Na Na Na Na Na*

6 “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

13 “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14 I have given them your

word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Hymn StF 518

Father, hear the prayer we offer:
not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength that we may ever
live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures
do we ask our way to be;
but the steep and rugged pathway
may we tread rejoicingly.

Not for ever by still waters
would we idly rest and stay;
but would smite the living fountains
from the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of
weakness,
in our wanderings be our guide;
through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be thou at our side.

Love Maria Willis (nee Whitcomb) (1824-1908), Samuel Longfellow (1819-1892)

Sermon: Deacon Sally Wheadon

I read recently that how we pray and what we pray for reveals a lot about the kind of people we are. I've never considered that before, but actually it is true isn't it. Our prayers reveal a lot about our life, our relationships, our world views and our priorities and concerns. Our prayers also reveal a lot about, not only what we believe about God, but also a lot about our relationship with God.

And in today's Gospel passage, we have the privilege of learning something about the way Jesus prayed and what his concerns and priorities were. **Firstly**, thinking of how to pray, we see that Jesus' prayer is not simply a wish or shopping list, his prayer is very much a conversation with his heavenly Father. **Secondly**, even though Jesus is about to face a trial which he knows will lead to an agonizing and humiliating death, his primary concern is not for himself, but for his disciples. And it might appear in this passage that Jesus is praying only for the eleven disciples whom he had called to follow him at the very start of his ministry, with Judas had already left during supper. However, in verse 20 it becomes clear that Jesus is not only praying for the eleven, but also those who will come to believe in

him through their word and that includes you and me. How awesome is that? On the night before he died, Jesus was praying to his heavenly Father for you and for me and his prayer reveals his love, loyalty and commitment to us.

So what does Jesus pray for us? Well, essentially, his prayer reveals that, just as the Father sent him into the world, Jesus sends his disciples into the world, and, in the light of this, he prays for our protection and our sanctification.

So firstly, why do we need protecting? Because Jesus knows that the world is a dangerous place. As he prays he knows that he is about to be crucified and that if the world hated him, it will hate his disciples also. But even so, in this prayer, perhaps Jesus is not as concerned with our physical protection as the protection of our hearts. Note that Jesus asks that we be protected by the power of God's name, the name that Jesus makes known to us. In the Hebrew Scriptures, a name was not simply a label by which to call someone but it carried with it, a person's presence, characteristics, qualities and attributes. Jesus asks for us to be protected by the attributes of his heavenly Father, attributes such as love, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, justice, beauty,

generosity and, not least, unity. Jesus prays for protection for us in God's name that we may be one just as he and his heavenly Father are one. The relationship of Jesus and his heavenly Father is one of love, intimacy, giving, mutual respect and dignity. And that's what Jesus is praying for us as his disciples, that we may be one body, holy and set apart, our hearts filled with and displaying the very life and attributes of God.

And being brutally honest here, there is no prayer that Jesus has prayed which has been so hindered from being answered by individual Christians and by the Churches than this. You see, where there are divisions, where there is exclusiveness, where there is competition between the Churches, the cause of Christianity is harmed and Jesus' prayer remains unanswered. The gospel cannot be truly preached and the world cannot be evangelized by competing churches. Every time a church divides, it is another tear in the fabric of the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul is very realistic about our human frailty and acknowledges that there will be differences of opinion within the church, but what he urges of the Christians in Rome applies still to us today. He says "Let us therefore no longer pass

judgement on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling-block or hindrance in the way of another." Paul was aware that Christian unity is of the upmost importance for the kingdom of God to prevail.

Turning now to sanctification.

Jesus prays for us to be sanctified in the truth. But what does sanctification really mean? When we use such words, I'm guessing that most people outside of the church have no clue as to what we're talking about and, perhaps, many inside the church too. Well, according to the dictionary sanctification literally means 'to be set apart for special use or purpose,' it then goes on to say 'to make sacred or holy.' You see, Jesus is sending us into the world, not to be a part of it, but to model a different way of being within it. When Jesus talks about the world, he's not talking about a physical place or creation, he's talking about the many different operating systems that are used to order society and that we have come to accept as 'just the way it has to be.' Often we ask ourselves "what else can we do?" even when the operating systems of the world perpetuate fear, anger, division, injustice, oppression and greed. This is the world into which

Jesus sent his disciples and it remains the world in which we live and practice our faith today. Jesus knows that the human ordering of life is often contrary and opposed to God's ordering of it. And so he prays for us to be protected and sanctified as we continue his life and work within the world. His prayer is for us not to be removed from the world, but to live within it according to God's operating system; he calls us to reveal God's love, mercy, forgiveness, beauty, wisdom and generosity in the world. But why? Because John 3:16 and 17 tells us that God loves the world, so much so that he sent his only Son, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

But let's be honest, it isn't easy to extract ourselves from the world's operating systems, many would willingly buy ethically sourced products but cannot because they themselves are the victims of injustice and greed leaving them with little with which to feed themselves and their families. But where we can and whenever we can, we are called to make a difference. In large part, we are the answer to Jesus' prayer. As we live out our lives in the world, we are called to offer forgiveness rather than retribution, mercy instead of

condemnation. We are called to see life through the lens of beauty rather than cynicism, to choose unity over individualism and God's ways over personal agendas. As I say, it isn't always easy, but in those moments when we do these things, we are the 'amen' to Jesus' prayer, our hearts are healed and the world is a different place.

With acknowledgement that this reflection is based on extracts from two sermons by Michael K. Marsh, a priest in the Episcopal Church. You can find more of his work on the website www.interruptingthesilence.com

Song – StF 508

Purify my heart,

let me be as gold and precious silver. - Purify my heart,
let me be as gold, pure gold.

*Refiner's fire,
my heart's one desire
is to be holy,
set apart for You Lord.
I choose to be holy,
set apart for You my master,
ready to do Your will.*

Purify my heart,
cleans me from within
and make me holy.
Purify my heart, - cleans me from
my sin, - deep within.

Chorus

*Brian Doerksen (born 1965)
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Prayers of intercession

Lord, we thank you that we can come to you with all the burdens of the people we know and love; all the burdens of the people we hear of and see; all the burdens of the people we laugh with and cry with.

All-powerful God, who understands our needs before we think and speak, we unload our pains and joys, our sorrows and our celebrations, and bring our prayers before you:

for the hurting and the hurt;
for the loved and the loveless;
for the young and old;
for believers and non-believers;
for those certain of their faith and those who waver;
for those of different faiths and identities from us;
for the ill and those in pain and distress;
for the dying and those whose bodies are etched with the marks of death and dying;
for those whose minds are bewildered and burdened by grief.

All-powerful God, surround each and every one with the circle of your protection that they may know your love, your peace, your comfort and your joy. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
As it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.*

Unfortunately under the current circumstances regarding Covid-19, there is a delay to processing donations by post. Please give via the website where possible or call 020 7523 2269 to donate by telephone.

The image shows a promotional poster for Christian Aid Week 2021. It features a woman in a blue and white patterned top and a white headscarf, carrying two large yellow plastic jugs on a yoke across her shoulders. The background is a dry, dusty landscape. Text on the poster includes: "Doing all she can against the climate crisis", "Every. Last. Drop.", "Together we STOP this climate crisis", "Give today to help families survive the drought.", and "Christian Aid Week 10-16 May". A white box at the bottom of the poster contains the text: "Christian Aid Week May 10-16th 2021".

Closing hymn - StF 662

Have you heard God's voice;

has your heart been stirred?
Are you still prepared to follow?
Have you made a choice
to remain and serve,
though the way
be rough and narrow?

Will you use your voice;
will you not sit down
when the multitudes are silent?
Will you make a choice
to stand your ground
when the crowds
are turning violent?

*Will you walk the path
that will cost you much
and embrace the pain
and sorrow?*

*Will you trust in One
who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow?*

Will you watch the news
with the eyes of faith
and believe it could be different?
Will you share your views
using words of grace?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

In your city streets
will you be God's heart?
Will you listen to the voiceless?
Will you stop and eat,
and when friendships start,
will you share your faith
with the faithless?

*We will walk the path
that will cost us much
and embrace the pain
and sorrow?
Will you trust in One
who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow.*

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www.spiritualsongs.co.uk

Music arranged by Joy Everingham

A sending out prayer

We do not ask for escape from hardships that we know are part of life in this world. Rather we ask: protect us from evil, make us one, and be with us through your Spirit. Show us your truth and guide us as we go out to serve the world in your name. **Amen.**

