

Dorset South and West Methodist Circuit Written Service
24th January 2021 – prepared by Student Deacon Janet Amey

CALL TO WORSHIP

Gracious God, guide of all who put their trust in you: grant us in all our doubts and uncertainties the grace to seek your will. That your Holy Spirit may save us from all false choices and that in your light we may see light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (William Bright 1824 - 1901)

Hymn: Be still

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here
Come bow before him now with reverence and fear
In him no sin is found we stand on holy ground
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around
He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned
How awesome is the sight our radiant king of light
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace
No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from him
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place

PRAYERS

Glorious God,
your holy Presence is here, your glory shines all around.
We gather in your name to worship and celebrate your presence in our lives.
In the morning sun – we feel your light on the world.
In the wind – we are guided by your Spirit. With holy fire, with splendour you are crowned.
We join with all creation in worship of you in faith.
In our lives we live in your presence, of love, of wisdom, of life.
Your power moves in all places, in our lives.
And in our hearts, we turn to you,
Glorious God – we adore you.
Amen

We bring our prayers of confession before God.
I invite you to take a moment to bring to mind the times, words and moments that burden your heart.

Faithful God,
We are called to be a people of love.
We bring before you the times when we have not acted in love.
The times that we have not cared for one another.
The words we have spoken that have caused harm.
The actions that we have chosen that have caused pain.
Refresh us, and renew us in you cleansing love, and forgive us.
In God we are assured of forgiveness and love.
Thanks be to God,
Amen

READING

Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea-- for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people."

And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

REFLECTION

As I write this, we have just entered tier 3 and many of the churches in the circuit are facing ceasing worship at least for the next month. Not a brilliant start to the new year we might say!

And there is this new strain of the virus, I am told it has longer proteins so it can spread a lot easier, and this is reflected in the increasing numbers of cases, and sadly deaths. Not the new year's joy we hoped for! It is so tempting for us to sigh and put life on hold for a bit - doing anything at the moment seems very complicated, and potentially dangerous.

It has been truly remarkable the ways we have found to worship, keep fellowship and chat with one another. We have learnt new skills and have been grateful to neighbours and friends. A pavement on one of my regular walks has suffered a bit through the heat and cold and cracks have begun forming in it. Over the summer I noticed that tiny pretty flowers grew in these cracks. They were perfect, they made me smile as I tried to think how they have grown, despite all the odds set against them, and how their presence symbolised faith and determination, or perhaps the beauty of nature? I have found, in the ways that we have continued to be a worshipping community, care for others and clung to our faith - we are like these flowers growing in the pavement.

In our reading today, we have a great deal presented to us in a few verses. We have John the Baptist arrested; Jesus would know the severity of this - perhaps thinking of the path leading to his death. We then have Jesus going to Galilee, saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." Jesus goes on to see Simon and Andrew, calls them to follow him and fish for people, finds James and John, they also follow him. There is a lot going on here in a few words. Each of these people were doing something. We have Simon and Andrew just fishing for their families, hoping to exchange in the market perhaps, trying to earn a living to survive. To just abandon their jobs and lives seems so odd. And we have James and John mending their nets, 'OK, Jesus we'll drop this and come with you'. Another strange response, with little apparent thought of indecision or concern of their families or those relying on them.

What is the author trying to tell us here? I am pretty sure Jesus would not expect us all of us to just drop all our responsibilities, aren't we called to follow him where we are? In our communities?

I think the clue to this is in the words of Jesus, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." Despite all the challenges of life, the time is now for us to respond to Christ. The life of John, his arrest and consequent death, the lives, families of Simon, Andrew, James, John and all the human care, worry and thoughts around these people, are happening, are the reality of life. And Jesus turns up, changing everything. Jesus turned up, saying yes I know you are busy, but come follow me.

I wonder whether that is a message we need to hear, yes there are a lot of things going on, but this is our time to follow Jesus. And how do we do this? We are given the answer in the words of Jesus - 'this is our time, repent and believe the good news.' Jesus doesn't want us to wait for a week, for a year, Jesus calls us now. Jesus didn't say to the fishermen, OK I'll come back another time more convenient... when you're not

mending your nets, when you're not trying to earn a living, when you've packed a lunch, when you're allowed back into church, when you're rested, wiser, fitter, more awake... when I am not worrying about John's arrest. Jesus came to where they were and they followed.

This is the same invitation for us. Where we are, Jesus comes to us. And just like the flowers I saw in the pavement, if we can't move to dug up soil, or a place where it's easier to grow - we will grow where we are! We are called to accept the invitation to follow Jesus and invite him into our hearts and lives. And we will find ways, to follow him, through phone calls, through prayer, through engaging with anything we can, through drinking the living water, for this is the good news!

Hymn: Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?

1. Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift or firm remain?

Refrain:

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
fastened to the rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*

2. Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?
While the surges rave and the wild winds blow,
shall the angry waves then your bark o'er flow?
(Refrain)

3. Will your eyes behold through the morning light
the city of gold and the harbour bright?
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,
when life's storms are past forever more?
(Refrain)

Prayers for the world

Below are some sentences, you are invited to pause after each one and add your own thoughts and prayers, before continuing.

We pray for the situations and places that are on our hearts.

For the lost,

For the hurt,

For the bereaved,

For the sick,

For the hungry,

For the broken,

May God's love surround those that we pray for and bring comfort and peace.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen

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: Be thou my vision

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art -
Thou my best thought, by day or by night;
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father; thine own may I be,
Thou in me dwelling and I one with thee.

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and thou only first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

BLESSING

May we live with faith, love and peace in our hearts, as we go in God's presence.
May the blessing of God the Father,
Son and Holy Spirit be with us
today and always.
Amen