

Worship at Home service Sunday 5th November 2023 with Revd Ian Forsyth

A call to worship:

Jesus is the one we follow. He came to serve, he humbled himself on a cross, and he was and is exalted. Jesus is our pattern and example; He is our teacher and we are all students. Let us worship him. **Amen**

StF 317 At the name of Jesus.

At the name of Jesus
ev'ry knee shall bow,
ev'ry tongue confess him
King of glory now;
'tis the Father's pleasure
we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning
was the mighty Word.

Humbled for a season
to receive a name
from the lips of sinners
unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it
spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious
when from death he passed:

Bore it up triumphant
with its human light,
thro' all ranks of creatures
to the central height,
to the throne of Godhead,
to the Father's breast,
filled it with the glory
of that perfect rest.

https://www.google.com/search?q=at+the+name+of+jesus+youtube&sa=X&sca_esv=563011930&rlz=1C1ONGR_en-GBGB1058GB1058&tbm=vid&chips=oq:at+the+name+of+jesus;rq:at+the+name+of+jesus+youtube;ss:youtube,youtube,BeKONpDADBo%3D&ved=2ahUKEwjKnPmMyZWBAXgT0EAHRG4DmQQmqqgFKAV6BAGCEAw&biw=1366&bih=651&dpr=1#fpstat e=ive&vld=cid:a620e72b,vid:gV9SlnravYg

Bible readings

Micah 3.5-12;
Psalm 43; 1
Thessalonians 2.9-13;
Matthew 23.1-12

Prayers of thanksgiving

Father, we thank you that we can always trust in you, for you make provision for our faults and failings, and send us all the help and encouragement we need.

Thank you for Jesus and his earthly life among his disciples, from that we learn so much.

Thank you that we can always have confidence in Jesus, leaning on his teaching and promises.

We praise you for who he is, and for who we are and will become in your plans for us. Lead us onward, heavenly Father. **Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

Today, we pray for all who feel isolated. In their uniqueness, they may also feel alone. This is most of us, some of the time, but it is some of us most of the time. God of encounter, may we all turn with love and interest towards those who have been isolated. God of encounter:

hear our prayer. 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.**

Time to reflect:

Imagine going into a shop to buy equipment for a camping holiday and the expert assistant guides you to get all the right kit including tent, sleeping bag, walking boots, socks, the camping stove and let's not forget the huge haversack to put all the equipment in. On leaving the shop you ask the expert where they go on holidays? The reply is, 'I go to the beach'. On leaving, you question yourself about buying a heavy load of mountain walking equipment, following advice from someone who never goes walking in the mountains.

Jesus is speaking to all his disciples and pointing out the Jewish Legal experts of the Law, who are talking about Moses, but do not practice what they preach. They were saying do this and that and telling people how to live. The result is they were creating a heavy load for others, but not even contemplating of following the Laws themselves.

Jesus says, the teachers and pharisees got it wrong, and in the Bible, he teaches us three straight forward truths about how to follow Jesus.

In the verses we read today, the teachers of the law got three things wrong according to Matthew's Gospel, their practice, their place, and their position.

V 1 – 4 Wrong practice, Jesus says to his disciples you must follow what they say, but do not do what they do, as they do not practice what they preach. Jesus says they are not even willing to lift a finger.

V 5 – 6 Wrong place, the teachers of the Law wanted to be honoured and be seen at the banquets and the synagogue. It was all for show, their need to be honoured in public and they were showing signs of piety.

V 7 Wrong position, the teachers of the Law wanted their status to be recognised in the marketplace. Having told his disciples what was wrong with the teachers of the Law, Jesus taught three truths, unity, having one teacher and his followers being humble.

V8 – 10 Jesus makes it clear we are all have one Faith, and we are equal, being a family where we have brothers and sisters in Christ.

Paul's letter to the Ephesians 4 v 4 – 6 reminds us today there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

V 11 Jesus helps us see that we are all servants of one another, so we are all the greatest.

John 12 v 26 says 'Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me'.

V 12 Finally Jesus taught about being humble, this helps us see it is the Lord who will exalt us.

In the Bible it says, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight' (Proverbs3 5-6).

Matthew's Gospel is not saying to follow the Mosaic Law was wrong, in fact, it is good, and God given.

What matters the most, is at the heart of the message was loving God, and your neighbour. Finally, Jesus goes to the cross and he carries it for the whole of humanity, the greatest load of all our sins, so we may walk with him today. Here is an invitation from Matthews Gospel Jesus says 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light' (Matthew 11 28-30).

To conclude Jesus calls us to good practice, good living in a good place.

StF 416 – There's a wideness in God's mercy.

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in Heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of our mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

But we make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own.

There is plentiful redemption
In the blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members
In the sorrows of the Head.

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

A sending out prayer:

Go into the world with Jesus as your inspiration, guide and friend. Be generous, without always counting the cost. Give of your time, without always seeking a reward. Share your love with a needy world. Make peace and strive for justice. And do it all in Jesus' name. **Amen.**