

## **Worship at Home from Local Preacher Jenny Brooks for the 15<sup>th</sup> January 2023**



### **Call to Worship**

Lord, help us to come with open hearts and minds,  
eager to spend time with you,  
longing to learn more about you,  
wanting to take more of who you are  
out to the world –  
until everyone has come to you.

### **Hymn 255 Singing the Faith Tune Tetherdown, or Paderborn (574)**

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 prisoners are freed,  
The sinners find place,  
The outcast are welcomed  
Gods 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.  
(Bryn Rees)

### **Bible Reading**

John chapter 1 verses 29-42

### **Prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness** □

Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us.  
Father God, you invited us to come and see,  
And we turned the other way.  
You offered us a warm welcome,  
And we did not extend that welcome to others.  
You invited us to tell others about you,  
And we turned away and chose not to.  
You invited us to come and eat,  
And we chose to eat elsewhere.  
You came as a sacrificial lamb,  
And we allowed you to be crucified.  
Lamb of God,  
who takes away the sins of the world:  
have mercy on us

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,  
we have been washed clean by your blood,  
by your sacrifice upon the cross.

We have been made whole in you  
and you invite us to walk with you fresh each day.

Thank you for wiping the slate clean.

**Amen.**

## **Reflection**

Last week's lectionary readings gave us Matthew's telling of the story of Jesus' baptism. This week we have the perspective of John's gospel. Like much of John's gospel, these verses are about meaning, rather than narrative. In verse 29 John the Baptist sees Jesus in the street and proclaims him "the Lamb of God". For John and his contemporaries, this would have had deep religious meaning; every morning and evening a lamb was sacrificed in the Temple for the sins of the people. This ritual began after the escape from slavery in Egypt, when the blood of a lamb smeared on every door protected the Israelites from the Angel of Death. The writer of Isaiah, a book that both Jesus and John the Baptist would have been familiar with, in chapter 53 verse 7, uses the image of a "lamb to the slaughter", someone who is seen as a substitute for the death of others. Throughout his telling of the story of Jesus, the writer of John's gospel is attempting to help his readers better understand the events concerning Jesus, are a new and better Exodus story. Just as God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, so God is now bringing all people into a better relationship with himself. God's lamb (Jesus) will take away the sin of the world – everyone, all of us, for all time, if we want that.

In verses 35-42 John the Baptist again sees Jesus and tells of his disciples that Jesus is "God's lamb". The disciples then follow Jesus and ask where he is staying. Jesus' reply is both practical and profound – "come and see". This is an invitation to talk at length, not just a passing exchange in the street. It is also implying that there are actions to be seen, not just talking. All of this prompts one of the men to go and find his brother and tell him, "I have found the Messiah" and then bring him to Jesus. Thus Andrew brings Peter to Jesus. Sharing the good news is as simple as this, "come and see" .. "Go and tell". Sometimes we feel it must be complicated, or difficult to tell others about Jesus. Maybe it isn't. Our blocks to sharing the gospel will be different, but not insurmountable. The Spirit of God will guide and support us.



## Hymn 462 Singing the Faith

Come with me, come wander, come welcome the world  
where strangers might smile or stones might be hurled;  
come leave what you cling to, lay down what you clutch  
and find, with hands empty, that hearts can hold much.

*Chorus:*

*Sing hey for the carpenter leaving his tools! Sing hey for the Pharisees  
leaving their rules! Sing hey for the fishermen leaving their nets! Sing hey  
for the people who leave their regrets.*

Come walk in my company, come sleep by my side,  
come savour a lifestyle with nothing to hide; come sit at my table and eat  
with my friends, discovering that love which the world never ends.

*Chorus*

Come share in my laughter, come close to my fears,  
come find yourself washed with the kiss of my tears;  
come stand close at hand while I suffer and die  
and find in three days I never will lie.

*Chorus*

Come leave your possessions, come share out your treasure,  
come give and receive without method or measure;  
come loose every bond that's resisting the Spirit,  
enabling the earth to be yours to inherit.

*Chorus*

John Bell and Graham Maule