



Chet Valley Churches

# All Together Worship

Trinity 2



# Following Jesus

21<sup>st</sup> June 2020

# Introduction

*Good morning and welcome to the Chet Valley. Our service this morning is All Together Worship on this the second Sunday of Trinity. Whilst some of our churches are now open for private prayer, we remain worshipping in our own homes – or maybe our gardens!*

*If you would like, why don't you light a candle as we gather together for worship, reminding us of Jesus, The Light of the World.*

## We Prepare for Worship

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you**

Our God is a God of invitation, continually calling to us and our opening hymn expresses just that: Will you come and follow me...

**♪♪ Hymn: Will You Come and Follow Me?**

**Will you come and follow me  
If I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
And never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
Will you let my name be known,  
Will you let my life be grown  
In you and you in me?**

**Will you leave yourself behind  
If I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
And never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
Should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer  
In you and you in me?**

**Will you let the blinded see  
If I but call your name?  
Will you set the prisoner free  
And never be the same?**

**Will you kiss the leper clean  
And do such as this unseen,  
And admit to what I mean  
In you and you in me?**

**Will you love the 'you' you hide  
If I but call your name?**

**Will you quell the fear inside  
And never be the same?**

**Will you use the faith you've found  
To re-shape the world around,  
Through My sight and touch and sound  
In you, and you in Me.**

**Lord, your summons echoes true  
When You but call my name.**

**Let me turn and follow You  
And never be the same.**

**In Your company I'll go  
Where Your love and footsteps show;  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
In you, and you in Me.**

Let us pray:

### ***The Collect for Purity—A Prayer of Preparation***

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden,  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit  
that we may perfectly love you  
and worthily magnify your holy name  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### ***The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day***

Faithful creator,  
Whose mercy never fails:  
Deepen our faithfulness to you  
And to your living word  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Confession—We Say Sorry to God**

As we become aware of God's presence with us, we realise how far we fall short of the love to which we're called; how we fail to follow Jesus but go our own way, following someone else or going up dead ends and blind allies.

*A minister introduces a time of penitence.*

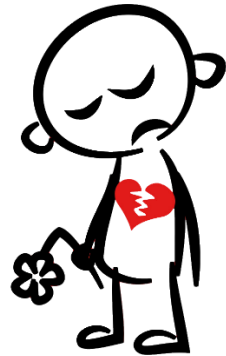
Jesus says, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'. So let us turn away from sin and turn to the Lord, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

*Then all say together*

**Father God, we ask you to forgive us  
For the things we have thought  
And the things we have said  
And the things we have done  
That do not please you.**

**We are sorry.**

**Help us to be more like Jesus:  
Ready to pray, ready to help others,  
Ready to do your will  
In all things, every day. Amen.**



## **Absolution—The Minister Announces God's Forgiveness**

May the God of love and power  
forgive *us* and free *us* from our sins  
heal and strengthen *us* by his Spirit,  
and raise *us* to new life in Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

We praise God in the words of the Gloria:

### **Gloria**

**Gloria, Gloria in excelsis Deo  
Gloria, Gloria. Alleluia! Alleluia!**



## **Reading: Matthew 10:24-39**

“A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

“So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## **Talk [Rev Alison]**

I think Jesus must be joking, mustn’t he?

All that talk about family strife and swords, that’s just not Jesus’ way is it. And we know he liked to joke.

There’s the story about the camel and the eye of a needle – that would have made them laugh. And the idea of being able to see to take the speck

out of someone's eye when you've got a great big plank in your own. And the notion that a responsible shepherd would leave 99 sheep totally unguarded and go off to find one that had got lost; that just wouldn't happen!

Surely he's joking! Jesus came to bring love:

*"Love one another as I have loved you."*

And the resurrected Jesus came with peace, greeting his disciples:

*Peace be with you!*

Just about the last thing he said was a message of comfort:

*And remember I am with you always to the end of the age.*

And in the passage we've just heard, Jesus reminds us that we are infinitely more valued than the sparrows which God protects.

Love, peace and infinite care. Isn't that what Jesus is all about?

It's perhaps what we want and need in this time of uncertainty, fear, and loneliness.

It's perhaps what we want and need as we move forward.

But actually, I think that Jesus is being deadly serious.

He was constantly in direct opposition to the Jewish authorities both in what he did and what he said. And indirectly, he challenged Roman authority by:

- Speaking out for the poor and the marginalised and the weak;
- Speaking out about justice and forgiveness;
- Speaking out against hypocrisy.

Much as we might like a warm, fuzzy Jesus who makes us feel good about ourselves and comfortable in our lives, that's not really what following Jesus is all about.

If we want to follow Jesus as he invites us to do, we need to be realistic about the cost. After all, a builder won't start without estimating his expenses else he might only build the foundations and run out of money with the laughter of people around him ringing in his ears.

If we want to follow Jesus as he invites us to do, we need to be realistic about the life changes and choices that we make. The rich young man was sad when Jesus told him to sell up and give the money to the poor if he wanted to follow him. We never discover if he did that or was just too wedded to his money that he couldn't change.

Many people have said that lockdown has introduced a pause on the world and as we emerge that we should seek to establish a new normal. In lockdown, we discovered anew the inequalities in our world: those living in cramped living conditions, those living with increased levels of debt, losing their jobs, going days without food – and that's just in our own country, never mind the rest of the planet.

In lockdown, we discovered the damage that has been done to God's creation. I was struck, like many, by the pictures of the Himalayas, visible from India for the first time in 30 years; by the Eiffel Tower and the London Eye not enveloped in a chemical fog; by the resurgence of wildlife. Those in the areas of worst air pollution have been those suffering the greatest death toll from Covid-19. Animals, including humans, have been forced into greater proximity because of the destruction of habitats which has increased the likelihood of diseases jumping species.

But, in lockdown, we have also discovered our common humanity. People have moved away from individualism to supporting those around them. Keyworkers have held communities together.

We have found that what we have and what we produce are not the most important things – that life itself has a greater value. Dignity for all is a priority where the homeless are housed and our time and our resources are put towards supporting the most vulnerable.

And we have discovered a greater imagination. New hospitals have been built in days; unprecedented levels of government support have come forth; there has been change across the world overnight.

As we emerge from lockdown, this new normal shouldn't just be the old normal or worse a few months down the line; we do not need racism, division, rising levels of inequality and public money used to bail out the worst polluters.

Many charities and church organisations are calling for us to reboot the economy with an emphasis on action to reverse the climate emergency and protection of the most vulnerable high on the agenda.

A new normal—we need to speak out about what this might be and how it might be achieved. How does that make you feel, I wonder? Does it make you feel uncomfortable? Is it a scary proposition? Yes! I think it is.

Jesus says that when we need to speak out, the Holy Spirit will speak in our hearts giving us both the words to say and the confidence to say them. He says that we should have no fear of those who label us and put us down, those who laugh at us. That we should not fear even death; that's perhaps not so likely in the UK but is certainly not unknown around the world.

In his Easter sermon the Archbishop of Canterbury said that, "As people of God we can be a part of casting a vision for a way forward." He asked if we would play our part.

It is an invitation to follow Jesus, and specifically, as the charity Tearfund puts it, to follow Jesus where the need is greatest.

Will you play your part?

*Let's just take a moment of quiet to reflect...*

Our next hymn is "Take my Life and Let it Be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee." Join in with it if you would like, or just listen to the words and wonder if you can make them truly yours.

### **♪♪ Hymn: Take my Life and Let it Be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee**

**Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee;  
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

**Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love;  
Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.**

**Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King;  
Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from thee.**

**Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my intellect, and use every power as thou shalt choose.**

**Take my will, and make it thine: it shall be no longer mine;  
Take my heart: it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne.**

**Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure-store;  
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.**



## **Creed: We Say What We Believe**

*The minister introduces the creed*

**We believe in God the Father,  
From whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
Who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
Who strengthens us with power from above.**

**We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## **We Pray Together [Richard Ball]**

Imagine you are a Moon-explorer, looking at Earth. You see a globe of deep blues with brown and green land masses and the white of the polar ice and swirling masses of clouds. How splendid and calm it seems. But as you start your journey home, you notice smog choking cities; the scars of deforestation and of fires; and the damage caused by flooding.

We pray for guidance in our better stewardship of the Earth.

As we seek to follow Jesus, **Heavenly Father, guide us.**

Closer still to our planet, you notice evidence of companies and individuals appropriating resources for their private gain; estates of great wealth and neighbouring slums; unused food rotting in fields and bins and long queues outside food banks; evidence of war, insurrection and terrorism; you sense tensions developing over water supplies.

We pray for guidance in sharing the Earth's resources more equitably, in living peacefully together despite our differences.

As we seek to follow Jesus, **Heavenly Father, guide us.**

As your space vehicle makes its landing approach, you see people walking separately; people wearing facemasks; notices detailing freedoms curtailed; and shops, places of entertainment and holy places closed or restricted in their activities.

We pray for guidance in dealing effectively with the crises that we face and in improving the Earth from what it has been.

As we seek to follow Jesus, **Heavenly Father, guide us.**

Back in your home town or village, you hear stories of suffering, illness and death; financial hardship and loss of employment; children's education and their development of social skills interrupted; and of hunger and growing debt.

We pray for guidance in our contribution to providing local support, love and comfort to those in need.

As we seek to follow Jesus, **Heavenly Father, guide us.**

Finally, as you sit in your room or garden and remembering the Archbishop of Canterbury's words—"As people of God we can be a part of casting a vision for a way forward"—please pray for something close to your heart and your response to it.

As we seek to follow Jesus, **Heavenly Father, guide us.**

We draw all our prayers together in the words that Jesus taught us.

**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: *Jesus Christ is Waiting***

**Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets:**

**No one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.**

**Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too;**

**Make me, friend or stranger, fit to wait on you.**

**Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets**

**Where injustice spirals and all hope retreats.**

**Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too;**

**In the kingdom causes let me rage with you.**

**Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets**

**Curing those who suffer, touching those he greets.**

**Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too;  
Let my care be active, healing just like you.**

**Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets,  
Where each sign of hatred His strong love defeats.  
Listen, Lord Jesus, I feel triumph too;  
On suspicion's graveyard, let me dance with you.**

**Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets,  
"Come and walk faith's tightrope, I will guide your feet."  
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few;  
Walk one step before me, I will follow you.**

## **Blessing**

Jesus challenges us to follow him and to recognise both the joy and the cost of that discipleship. Therefore, I dare to call upon you, as part of God's Church, here in the Chet Valley and elsewhere, to live out what you proclaim.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit will you dare to walk the lonely streets, serving those in need?

**By the Spirit's power, we will.**

Will you dare to speak out against injustice and campaign for what is right?

**By the Spirit's power, we will.**

Will you dare to share Christ's healing and comfort with those who are hurting?

**By the Spirit's power, we will.**

Will you dare to speak the truth, deny false news, and build others up?

**By the Spirit's power, we will.**

Will you dare to master your fear of shame and embarrassment and follow Jesus wherever his path may lead you?

**By the Spirit's power, we will.**

Then may the blessing of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit be upon you and those whom you love, now and forever more. **Amen.**

## **The Dismissal**

Go in peace to love, follow, and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**

*The Road goes ever on and on  
Down from the door where it began.  
Now far ahead the Road has gone,  
And I must follow, if I can,  
Pursuing it with eager feet,  
Until it joins some larger way  
Where many paths and errands meet.  
And whither then? I cannot say.*

*J R R Tolkien*

