

Worship@Home 8th September 2024 with Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Holy God, creator, sustainer, and redeemer of all things. You sent your only Son into the world to show us the ways of your love and you sent your Holy Spirit to dwell within us. Open our hearts and minds to your living Word and the boundless love that flows from your divine presence. May your grace transform us so that we might grow together as your holy people and proclaim your glorious Kingdom. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

STF 255 – The Kingdom of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vavK1736mQM>

The kingdom of God is justice and joy,
for Jesus restores what sin would destroy.
God's power and glory in Jesus we know;
and here and hereafter the kingdom shall grow.

The kingdom of God is mercy and grace;
the captives are freed, the sinners find place,
the outcast are welcomed God's banquet to share,
and hope is awakened in place of despair.

The kingdom of God is challenge and choice,
believe the good news, repent and rejoice!
His love for us sinners brought Christ to his cross:
our crisis of judgement for gain or for loss.

God's kingdom is come, the gift and the goal;
in Jesus begun, in heaven made whole;
The heirs of the kingdom shall answer his call,
and all things cry glory to God all in all.

By Bryn Rees (1911-1983) Words © Alexander Scott. One Licence Song Number: 28013

Please read: Mark 7: 24-37 <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=208998401>

Time to Reflect

In the reading that we have today we see Jesus' interaction with two people who faced prejudice and discrimination. The first is a Gentile woman of Syrophenician origin whose daughter is said to be troubled by an unclean spirit. The second is a deaf man whose disability means that he is unable to communicate with those around him.

Jesus response to the gentile woman would seem to be harsh. Commentators on the text have differing interpretations on what Jesus is doing here. On the face of it, Jesus' response appears to echo what he is recorded as saying Matthew 15:24: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Yet the woman's faithful and tenacious response reveals a deeper truth about the Kingdom of God; that God's love and restorative power is for all people and crosses all social, cultural, and ethnic boundaries. From this encounter with Jesus, the gentile woman not only receives the healing that she requests for her daughter but she also teaches about the inclusive love of God for all people.

In the second encounter, Jesus heals a deaf man with a speech impediment, whilst inside gentile territory. The man's healing enables him to hear and communicate with those around him, which empowers him within his community. Once again, a healing enables a restoration to someone who existed on the margins of his society who would have been inequitably treated as an outsider.

At the beginning of this new connexional year this passage on Jesus' healings reminds us that God's Kingdom is for all people and especially for the stranger, the outsider, and those on the margins of society.

Jesus' ministry of liberation and restoration is a sign that God loves and cares for every human being made in the divine image and likeness. At a time when our society is afflicted by extreme nationalism, racism, and xenophobia, this passage reminds us of our calling to share the inclusive love of God and resist harmful attitudes and action that would oppress and disregard human dignity and worth. The passage also reminds us of our reliance on the grace of God for our spiritual healing and restoration; grace that is offered to us freely and unconditionally as a divine gift. This is a gift made available to all people through Jesus, who died and was raised for the redemption of the whole of creation.

So let us proclaim and celebrate God's inclusive love and witness to it in our words and our actions.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:
The needs of the world...
The Church and its calling...
Loved ones going through difficult times...
For peace, justice, and reconciliation...
In Jesus name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven...

StF 251 – Jesus Christ is waiting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wqgzlel4-5E>

Jesus Christ is waiting, Waiting in the streets;
No one is his neighbour, All alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.
Make me, friend or stranger, Fit to wait on you

Jesus Christ is raging, Raging in the streets,
Where injustice spirals. And real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too.
In the Kingdom's causes. Let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing, Healing in the streets;
Curing those who suffer, Touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too.
Let my care be active, Healing just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing, Dancing in the streets,
Where each sign of hatred. He, with love, defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I should triumph too.
On suspicion's graveyard. Let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling, Calling in the streets,
"Who will join my journey? I will guide their feet."
Listen, Lord Jesus, Let my fears be few.

Walk one step before me; I will follow you.

By John Bell (b.1949) and Graham Maule (b.1958).

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Final Prayer

God, Protector of the widow, the orphan and the stranger –
in a world where many know despair,
you raised your Son Jesus to give hope for humanity and renewal to the
earth.

Continue to strengthen and unify your Church
in its struggles against the forces of death in the world, where violence
against creation and humanity obscures the hope of the new life you offer.
This we pray in the name of the Risen Lord, in the power of His Spirit.
Amen.

Resources for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and throughout the year

(2011), <http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc->

*[main/documents/p2/2010/WOP2011eng.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p2/2010/WOP2011eng.pdf) jointly prepared and published by The Pontifical
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