

A short act of worship for use in people's homes, provided by Mrs Rosie Greenhalgh.

**Call to worship** Psalm 111 vv 1 & 10

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,  
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practise it have a good understanding. His praise endures for ever.

**Hymn** Praise to the Lord (*Singing the Faith 88*)

[Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation! \(with Lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,<br/>the King of creation;<br/>O my soul, praise him, for he is thy<br/>health and salvation:<br/>Come ye who hear,<br/>Brothers and sisters draw near,<br/>Praise him in glad adoration.</p>       | <p>3. Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper<br/>thy work, and defend thee;<br/>Surely his goodness and mercy here<br/>daily attend thee;<br/>Ponder anew<br/>All the Almighty can do,<br/>He who with love doth befriend thee.</p> |
| <p>2. Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things<br/>so wondrously reigneth,<br/>Shelters thee under his wings, yea,<br/>so gently sustaineth:<br/>Hast thou not seen<br/>All that is needful hath been<br/>Granted in what he ordaineth?</p> | <p>4. Praise to the Lord! Oh let all that is in<br/>me adore Him!<br/>All that hath life and breath, come now<br/>with praises before Him!<br/>Let the Amen<br/>Sound from His people again,<br/>Gladly for aye we adore Him!</p> |

*Joachim Neander (1650-1680) Translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)*

**Prayer of Adoration, Thanksgiving & Confession** (*using Psalm 111*)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, I come in the company of the upright to praise and thank you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Full of honour and majesty is your work; your righteousness endures for ever.

I praise and thank you for the cycle of nature; for the lengthening days and the small signs of the Spring to come: the snowdrops in my garden and the birds appearing in pairs. Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them.

I praise and thank you for the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to show me how to live, and to die in my place. You sent redemption to your people; you have commanded your covenant for ever. Holy and awesome is your name.

I praise and thank you that all things come...to pass; for the vaccines being rolled out and the hope of more normal times to come when our lives will no longer be dominated by Covid. You have shown your people the power of your works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.

Forgive me, Lord, when I forget that all your precepts are trustworthy, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. Forgive me for the times when I forget that I belong to you, and am selfish or unkind. I thank you that you are gracious and merciful, forgiving your children in love. As far as the east is from the west, so far you remove our transgressions from us.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, I come in the company of the upright to praise and thank you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Your praise endures for ever. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer**

## Read Deuteronomy 18 vv 15-20

<https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/suchet/nivuk/Deut.18>

*The relevant verses are found between 2.14 – 3.15 minutes.*

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. For this is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, ‘Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire any more, or we will die.’

The Lord said to me: ‘What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.’

## Read Mark 1 vv 21-28 <https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/suchet/nivuk/Mark.1>

*The relevant verses are found between 2.38 – 3.37 minutes.*

They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God!’ ‘Be quiet!’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, ‘What is this? A new teaching – and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.’ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

## Reflection

In our first reading Moses told the Israelites that God would raise up a prophet like himself from among their number, and that God would put his own words into the prophet’s mouth. Through Moses, God says: “You must listen to him.” To be like Moses, the prophet would not only speak the words of the Lord, but also would be with the people, interceding for them and showing them how to live holy lives. In the time of Jesus, the Jews were still waiting for this prophet; people asked John the Baptist whether he was the Prophet, but he answered No (*John 1:21*).

Mark tells us at the very beginning of chapter 1 that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. In the first half of his gospel he writes of many events which lead towards that conclusion. And at the high point of the Transfiguration, Peter, James and John hear the voice of God saying of Jesus: This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him! (*Mark 8:7*). Jesus is greater than Moses, for God acknowledges him as his Son. Christians believe that Jesus is the Prophet spoken of by Moses, the one who not only told us everything God commanded him, but who is Immanuel, God with us, interceding for us and showing us how to live holy lives.

The Mark passage we are looking at today comes at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, and shows him being invited to speak in the synagogue at Capernaum. It’s interesting that Mark does not tell us what Jesus said; instead he focuses on the reaction of the people to what they were hearing. They were amazed, because Jesus taught with authority, and his teaching was not like that of other rabbis – it was new. Perhaps they felt they were hearing the word of the Lord.

They were also amazed that impure spirits had to obey Jesus. Whatever we think about demons, in the first century evil spirits were thought to come from Satan, and to fear righteousness. The impure spirit knows that Jesus comes from Nazareth, which emphasises his

humanity, but names him as the Holy One of God, revealing his divinity. Jesus' power over impure spirits shows that he can destroy the evil forces which oppress people, then and now. When we pray 'Deliver us from evil', we acknowledge God's power to do just that in our own day. Where does authority come from? Moses had no earthly authority among the Hebrews he led out of slavery in Egypt. In fact, they knew him to be a murderer, for they had seen him kill an Egyptian overseer. Yet God spoke through Moses and he became the great Lawgiver. Similarly, Jesus had no earthly authority. He had had no training; he was not an accredited rabbi. Yet God spoke through him and he led his people out of slavery to sin, giving them the Law of Love.

It may be helpful to think of Greta Thunberg, the Swedish girl who in 2018, at the age of 15, addressed the UN Climate Change Conference in Poland in such a way that the delegates sat up and listened. Here was someone speaking truth from the shoulder, someone not like the rest of the delegates. As we remember how quickly the world learned of Greta – who at 15 years old had little earthly authority – it may help us realise the impact Jesus had in Galilee.

Greta's campaigning has attracted strong support and also strong criticism. Jesus, too, faced both criticism and support in his ministry. His own family thought he was out of his mind (*Mark 3:21*); teachers of the law from Jerusalem thought him possessed by Satan (*Mark 3:22*); and the people of his home town, Nazareth, rejected him (*Mark 6:1-6*). But when Jesus' difficult teaching caused other disciples to desert him, Simon Peter told him: "You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." (*John 6:68-69*)

Authority – that quality which makes us sit up and listen – is not always a result of earthly education. Sometimes, as for Moses and Jesus, it comes direct from God. In the end, we listen to those who speak with spiritual authority because we feel we are hearing the authentic word of God, the words of eternal life. In the case of Jesus, we believe that he is the Holy One of God. Jesus the Good Shepherd tells us that his sheep follow him because they know his voice (*John 10:4*). Like Nipper, the dog in the HMV logo, we can listen for our Master's voice however it comes to us, whether through the Bible or through modern prophets, and hear God's word for us. God tells us to listen to Jesus his Son, but it's not enough simply to listen. Jesus said: Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (*Matt 7:24*) The winds of Covid are beating upon our houses at this time, and we may be depressed by the rain which seems to be falling in our lives. But whatever the world throws at us, our house will stand if it is built on the rock which is Christ.

Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and he rules over all. He is with us in this pandemic and he will not leave us to face it alone. Let's go into this new week determined to listen to him and to put his words into practice. Let's go into this new week full of hope, determined to love God, love our neighbour and love one another as Jesus has loved us. **Amen.**

Our next song reminds us who Jesus is and why we need to listen to him and act on his words.

**Hymn** You are the King of glory (*Songs of Fellowship 627*)<sup>2</sup>

[You Are The King Of Glory - YouTube](#)

You are the King of Glory,  
You are the Prince of Peace,  
You are the Lord of heav'n and earth,  
You're the Sun of righteousness.

Angels bow down before you,  
Worship and adore,  
For you have the words of eternal life,  
You are Jesus Christ the Lord.

Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Hosanna to the King of kings!  
Glory in the highest heaven,  
For Jesus the Messiah reigns.

*Mavis Ford*

## Prayer of Intercession

Holy God, I thank you for giving your divine authority to Jesus and for helping me to recognise his voice and hear your words for me today. Help me not only to listen, but to put his words into practice, so that my whole life may be built on the rock which is Christ.

I come before you to pray for your church and for your world. May your gospel message ring out to the world from our churches so that all might hear and respond to the voice of Jesus....

Lord, teach us to listen and then act: **help us practise what we preach.**

I pray for all doctors and carers trying to cope with this second wave of Covid-19.....

I pray for those suffering from coronavirus, at home and in hospital...

I pray your blessing on all who are bereaved...

I pray for those working in education and for parents juggling work and home schooling...

Lord, teach us to listen and then act: **help us practise what we preach.**

I pray for all in the UK who are struggling to make ends meet ...

Give wisdom, justice and mercy to our politicians as they consider the best ways to deal with Covid and with Brexit...

Lord, help me to remember neighbours across the world suffering natural disasters or conflict during this pandemic ...

Lord, teach us to listen and then act: **help us practise what we preach.**

I pray for my family and friends, that they may recognise their Master's voice ...

I pray for all the churches in our Kennet & Test Valley circuit and for its staff, asking a special blessing on Peter Bennett and Karen Frost for all they do to keep us together in Christ...

Lord, teach us to listen and then act: **help us practise what we preach.** In Jesus' name.

**Amen.**

**Hymn** Master, speak! Thy servant heareth (*Singing the Faith 666*)

[Master speak thy servant heareth \(By St Michael's Singers\) \(gospel hymn\) - YouTube](#)

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| 1. Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,<br>Waiting for Thy gracious word,<br>Longing for Thy voice that cheereth;<br>Master, let it now be heard.<br>I am listening, Lord, for thee:<br>What hast thou to say to me? | 3. Master, speak! Though least and lowest,<br>Let me not unheard depart;<br>Master, speak! For O thou knowest<br>All the yearning of my heart,<br>Knowest all its truest need:<br>Speak, and make me blest indeed. |
| 2. Speak to me by name, O Master,<br>Let me know it is to me;<br>Speak, that I may follow faster,<br>With a step more firm and free,<br>Where the Shepherd leads the flock,<br>In the shadow of the rock.           | 4. Master, speak: and make me ready,<br>When thy voice is truly heard,<br>With obedience glad and steady<br>Still to follow every word.<br>I am listening, Lord, for thee:<br>Master, speak! O speak to me!        |

*Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879)*

## Blessing

May we listen to our Lord Jesus Christ, hear his voice and put his words into practice this week. And the blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon us and all those we love, now and for ever. **Amen.**

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