

Sunday 17 October 2021

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Loving God I know that you are with me in every moment of my life but as I set this special time aside, I pray that I might feel your presence and that through the power of your Holy Spirit, I may find myself in the presence of others who worship you this day. [*Pause*].

I pray that you would make me alive to the Holy Spirit, that in the stillness I might hear your Word and find myself drawn in tune with the melody of your grace.

Amen.

Hymn: May the Glory of the Lord Fill His Temple (StF 31)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjpVwl-Ecfs>

May the glory of the Lord fill his temple
as we gather in this place,
may the glory of the Lord touch his people
as we meet here by his grace.

Weak though we are, you lift us
from sin,
where our hearts wait you long to
come in,
so Lord we pray let your healing
begin --
send us your Spirit today!

May the glory of the Lord fill his
temple,
and may we meet him face to face.

Jonathan Nowell

Let us pray together

Gracious God, I praise you for who you are. For you are the Lord, the giver and sustainer of life whose nature is love. I thank you that even when I rebel against you, your unquenchable love seeks me out. I thank you that in Jesus, you made the first move and have rescued me. I pray that as your Word ministers to me, that I might so open my heart to your grace that it might fill me, transform me and overflow into all my relationships and dealings with the world. Amen.

Today's Reading from the Old Testament

Hebrews 5: 1-10

¹Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; ³and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. ⁴And one does not presume to take this honour, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

‘You are my Son,
today I have begotten you’;

⁶as he says also in another place, ‘You are a priest for ever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.’

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey

him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Today's Gospel Reading:

Mark 10: 35-45

³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, ‘Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.’ ³⁶And he said to them, ‘What is it you want me to do for you?’ ³⁷And they said to him, ‘Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.’ ³⁸But Jesus said to them, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’ ³⁹They replied, ‘We are able.’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.’

⁴¹When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴²So Jesus called them and said to them, ‘You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be

your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

Time to Reflect

Social anthropology reveals that in every culture in every time and in every place, human beings create religion. Where there is religion, there are priests; intermediaries who seek to "help" the masses to navigate divine forces that must be placated if they are to prosper. Israel had its own aristocratic line of priests but was frequently let down and disappointed by them. Always aloof, they were frequently corrupt.

In the chapters leading up to our Gospel reading this morning, Jesus has been identified (privately for now) as the Messiah, the Christ, the anointed king in waiting. As in every time and place, James and John want to be the intermediaries. If Jesus is going to be King, they want in on it.

How different then the message given to us in Hebrews! God has decided that Jesus is indeed the anointed King, but *this* king is also to have the dual role of Priest-King, modelled on Melchizedek (see Psalm 110 and Genesis 14). King Jesus does not need an intermediary for he is also High

Priest forever because, far from being aloof, this Priest-King has also shared our life of joy and of suffering. In Jesus, we need no intermediaries but can approach the throne of grace with confidence (Heb 10:19) and with prayer.

We get to share in this nature through our baptism. As the Body of Christ, we are a "Priestly Community" but, like James and John, we need Jesus to reshape our all too human, religious instincts and replace them with God's model of kingship and servanthood.

Grace and peace.

A time of prayer

Loving God,

You call us to share in your baptism and in your work. In response, I offer these prayers for the world that you made and that you love.

In a world where wealth and power are hoarded by a few, I pray that there would be an equal sharing of the vaccines and the necessities of life.

In a world where vested interests imprison us and rob others of the life you offer, so I pray that your people, networked through prayer, might rise up to call out injustice wherever we see it.

In a world confronted with climate emergency, I pray that you would make us enemies of apathy and agents of your Kingdom.

Finally because I know that you love me too, I take time to lay before you those things that are close to my heart..... {pause to reflect}

I ask these prayers in the only way that I can; in the power of your Holy Spirit and in the name, grace and character of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *Our Father*

Hymn: "One Human Family God Has Made" (StF 687)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnBjppHddkl>

One human family God has made,
and all for each to care.
One world, to be the home of all,
with all its wealth to share.
One Christ, to manifest on earth
love's ultimate design.
One Church to know the mystery
of broken bread and wine.

One race, one world -- yet torn
apart,
we spurn the way of love.
But still ahead, the Christ leads on
and calls his Church to move
from love of power to power of
love,
to give the word to all --
to trust the love that conquered
death,

outside the city wall.

And are we brave enough to join
with that great company --
the cost not less than all we have
and are or hope to be --
the bitter cup of human sin
to drink with him who died,
and take his love outside the wall
to all the crucified?

Claim him who claims us for his
own,
to share his pain and grief,
to bear the scars that stamp us his --
the hallmark of belief.
As partners of the living Christ,
who risk the path he trod,
with wondering love we find we
share
the timeless joy of God.

Rosemary Wakelin (b. 1932)

A prayer of blessing

God to enfold you,
Christ to uphold you,
Spirit to keep you in heaven's sight ;
so may God grace you,
heal and embrace you,
lead you through darkness
into the light.

John L. Bell (b. 1949)

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