



The Methodist Church

Burley in Wharfedale, Menston & Otley

July 25th 2021

Welcome

It's great to be sharing with you in worship today. I'm delighted that Rev Helen Lambert from Trinity Church, Rawdon, will be sharing God's Word with us in a few minutes but as we gather together to worship God, each in our own homes, we recognise God's presence with us, and we ask God to minister to us this day. So, we start our service in prayer:

God of healing, God of wholeness, we bring to you our brokenness, our sinfulness, our fears, and despair, and we lay them at your feet.

God of healing, God of wholeness, we hold out hearts and hands, our minds and souls to feel your touch, and know the peace that only you can bring.

God of healing, God of wholeness, in these precious moments in your presence and power grant us faith and confidence that here in this place our broken lives will be made whole and new.

Song

King of kings, majesty,
God of heaven living in me.
Gentle Saviour, closest Friend,
Strong Deliverer, Beginning and End,
All within me falls at your throne.
*Your majesty, I can but bow;
I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve,*

I live to serve your majesty.

Earth and heaven worship you,
Love eternal, faithful and true,
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls,
Brought this sinner near to your throne;
All within me cries out in praise.
Your majesty, I can but bow...ⁱ

Prayer of Confession & Thanksgiving

Unclutter our lives, Lord we have so much, consume so much, expect so much.
Grant us perspective; to see this world through your eyes rather than our own.
Grant us compassion; to see where there is a need for us to play our part and not to turn aside.
Grant us gratitude for what we have, for our daily bread - the gift of life.
Unclutter our lives, Lord, give us space, simplicity and thankful hearts.

Song

Faithful One, so unchanging,
Ageless One, you're my rock of peace.
Lord of all I depend on you,
I call out to you again and again.
I call out to you again and again.

You are my rock in times of trouble.
You lift me up when I fall down.
All through the storm your love is the anchor,
My hope is in you alone
(Repeat all)ⁱⁱ

Reflection

Rev Helen Lambert
"The Hem of the garment"

The videos can be viewed at www.burleymethodist.org
Alternatively, the written text is provided below

Prayers of Intercession & The Lord's Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, greater than all things, greater than every thought of you, come, hear our prayer.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

O Christ the Healer, by your wounds others are made whole, by your tears sorrow is washed away, come with kindness to those who today need your touch, your time, or who need to know that you remember them.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

O Christ the Feeder, you ask for what we have in order to nourish those we tend to forget. Where people hunger, in or out of the camera, direct not just the pity of our eyes, but our generosity even if it hurts.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

O Christ the Peacemaker, stubbornness condemns us, unsure as we are to walk the road that leads to peace. Show us, whose science is set to militarise the galaxy, the simpler, humbler and yet more difficult path by which our warfare may be turned to welfare.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

O Christ the Liberator, the chains of death and hell could not hold you, yet imperialism, racism, sexism and a thousand other bogus ideologies ensnare your people. Where humanity cries out against inhumanity and where Nature mourns for its lost good, deliver all from evil.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

O Christ the Stranger, you meet us when we are not ready for you; you stand or sit with those we avoid; you knock on the door we are hesitant to open; you say the word we are reluctant to hear. Come, where you are kept at arm's length and take the hand that needs to hold you.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that you are God; we believe that you are true to your promise to answer the prayers of your people; in us, through us, and, if need be, despite us, let the fabric of the world be transformed into the shape of your kingdom for your own Name's sake. Amen.ⁱⁱⁱ

Together, we say the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who 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.

Hymn

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord;
For a just and equal sharing
Of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
Help us rise and pledge our word.

All that kills abundant living,
Let it from the earth be banned;
Pride of status, race, or schooling,
Dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
May we hallow life's brief span.

Lead us forward into freedom;
From despair your world release,
That, redeemed from war and hatred,
All may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
Fear will die and hope increase.

You, Creator-God, have written
Your great name on humankind;
For our growing in your likeness
Bring the life of Christ to mind;
That by our response and service
Earth its destiny may find.^{iv}

Blessing

You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. You have one Master, one God and Father of all, who rules over all, works through all, and is present in all. May everything you are and think and do be permeated with oneness.

Reflection

Rev Helen Lambert, "The Hem of the Garment"

“For she said, “If I can just touch His robes, I’ll be made well!”

One of the things that has remained with me from my time in India last January, is the incredible faith of the people that I met there. After the celebration Sunday service, they lined up for prayer from the team – and in their eyes I could see their confidence that they would receive their miracle. Such was their faith in the power of prayer. When I think of this small story of a woman with such enormous faith it reminds me of those faces, those eyes that met mine and how they challenge me and inspired me in my own personal walk with Jesus.

When I think of this woman, I see the same faith in her eyes as she reached out to Jesus. She desperately wanted Him to heal her, but after all the rejection and mistreatment that she had received for twelve years she must have decided that her only hope was to sneak up behind Jesus in the crowd; then and only then could she touch the hem of His garment. She was focused on just one single act, to touch the hem of His garment. That’s all she had to do, and she was willing to place all her hope, all her faith in Jesus. Her faith activated the power of Jesus.

This woman had known great disappointment. She had been shunned, rejected, and looked down upon for twelve long years; she spent all that she had on empty promises and no healing. But somehow this was different. She heard about Jesus—and she believed that if she could touch the hem of His garment, she would be healed. Not only was she healed but she was called a child of God, she was welcomed into the family of God, and she was accepted after twelve years of rejection. So not only was her health restored but she was restored into her community.

She knew something that we all should remember, when our hope is placed in Jesus—anything is possible. This woman knew He was the answer and so she reached out to Him. She just had to get to Jesus, but if she were to get to Jesus, she had to overcome the obstacle of the people (the world) who were in her way, and the world is still getting in the way, because the world doesn’t want you and I to get to Jesus. I wonder if you have noticed that every time you start to get close to Jesus, the enemy tries his best to place obstacles in our way? He will place all that he can before you, so you focus on the difficulty, the storm, or the crowd.

It was no coincidence that the day the YBA team returned from Kolkata, we heard the news of Covid for the first time. It was no coincidence that on my return full of hope and a passion for mission that lockdown happened. God was on the move and the enemy started his attack.

Today I want this story of this woman’s faith to be your inspiration and your story as we slowly and carefully emerge from 18 months of covid and all that this has meant to us and our church communities.

This woman who is healed by her faith – after twelve years of suffering and trying everything she could she is healed by simply touching the hem of Jesus’ garment. Her mustard seed faith gave her the strength to battle the crowds and to stretch her fingertips reaching out until they can just about touch a tiny scrap of fabric, and instantly she is healed. She expected the miracle and it happened.

Recently my friend Shirley, who works in Uganda came to visit us and she spoke wisdom into my prayer life. She said that she never asks God for anything – she just thanks him for answering her prayer.

We all have dreams and goals that God’s placed in our heart, things we’re believing for, situations we’re praying to turn around they start off like seeds, planted into our lives, waiting till the time is just right for them to grow and blossom. From the time we pray into that seed until the time we see it come to fulfilment, the trial of our faith begins, this is when many people get discouraged and give up, they start believing the negative thoughts, it’s never going to happen, it’s taking too long; this is the time when the seed is lying dormant, it’s still alive, it still has potential, but it can’t do anything until you do your part and start watering the seed. The way you water it is by thanking God in advance. You don’t wait until you receive the promise, you thank God that the answer is on the way, that’s not just being positive, that’s watering the seed; when you thank God in advance for the answer, it not only waters the seed, but it strengthens your faith

When you give God praise it gives you strength, when you thank God in advance for the answer, that’s what keeps you encouraged, no one will stay strong in faith by complaining, we are not going to see answers if we think “I’ll give God praise after the problem turns around, I’ll thank God after I see the solution.” if you don’t thank God in advance, you won’t have the strength you need to wait for the answer.

When you give God praise, God gives you strength to keep believing that what He promised will come to pass – in his timing and not yours, in his strength and not yours. I know from experience that negative thoughts will come to try to get in between our hopes and dreams; that the enemy will use people to distract us and weaken our prayers by being negative. But remember when you give God praise, God will give you the strength to keep

believing; the mistake we make so often make is that when these thoughts of worry come, and when it doesn't look like things are ever going to change, we start begging, but begging doesn't get God's attention. Once you pray, and once you ask God to heal or to restore, from that moment on you don't need to ask God anymore. He heard you the very first time, so every time you think about it, thank God that the answer is on the way rather than ask why it hasn't happened. Some people ask God for the same thing the same way year after year; so why not try this - instead of asking for the same thing the same way year after year let's say, Lord, I believe you heard me the first time, and I want to thank you for blessings my life.

What begging won't do, praising will do; don't be a beggar, be a believer, once you start to pray, turn it into praise in the valleys and on the mountain tops. Any of us can give God praise when we're on the mountaintop, it's easy when everything's going our way, but it takes a person of great faith to say "God, nothing is going my way, I could easily be discouraged, I could easily complain, but I know this valley belongs to praise, so God I want to thank You that You're restoring and reversing, that things are changing because praise causes you to go to work, praise breaks the chains that are holding me back, praise opens doors and praise causes things to fall into place it is praise that reverses and restores.

The first day you prayed God heard you, the first time you asked God to set the miracle into motion, that very first day the answer was on the way, that's why you don't have to keep praying about the same thing, you don't have to ask again and again, the answer is already on the way, the promise is already in motion, the breakthrough is already enroute, the right person is already in your future, the victory is already up ahead of you. Think of all the joyous prayer time you can have by switching from asking to thanking - by thanking God in advance, for the healing, the restoration, and the dream. Jesus gave us this example – remember how He thanked God for the answer before it came, and said about Lazarus:

John 11:41 (NIV). ⁴¹ *So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.*

If Jesus thought it was important enough to thank God before the answer came, then we should certainly start thanking God for the answer - even when we don't see any sign of it happening. Let's bat the lies out with words of thanks and praise – lets change the way that we as a church pray and let free ourselves - this is what faith is all about, you can't look at it with your earthly eyes; you have to be as bold as Jesus, and say, Father, I want to thank you in advance that you have heard my prayer. I may not see a way, but I want to thank you in advance, for the blessings that You have in store for my life.

You may not see anything happen for a week, month, year, or for many, many years, but as you keep thanking God your faith is getting stronger, and if you keep thanking him in advance you won't get discouraged even though you don't see anything happening; I know that sometimes it is difficult, sometimes you may not feel like doing it, but I am going to challenge you to change your prayer life and I am asking you to join me, as we all turn our prayers into praise and as we do we too will battle the crowds of the world and touch the hem of the garment.
Rev Helen Lambert July 2021

ⁱ Words and Music by Jarrod Cooper, 1996, Sovereign Lifestyle Music Ltd., StF 331.

ⁱⁱ Words and Music by Brian Doerksen, 1989, Vineyard Songs and ION Publishing, StF 628.

ⁱⁱⁱ "Present On Earth," P. 203-204, Wild Goose Resource Group, 2002.

^{iv} Words by Fred Kaan, 1968, Stainer and Bell Ltd, StF 696.