

2022 – 3RD APRIL – WORSHIP AT HOME – LENT FIVE

Dear friends,

Coming well into Spring now. May the hope of this season lead the world into peace and may we be able to put things back together again. Lives have been shattered and will never be the same again for so many people – all we can do is whatever little we can to add to the humanitarian works that go on. We need to be thankful for all that we have in our lives and serve others wherever and however we can to help them in their need.

Every blessing to you all, *Margaret*.

Call to worship: Rejoice! God has done great things.

Shout with joy for his goodness.

Come and praise him for all that he is doing.

With all our hearts we come to worship you.

With all our minds we offer you our praise.

With our whole being we honour you.

May all that we do, all that we say,

all that we think and all that we feel,

bring glory to you, our Creator and Redeemer.

Lord, guide us as we press on towards the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

May we be single-minded in pressing ahead.

May we be strong in persevering

and may we always be encouraged by you and your love. **Amen.**

The words to ‘New every morning is the love’ written by John Keble [1792-1866] Singing the Faith 137

1 New every morning is the love our waking and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life, and power, and thought.

2 New mercies each returning day hover around us while we pray;
new perils past, new sins forgiven,
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

3 If on our daily course our mind be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

4 Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be, as more of heaven in
each we see;
some softening gleam of love and prayer,
shall dawn on every cross and care.

5 The trivial round, the common task, will furnish all we ought to ask;
room to deny ourselves, a road to bring us daily nearer God.

6 Prepare us, Lord, in your dear love for perfect rest with you above;
and help us, this and every day,
to live more nearly as we pray.

Prayers and Lord's Prayer:

Creator God, loving Saviour, living Spirit,

We celebrate your generosity in receiving all that we would give you.

We rejoice in your generosity as you pour out your blessing on all that you have made.

We commit ourselves to reflecting your generosity in our lives, by giving the best of all that we have and are wherever there is need. **Amen.**

Dear Lord, we are sorry for times when we have judged the actions of others without thinking about why they acted as they did.

We are sorry for times when we were so focused on our personal agenda that we failed to see that others have agendas too.

We are sorry for times when we have spoken out without thinking of the impact our words will have on others.

Anoint us with your love, O Lord, that we may be forgiven. We pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Ever-giving God, we sometimes close our hearts to you and to others, but your heart is always open, pouring out your grace and love, filling our lives with the fragrance of forgiveness and friendship, wiping away our fears and regrets, and receiving the thanks we would offer you.

May the trickle of our praise become a torrent, and may the whole world be filled with your truth.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

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.**

Philippians 3: 4b-14:

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in death, and so, somehow, attaining in the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead. I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

John 12: 1-8:

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was amongst those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected. 'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.'

He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to whatever was put into it.

'Leave her alone,' Jesus replied. 'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.'

Comment:

Here John tells us that it is only six days to the Passover, the time of sacrificing the sacrificial lamb. All male Jews who lived near enough were expected to go to Jerusalem for the Passover. The city would have been crowded so the outskirts in places such as Bethany were counted as part of the outer limits, and so could accommodate pilgrims. Even though he had been condemned by Caiaphas and 'outlawed' by the Pharisees, Jesus still continued towards Jerusalem, knowing it was at great cost to his life. He stayed in Lazarus' house – the Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead – the Lazarus who now sat with him at the table. The sisters, Mary and Martha, loved Jesus. Martha served as best she knew how by looking after his need for food and comfort. People like her made Jesus' ministry possible. Mary was more impetuous and certainly not afraid of showing her love for Jesus. She came into the room and gave him the most precious thing she had – a pound of very expensive perfumed oil – pure nard. She poured this over Jesus' feet, not presuming to anoint his head.

The Messiah is also known as the Anointed One so this act of Mary's had great significance. No doubt, Mary then scandalised those present when she wiped Jesus' feet with her loose

hair as in Palestine no self-respecting woman would dream of appearing in public with her hair loose [it proclaimed her to be a 'loose woman'!] However, Jesus accepts her action not only as a sign of her love but also as a preparation for his burial. Jesus is in no doubt that his time is now limited, but love makes the task ahead possible. Pain can be borne as long as we know that we are not totally on our own. The extravagance of love can enrich both giver and receiver.

We are told that the house was filled with the fragrance – a detail that is obvious – perhaps [as Susan Sayers, writer, and priest writes] John wanted us to know that the whole Church would be filled with the memory of this act.

Judas then costs Mary's act of love. What a thing to do! One can never measure love by money. Susan Sayers again: 'Here is a hint that the women understood Jesus better than some of the apostles.'

From David Adam [Sermon Illustrations]: A nurse in hospital described how humans have a great capacity for accepting what is happening to them – and for enduring great pain, as long as they have loved ones about them and also other people who really care. Pain can be borne as long as we are not alone. We need to know in our troubles that we are still loved and cared for. Worse than pain is the feeling of separation from loved ones, or a feeling that we are no longer wanted.

When many were beginning to go against Jesus – including Judas – it is good to see the expression of love and affection that was shown Jesus from that whole household at Bethany.

Prayers:

Let us pray for all who serve their neighbours. We remember those who put their lives at risk in providing emergency services – ambulance, paramedics, fire brigade, police, coastguard and others. Uphold and strengthen them, loving Lord.

Let us pray for all who serve their neighbour whether they be next door or a refugee fleeing war, offering safety and care. Let us pray for all those who are so often taken for granted – perhaps working in shops, cafes and restaurants, ensuring good living for others. May they know they are honoured and valued, generous Lord.

Let us pray for all who serve their neighbours, remembering those who travel overseas to work for aid agencies and charities. Give them wisdom and compassion, gracious God.

Let us pray for all who serve their neighbours – we remember those you call to serve you in your all-encompassing Church, Lord, be they ordained or lay, aiming to work for you and your way in all things. May they be sustained by your unending love, loving and gracious Lord.

Hear our prayers, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The words to 'beneath the cross' written by Keith Getty [b. 1974] and Kristyn Getty [b. 1980] StF 442

1 Beneath the cross of Jesus I find a place to stand,
and wonder at such mercy that calls me as I am.
For hands that should discard me, hold wounds which tell me: 'Come'.
Beneath the cross of Jesus, my unworthy soul is won.

2 Beneath the cross of Jesus his family is my own;
once strangers chasing selfish dreams, now one through grace alone.
How could I now dishonour the ones that you have loved?
Beneath the cross of Jesus are the children called by God.

3 Beneath the cross of Jesus, the path before the crown,
we follow in his footsteps where promised hope is found.
How great the joy before us – to be his perfect bride.
Beneath the cross of Jesus we will gladly live our lives.

Closing Prayer:

Go and worship God in the world through your prayers, through your words, through your actions, and through your living.

And know that he receives your love with joy.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and for evermore. **Amen.**