

ORDER OF SERVICE – Worship at Home 27th September 2020

A short act of worship for use in people's homes, provided by Marilyn Britt.

Opening Prayer. Lord Jesus, help me to worship and praise you in spirit and truth and to know you as Messiah. Amen.

As we prepare for worship, let us listen to this song

Hymn STF 385 ¹ [To listen click here](#)

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| 1. Holy Spirit, we welcome You.
Holy Spirit, we welcome You.
Move among us with holy fire,
as we lay aside all earthly desires,
hands reach out and our hearts aspire.
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
Holy Spirit, we welcome You. | 2. Holy Spirit, we welcome You.
Holy Spirit, we welcome You.
Let the breeze of Your presence blow
that Your children here might truly know
how to move in the Spirit's flow.
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
Holy Spirit, we welcome You. |
| 3. Holy Spirit, we welcome You.
Holy Spirit, we welcome You.
Please accomplish in me today
some new work of loving grace, I pray;
unreservedly have Your way.
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
Holy Spirit, we welcome You. | |

Revelation 22: 17 says ² The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let those who hear say, "Come!" Let those who are thirsty come; and let all who wish take the free gift of the water of life.

Prayer. God how great it is to be able to worship you wherever I am; whether in a special building or safely in a room at home, I know you are available and listening to everything I say. It is so good to be able to speak to you whenever I wish and to know you are at my side guiding my way. I thank you for being a generous God; for providing all I need for my wellbeing. I praise you for the world you created and for the wonderful beauty of all things you placed in it.

I am sorry that by my actions I have not looked after it as I should. I am sorry I haven't always treated friends and neighbours kindly and considerately when circumstances make life difficult for them. I am sorry Lord and repent of all my wrongdoings. Lord, in your mercy, forgive me. Lead me by your light so that I may follow you. **Amen.**

Hymn - STF 59 ³ [To listen click here](#)

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| 1. Lord, the light of your love is shining,
In the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us,
Set us free by the truth You now bring us,
Shine on me, shine on me. | <i>Shine, Jesus, shine,
Fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze,
Set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
Flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth Your word,
Lord, and let there be light.</i> |
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2. Lord, I come to Your awesome presence,
From the shadows into Your radiance;
By the blood I may enter Your brightness,
Search me, try me, consume all my
darkness.
Shine on me, shine on me.
Shine, Jesus, shine,

3. As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness.
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story.
Shine on me, shine on me.
Shine, Jesus, shine,

Introduction to reading. Goodness me. I need a glass of water after singing. I wonder how many of you have a glass of water beside the bed? Do you wake up feeling thirsty and have some water before making a cup of tea or coffee to get going for the day? We are so well off now that we are able to turn on a tap and collect clean drinkable water whenever we want. In this world, this is not available everywhere and Water Aid, Christian Aid and other organisations are working hard to get clean water to everyone on other continents. Clean fresh water at the turn of a tap is not available to all.

Do you remember Moses leading the people out of Egypt into the Promised Land? They needed water. Here is some of the story from Exodus 17: 1-7.

Reading Exodus 17: 1-7 ²

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, travelling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²So they quarrelled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?" ³But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" ⁴Then Moses cried out to the Lord, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." ⁵The Lord answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and because they tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Talk

The Exodus was long and hard and the Israelites questioned whether the Lord was with them or not. They needed water. In a part of the world where water is in short supply, nothing was more serious to them than the absence of water. Moses is probably tired of listening to the complaints from the travellers who were anxiety-ridden and terribly afraid of perishing along with their livestock. Under stress (and when hungry and thirsty) we grumble, and sometimes get very cross, angry and see only a hopeless situation just like the Israelites. They seemed to be losing faith, not praying, and so Moses asked why they were testing God and Moses cried out to God for help. God listened and provided the answer. When Moses struck the rock twice, water poured out. The Israelites must have been amazed. Imagine their faces – it must have left a lasting impression on them and help them realise that God knows what we need for survival and provides. Clean water is vital for life.

The Bible gives many instances of famine and drought and we still face the same problems today. We think of cool refreshing rain making all things fresh, but in many countries, there are times of drought and then the monsoon season. We hear more frequently of typhoons and tsunamis and we see on our screens the devastation caused to homes, towns and cities. I remember the flooding in Britain in January. We are not immune. We recognise that a lack of, or the wrong kind of rainfall can be catastrophic for all farmers crops and livelihoods. We feel the results in the scarcity and cost of our foods in the supermarkets. We do talk about climate change but we seem slow to act.

Hymn StF 544 ⁴ [To listen click here](#)

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| 1. As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after You.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship You.
<i>You alone are my strength, my shield,
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.</i> | 2. I want You more than gold or silver,
Only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of my eye.
<i>You alone are my strength, my shield,</i> |
| 3. You're my Friend and You are my Brother,
even though You are a King.
I love You more than any other,
so much more than anything.
<i>You alone are my strength, my shield,</i> | |

Introduction to reading. Our next reading is taken from John 4: 4-26 ². You may remember the story of the Samaritan woman on her own at the well in the hot noonday sun collecting her water. Jesus was on his way from Judea to Galilee and had to go through Samaria and a town called Sychar where Jacob's well was. Jesus was hot and tired and sat down by the well. Let's hear the conversation between the Samaritan woman and Jesus. Read it as shown as a conversation.

Will you give me a drink? My friends have gone into town to buy food.

You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink? Jews do not associate with Samaritans.

If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.

Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?

Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them, will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.

Go, call your husband and come back.

I have no husband.

You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.

Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.

Woman, believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.

I know that Messiah" (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us. I, the one speaking to you - I am he.

Reflection

I wonder what the woman's reaction is to that conversation? She was at the well on the outside of the city along the main road on property which had been owned by Jacob. The well was not a spring-fed well, but a well into which water seeped from rain and dew and was very deep. Women went to draw water in the early morning and evening but this woman came at noon – in the heat of the day probably to avoid meeting others who knew her reputation. No respectable Jewish man would talk to a woman. She has realised that this man is different. He is a Jewish man talking to a Samaritan woman and seems to know a lot about her. She suggests to him that he is a prophet and is uncomfortable as he seems to know so much about her private life. She tries to divert the conversation – she doesn't want to talk about it. She tells him that her forefathers worshipped on the mountain but says the Jews say they must worship in Jerusalem. Jesus directs the conversation to the more important point: that the location of worship is not as important as the attitude of the worshippers. God is present everywhere and can be worshipped anywhere at any time.

But within that conversation Jesus is offering her a free gift. Living Water. Does she think this will make life easier for her? Not having to walk to the well in the heat for the water is not just for herself but her man and possibly children!

Living Water – what did Jesus mean? Living water is running or moving water as opposed to the still stagnant water in the well. In the Old Testament, many verses speak about thirsting after God as one thirsts for water. God is called the fountain of life and the spring of living water. Frequently, water is symbolic of God's blessing and spiritual refreshment. Longing for it indicates spiritual need. In saying he would bring living water that could forever quench a person's thirst for God, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah for only the Messiah could give this gift that satisfied the soul's desire. We recognise physical hunger and thirst and generally we satisfy our bodies when hungry and thirsty. But spiritual hunger – how do we feed our souls? By the Living Word, reading the Bible and knowing Jesus Christ can satisfy our hungry souls.

Living water does not make things easier for us. Christ came to change us on the inside and to empower us to deal with problems from God's perspective. But Jesus the Jew was talking to a Samaritan woman – the gospel is to be shared with everyone – there is no limit to God's love and grace.

Prayers for others

Thank you God that you are constantly available and the gift of the Holy Spirit is for all regardless of gender, race or status.

In a time of so many different important concerns, I pray for the leaders of the world, the governments, church, business and trade leaders that they may discern your wisdom and guidance for the people. I pray for those who are in poverty, being made redundant and homeless. I remember those who are sick, anxious and worried, mourning the loss of loved ones and concerned for the future. I pray for my family and friends as well as myself.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Creating and loving God, you provide for all our needs. We have been thinking about water which we see and use in many ways – the tossing sea, the flowing river, the torrent from the waterfall, babbling brooks and running rivers and the constant water from our taps. But I know of parts of the world without access to clean fresh water and sanitation. At this time of Covid 19, water is a must for cleanliness and to avoid dehydration in places of drought and famine. I pray for the work of Christian Aid, Water Aid, Action Aid, Wells for India and Toilet Twinning and other organisations that need support to make improvements.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

But Lord you also offer living water – let me accept this water so I may never be thirsty. I pray it will reach all people in every place, whatever their circumstances, whatever their past, so they can look to a future with hope in their hearts, fed by your living water and love. The world is a thirsty place; let your living waters flow from our hearts to a thirsty world.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Lord give me this water that I may never be thirsty. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn – StF 248 [To listen click here](#)

1. I heard the voice of Jesus say:

‘Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon my breast.’
I came to Jesus as I was,
so weary, worn and sad,
I found in him a resting place,
and he has made me glad.

2. I heard the voice of Jesus say

‘Behold I freely give
the living water; thirsty one
stoop down and drink and live.’
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

3. I heard the voice of Jesus say:

‘I am this dark world's Light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright.’
I looked to Jesus and I found
in him my star my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk,
till travelling days are done.

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

Blessing

May clean clear water reach all those who still don't know how to quench their thirst.

May living water continue to refresh and satisfy us in our dryness.

May the Holy Spirit show us how to share the good news of your living water.

May the blessing of God, be with us all as we share His gifts to us. **Amen.**

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