



Heacham Parish Church

14th June 2020 Sunday Service
Heacham Parish Church at home

EXPLORING PRAYER PART 2 – Learning to lament

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you **and also with you**

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God

Who knows our needs, hears our cries, feels our pain and heals our wounds.

Lord, we seek to meet you through praise and prayer. **Let our praise be prayer and our prayer be praise.**

In our worship, may God build up our faith **and strengthen our resolve to pray and to wait for the answer.**

We continue our series on Exploring Prayer in our services, which link in with the exploring prayer video series from The Archbishop of Canterbury, this week we are thinking about learning to lament.

These are the heartfelt prayers, when we cry out to God in pain, sorrow, grief and anger, the time we are honest with God, let God know (even though he already knows) how we are feeling. Many, many prayers of lament have been and are being prayed as we face this global pandemic, and its impact on us all.

Psalm 55 verse 17 says Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress and he hears my voice.

Song: Through all the changing scenes of life sung and played by Colin and Rosie Ross

**Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.**

**Of His deliverance I will boast,
Till all that are distressed
From my example comfort take,
And charm their griefs to rest.**

**O magnify the Lord with me,
With me exalt His Name;
When in distress to Him I called,
He to my rescue came.**

**The hosts of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just;
Deliverance He affords to all
Who on His succour trust.**

**O make but trial of His love,
Experience will decide
How blessed are they, and only they,
Who in His truth confide.**

**Fear Him, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you His service your delight,
He'll make your wants His care**

Bible Reading: Job 19: 13-27 read by Barbara Jennings

A Reflection from The Rt Revd Jonathan Meyrick, Bishop of Lynn

I am taking a funeral later this week. For most clergy that's a fairly regular part of our responsibilities. Each one has its particular poignancy and grief – sometimes it is desperately sharp – the man I am taking the service for this week died far too soon, and his teenage daughters were with him when it happened, very suddenly.

Part of what we do at a funeral is allow people to lament, to voice some of their sense of grief. Mostly there will be thanksgiving too – **all** our lives have elements to rejoice in; and the hope that is focussed for us in the promise of resurrection, of finding our designated place in the eternal light and love of God. But the lament will always be part of it. A few weeks ago I took another funeral – a woman who had died at what felt a natural point her life. But the sense of lament, as the woman's daughter had to stand 8 feet away from her sons as they shed tears for their Granny, unable to reach out to them was very obvious: this was early in the lockdown and two grandsons were in separate households, each standing and weeping on their own.

And then there are from time to time, points where a whole community makes lament – one of the things we at the centre of the diocese will want to facilitate at the end of the current blight on all our lives, will be a public expression of lament over all the individual tragedies that have been part of it – as well as giving thanks for all the people who have helped to bring us through it. The wave of protests that has swept over many places in the wake of Georg Floyd's death – that too is a kind of expression of public lament. Quite rightly too – not all the extreme by products, but the sense of outrage that any human life could be so barbarously and callously wasted.

Both private and public lament are part of our ongoing conversation with God – that’s what prayer is: connecting to God, often in silent or spoken conversation, chat, explosions of outrage, pleading – or just in the stillness of our own hearts. Lamenting, crying out against, grieving, are not denials of God – they are, at times, an essential part of our response to him. The two main places where lament is found in the Bible are the book of Psalms – where community lament features over and over again and the book of Job where the lament focusses on an individual. Briefly, this book takes an old legend, reflected in the first two chapters and again right at the end of the book, and inserts in between, a long poetic lament for the sufferings – seemingly utterly unjustified sufferings – of an individual: Job. This lament – like so many of ours, is full of agonised “why’s?”: “why has this happened to me?” It repudiates a simplistic theology that would say – if you are suffering, you must have done something wrong and struggles powerfully to find a meaningful answer.

In the part we heard just now, about halfway through the book, it almost seems as though the poet is reaching out to the possibility of resurrection, but then his heart fails within him and he can’t quite get there. The development of a belief in resurrection was still at least 100 years away. What he **does** become increasingly convinced of though, is the reality of the presence of God even in his sufferings and he finds comfort and reassurance there.

For Christians, that presence of God in our own realities is focussed on Jesus and above all in Jesus’ cross. That cross represents so many things, but for me, supremely, it is testament to God’s presence with us all in our laments – at the bleakest moments of despair; even when it seems that we are utterly

deserted (My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?), in Jesus, God is there with us.

Hence this powerful hymn:

**When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God:
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.**

**See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

**Were the whole realm of Nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!**

Prayers of intercession written by Val Fisher

Loving God As we come before you now, we bring to You our fears, worries and anxieties.

We cry out to you Lord to help us not to back away from you during these awful times.

It is so difficult for us to only talk to each other from a distance or to communicate by telephone or screen or wave through a window.

Heart breaking not to be able to embrace our loved ones, not able to be with loved ones at the end of their lives or attend funerals.

Anger at the times when others walk too close to us.

Pleading times for the charities needing financial support.

Desperate times for people who are struggling to support themselves and their families.

Hopelessness of the homeless, refugees, people who have nowhere to go, the ones who are unable to self isolate.

Humiliation of racism and discrimination.

Cruelty metered out to creatures and animals, wild and domesticated, once used as commodities and now discarded.

Disregard for Your Creation, pollution and climate change not seeming to be as important as material things.

We look around our world and see a broken world, a world that desperately needs our love and care, a world that is suffering because of sin.

Amongst all of everything going on around us Lord, we know that You love us and we know that we have to suffer the consequences of the way humankind chooses to live and so we pray that You hear us.

Loving God, Please hear us

We pray for those who live in fear every day as they unselfishly care for others, putting their own lives at risk, those in isolation, in their loneliness, the bereaved, the homeless, the refugees, the ones who have nowhere to go, those who are unable to self isolate, those who suffer racist attacks and those who are discriminated against.

Loving God, Please hear us

Please help the ones in authority throughout Your world, to make decisions that will protect everything in Your Creation and glorify Your name.

Loving God, Please hear us

We praise You for Your gift of Creation and thank You for the silver linings amongst all this chaos and pray that globally, You will soften the hearts of humankind to enable us to take more care of Your Creation and that this crisis will lead our brothers and sisters who do not already know You, to search for a more spiritual path in their lives which will lead them to look for You Lord and to discover that You love them just as they are.

Loving God, Please hear us

Heavenly Father, please wrap Your arms around Your world, help us to gain comfort and guidance from the fellowship of Your Holy Spirit and surround us with Your Angels for protection.

We thank you Lord for Your forgiveness and for always being there beside us. We offer up this prayer to You in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We pray together the Lord's prayer

Song: Beauty for brokenness sung and played by Hilary, Lesley, Shona, Richard, Judith, Terry and Karen.

**Beauty for brokenness,
Hope for despair,
Lord, in the suffering,
This is our prayer.
Bread for the children,
Justice, joy, peace,
Sunrise to sunset
Your kingdom increase.**

**Shelter for fragile lives,
Cures for the ill,
Work for the craftsmen.
Trade for their skills.**

**Land for the dispossessed,
Rights for the weak,
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak.**

Chorus

**God of the poor,
Friend of the weak,
Give us compassion, we pray,
Melt our cold hearts,
Let tears fall like rain.
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame.**

**Refuge from cruel wars,
Heavens from fear,
Cities for sanctu'ry,
freedoms to share.
Peace to the killing fields,
Scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness,
His cross for the pain.**

**Rest for the ravaged earth,
Oceans and streams,
Plundered and poisoned,
Our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness,
Carelessness, greed;
Make us content with
The things that we need.**

**Lighten our darkness,
Breathe on this flame,**

**Until your justice
Burns brightly again;
Until the nations
Learn of your ways,
Seek your salvation
And bring you their praise**

Final Prayer

Be bold in prayer, and courageous. Be gentle in prayer, and compassionate.

Be honest in prayer, and weep. Be silent in prayer, and speak out. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Blessing from Bishop Jonathan

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you and those you love always.
All Amen.

The **HEACHAM PARISH CHURCH online service** will be on
Youtube from 8am on Sunday morning
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCefWbBrE77u7MPpdjWtwzo>
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**PRAYER MEETING- 10am Sunday 14th focussing on
Prayers of Lament**

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9960936343?pwd=TIerVHp3UHBzZHNTSm16QzdCNUY0Zz09> Meeting ID: 996 093 6343 Password:
150936

Everyone is very welcome, if you can't or don't want to zoom, you could join us at home by praying at that time... together, yet apart.

Church re-opening

We are sorry the church building remains closed, we are working towards re-opening for individual prayer as soon as we safely can. The PCC is meeting on Monday 15th June to discuss how and when this can happen.

Please bear with us as we clean and prepare the church within the COVID Secure guidelines.

Details of how and when we will be open will be available soon.

Molly Sage- Service books

Molly's family produced a service book for her funeral with photographs and memories. Veronica has some copies if you would like one.

For those without access to the internet:

The telephone worship service: **Daily Hope**, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. This is a freephone service.

Also The Diocesan weekly podcast **Sunday Hope** can be listened to via your phone by calling **01603 537577**- calls for this are charged at a local rate.