

Barthol Chapel and Tarves Worship Materials Sunday 5 July 2020



“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

INTRODUCTION

A couple of weeks ago I suggested setting apart a special space where you might spend time with God, both on Sunday mornings either on zoom or with the written worship materials from the web-site, and during the week. Here I will be suggesting activities linking to this space each week.

Think about the letters of the word “REST”. Can you think of a word to associate with each letter that helps you to understand what Jesus means in giving rest for the weary?

Praise CH4 147 All Creatures of our God and King vs1,2,3,7

All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Bright brother sun with golden beam,
Clear sister moon with softer gleam!
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Swift rushing wind so wild and strong
High clouds in heaven that sail along,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
New breaking dawn, in praise rejoice,
And lights of evening, find a voice!

Cool flowing water, pure and clear,
Make music for your Lord to hear,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Fire with your flames so fierce and
bright,
Giving to all both warmth and light.

Let all things their Creator bless,
And worship God in humbleness,
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the
Son,
And praise the Spirit, Three in One!

The Word of God: St Matthew 11:25-30

25 At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

28 *'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'*

Reflection

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. (Matt 11:28)

Familiar words. Comforting words. We all need rest. I'm normally a good sleeper. But over the last few months I've definitely experienced a disruption in sleep patterns. And so I understand have many others. For some that has been caused by anxiety over the current situation, for others grief has played a part, for others trying to balance the demands of working from home and home-schooling without the support of the wider family network has created a great deal of stress, and for yet others an increase in the time we spend on our screens has been a major contributor. And there have been many practical suggestions made about how to make sure that we get the sleep we need.

However those words of Jesus that we have just heard are spoken in a different context with a different meaning. They are not about how we sleep but about how we live and work. The rest for your souls that Jesus promises is not a better mattress or a darkened room or a piece of soothing music, or even a holiday. Let me explain. These words of Jesus are placed by Matthew in a particular context. They come just before the controversy which arises between Jesus and the Pharisees over the keeping of the Sabbath.

In effect Jesus words are directed at those who are wearied by the demands made upon them under the complex laws of the scribes and the Pharisees. These laws have been put in place with the best of intentions. They were there to protect the people, to ensure they did not accidentally find themselves in breach of the traditions and customs of the people's faith. The Pharisees have spent all their lives learning these rules – they are the wise and the intelligent. Most people on the other hand have at times been struggling simply to survive and the additional burdens the religious law places upon them are just too much.

I must admit there have been times during this lockdown when I've looked at instructions that have come out from the central offices of the Church and literally felt my blood pressure rise. And I know I'm not alone. These e-mails have been issued with the best of intentions, I know but.....when you are struggling to put in place for your congregations, the simplest opportunities for worship and witness, anything that appears to restrict your actions further can seem like a burden too many to carry..

On the other hand a recent invitation to share in communion on-line with other ministers sent out by the Moderator of the General Assembly promised something very different and did not disappoint. Here was an opportunity to come to God in wonder and worship – like a child might do. And it offered true support, comfort and strength for the journey.

When we are carrying a heavy weight we might long for it to be taken away from us. And if that weight is guilt, or the pressures we place on ourselves, then the gift of forgiveness can offer us release. But other responsibilities can weigh just as heavily. When it comes to these other burdens, God does not promise that the load we are carrying will be

removed. Instead the invitation is to come to Jesus and learn from him how to carry it in a different way.

Traditionally, when farmers trained their beasts to the plough, they would yoke them together, an experienced one with a young one. The young one would then learn from the older one. Jesus invites us to share his yoke. And we are told his yoke is easy and his burden is light. It replaces the yoke that we often try and put on ourselves with the easier or kinder yoke that does not chafe. Jesus yoke is a new way of being in the world. It is not about always trying to live up to a certain set of rules or standards, imposed by ourselves or others. It is about being open to receive God's grace and going on to share that grace with the world.

The rest for our souls which Jesus promises is an active rest from that which wears us down. The work of building the kingdom of God still needs to be done. But through his Spirit, Jesus enables us to do that work in a way we can handle.

Pause for Thought

What are the burdens you are carrying today? What will they be in the coming weeks? How might the knowledge that you can share them with Jesus make a difference to the way you live your life?

Pointers for Prayer

- Those suffering from or bereaved by the corona virus
- The NHS, its staff in hospitals and GP practices as well as the other emergency services and volunteers
- The Government and Scottish Parliament and their advisers as they seek to guide us out of lockdown
- All those in education as they seek to reorganise schools for the safe return of children to classes, teachers and children as they begin their holidays
- All whose lives have been impacted by slavery in the past and today
- Family, friends and neighbours, those most affected by the lock-down and those finding it difficult to move forward
- Other people and situations who are in your hearts today.
- The Church that we might offer a faithful witness to Christ through this time

Praise 561 Blessed Assurance Jesus is mine

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine
O what a foretaste of glory divine
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of His Spirit, washed in His
blood

*This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day
long*

*This is my story, this is my song
Praising my Saviour all the day
long*

Perfect submission, perfect delight
Visions of rapture burst on my sight
Angels descending bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest
I in my Saviour am happy and blessed
Watching and waiting, looking above
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Notices

Challenge of the week

Look around and see if you can help to carry someone else's burden this week.

Next Sunday 9.45am Joint Worship (Service commences 10.00am)

If you would like to be added to the e-mail list for the link to Sunday's live worship gathering on zoom or join in on your landline please contact Rob e-mail sessionclerk@bartholchapel.org or Susanna Tel 851345 or e-mail smbichard@aol.com.

Pastoral Matters

Alison is on holiday next week. For urgent pastoral matters please contact Rev Dr Will Stalder Tel 806264

Care for the Community if you are aware of anyone in Tarves who needs help of any kind please contact Ruth 851887

Tuesday 11.00am Tarves Session Coffee Morning hosted by Susanna