

**2022 30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER WORSHIP AT HOME – [also incorporating All Saints Day]**

Dear friends,

So here we are at the end of October, and so this week, whilst we look at the lectionary where we find the story of Zacchaeus, we also bear in mind that on 1<sup>st</sup> November it is All Saints' Day and so the offering this week will end with that. Every blessing, Margaret

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**Call to worship:** Faithful God, we come to you to lay down our burdens – to rest in your presence -to receive your love – to discern your priorities – to pray for those on our minds, and to draw closer to your heart, which breaks with all who suffer and rejoices with all who are at peace. **Amen.**

Loving God, you welcome us and delight in drawing people to your table, seeking and saving those who have isolated themselves through their actions or words.

We pray for one another that we too would be a people of welcome – opening our hearts to those longing to be accepted. **Amen.**

**The words to 'Sing of the Lord's goodness' written by Ernest Sands [b.1949] Singing the faith 65**

1 Sing of the Lord's goodness, father of all wisdom,  
come to him and bless his name.

mercy he has shown us, his love is for ever,  
faithful to the end of days.

*Come then, all you nations, sing of your Lord's goodness, melodies of praise and thanks to God.  
Ring out the Lord's glory, praise him with your music, worship and bless his name.*

2 Power he has wielded, honour is his garment,  
risen from the snares of death.

His word he has spoken, one bread he has broken,  
new life he now gives to all. *Come.....*

3 Courage in our darkness, comfort in our sorrow,  
Spirit of our God most high;  
solace for the weary, pardon for the sinner,  
splendour of the living God. *Come.....*

4 Praise him with your singing, praise him with the trumpet,  
praise God with the lute and the harp;  
praise him with the cymbals, praise him with your dancing,  
praise God till the end of days. *Come.....*

**Prayers:**

All-forgiving, all-loving God, we worship you today.

We acknowledge your greatness, confessing that we cannot understand your ways – but we know that they are wonderful.

We bring you all our praise, joining our voices with your children around the world, lifting our hearts and faces to you.

You, God of our lives, our hearts, our world, we bless your name today. **Amen**

Forgive us, Lord, when we are slow to see opportunities for change in our lives and in the lives of others. May we never turn away those whom you would welcome, nor turn aside from your welcome for us- but may we grow in faith and trust and generosity, walking ever more closely towards Jesus, our friend, and our guide. **Amen.**

The God who called us, calls us still: cleansing our hearts and renewing our minds.

We delight in knowing that we are forgiven – that we can turn away from wrongdoing and that we can start afresh today.

In God's great love, we choose to live differently. For Jesus' sake, **Amen.**

Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come and 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.**

### **Luke 19: 1-10 [NIV]:**

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him: "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter: "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord: "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him: "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."

### **Comment**

Jesus was passing through Jericho which is a town at a strategic crossing of the River Jordan. An oasis in the desert, it has palm forests and balsam trees and, apparently, the fragrance from both the balsam and the rose gardens can be detected for miles around. Jericho has a spring supplying fresh water all the time and there has been a city on this site for 10,000 years, making it one of the oldest cities in the world. It is a wealthy city. It is situated about 400 meters below sea level – so it is the lowest city in the world, and not just geographically for in Jesus' time Jericho was decadent. This was where Zaccheus lived and worked as a tax collector and, it being a rich city, he did very well financially, especially as he was a chief collector and so made more money than the others. He was well known in Jericho – a big income and a big house, but not a physically big man. He was also a traitor to his country, working for the Romans. Not surprisingly, Zacchaeus was not popular – indeed he was held in very low esteem.

However, Zacchaeus had heard that Jesus was passing through and he wanted to see him. He had heard that Jesus was a friend of tax-collectors and sinners, and he needed a friend! He really wanted to see Jesus – bit so did everyone else and the crowd was dense. Zacchaeus, being so short, couldn't see a thing – and there was no way anyone was going to let *him* through. Not to be put off, Zacchaeus nipped on ahead and climbed a tree where he could peer through the leaves. Jesus saw him and said: 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' The crowd were not pleased – why should Jesus mix with such a sinner, the lowest of the low?

David Adam wrote: "One day some would realise that Jesus descended into the depths to lift us up. He came to the lowest to raise them to the heights. Jesus comes to sinners exactly where they are; not where they ought to be or want to be, but where they are. So he came to Zacchaeus and he called him by his name! Jesus reached out to the lonely, money-grabbing, no-hoper Zacchaeus."

Zacchaeus became a changed man, pledging to give half of everything he owned to the poor, and to repay anyone he had defrauded four times over. He had changed and wanted to show everyone.

Jesus came then – and comes now – to seek and save the lost. Have we let Jesus enter into the depths of our lives to make friends with us? He comes to us to lift us up – he is the Good Shepherd, calling us by name [as he called Zacchaeus]. He seeks for all who are lost.

### **Prayers:**

Lord, we pray for all who seek out:

the vulnerable in our world, and offer them protection;

the elderly hidden away at home, and save them from loneliness;

the abandoned, and save them from suffering;

the mentally distressed, and help them find peace and stability;

the poor, and save them from starvation;

your rejected people, and save us from forgetting them.

We pray in the name of Jesus, who ate with Zacchaeus, and changed his life. **Amen**

Lord, there are things I want to change in my life, but I don't know how – my priorities, my busy-ness, my need to have, and to be in charge.

Where I am anxious, make me adventurous – where I am driven, help me to rest – where responsibilities overwhelm me, help me to be realistic – where my quiet time has slipped away, help me to make space for you, so that when the demands of each day come knocking at the door, I may welcome them with a sense of peace, not resentment or fear.

Help me to change today, Lord. **Amen.**

We thank you, Lord Jesus, for being with us today, and every day, in our noisy, busy lives.

We pray that we may hear you calling our names and that we may make the effort to see your face in the crowd. **Amen.**

### **FOR ALL SAINTS DAY**

#### **Ephesians 1: 11-23: [The Message]:**

It is in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for – long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living – part of the overall purpose he is working out in everything and everyone.

It is in Christ that you, once you heard the truth and believed it [this message of your salvation], found yourselves home free – signed, sealed, and delivered by the Holy Spirit. This signet from God is the first instalment of what is coming – a reminder that we will get everything that God has planned for us, a praising and glorious life.

That is why, when I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the followers of Jesus, I couldn't stop thanking God for you – every time I prayed, I'd think of you and give thanks. But I do more than thank. I ask – ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory – to make you intelligent and discerning in knowing him personally, your eyes focused and clear, so that you can see exactly what he is calling to do, grasp the intensity of this glorious way of life he has for his followers. Oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him – endless energy, boundless strength! All this energy issues from Christ: God raised him from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe – everything from galaxies to governments – no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being but *forever*. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the centre of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts – by which he fills everything with his presence.

**Comment:**

At this time of year – from All Saints Day to the Sunday before Advent when we celebrate Christ the King, we are asked to rejoice that we are part of God’s kingdom, and not only us but the whole Church in heaven and on earth. We are part of the communion of saints. We are in communion with the Church Triumphant in heaven because we are all in the heart of God. We are called to be saints – that is, to belong to God, to witness to him, and to help to bring in his kingdom.

When Paul wrote this letter, he addressed it to ‘the saints in Ephesus’. In the same way he addressed his letter to the Corinthians, ‘to those called to be saints’. In the same way, Paul would have addressed us as the saints in wherever we are based. This should make us think. If we are addressed as the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus, do we see ourselves as dedicated people, for that is what we should be.

Paul lists some of the hallmarks of the Church – to show us how to know it is the genuine article and not just some dull copy.

We are sealed with the Holy Spirit. Paul knew that when anything important was sent off it was sealed to show whom it belonged to and that it should arrive intact. In baptism we are sealed with the Spirit, called to be holy, dedicated to God. And this is just the start for there is a far greater inheritance offered to us. Paul tells the Ephesians that he has heard of their faith in Jesus and their love towards others. This is another hallmark of our calling – love towards God and towards one another. Love isn’t healthy if we fail to love God or one another.

Paul prays that we might have wisdom – a gift which is more than just knowledge as it involves discernment – and is a gift of God. So we are to be a thinking and a sensitive people.

Paul prays that we may come to know God – that we may see with our hearts as well as with our heads – that we may know what is the hope and the inheritance to which we are called. He asks that we, too, may experience the power of God and the resurrection of Christ.- - that we may know that Christ rules over all and is all-powerful. Then he reminds us that we are all part of the body of Christ – that Christ works in us and through us. We are to work with him, and for him.

These are a good few hallmarks for us to think about – perhaps read Ephesians 1: 11-23 above quietly to yourself each day this week.

**Illustration [David Adam]:**

A man presented himself to the minister leading the service once it was over. “I would like to become a Christian,” he said. The minister enquired what it was that had brought him to this decision. Was it a sermon, a book, or some event in his life?

The man was a little embarrassed at this point and said how he read little and hardly ever attended church. “It’s my boss at work – he is a real tough chap and we are a hard bunch of men – it’s the way he deals with us. I wanted to know what made him so sensitive and caring – what made him strive to be honest and fair to all. He told me it was because he was a Christian. If that is what a Christian is like, that is what I want to be,”

The best advertisement for God and for our faith is the way in which we live and witness to what we believe.

**The words to ‘For all the saints’ written by William Walsham How [1823-1867] Singing the Faith 745**

1 For all the saints who from their labours rest, who thee by faith before the world confessed,  
thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest: Alleluia, alleluia!

2 Thou wast their rock, their fortress and their might; thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;  
thou in the darkness still their one true light: Alleluia, alleluia!

3 O may thy soldiers, faithful, true, and bold, fight as the saints who nobly fought of old,

and win, with them, the victor's crown of gold! Alleluia, alleluia!

4 O blest communion, fellowship divine! We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;  
yet all are one in thee, for all are thine: Alleluia, alleluia!

5 And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long, steals on the ear the distant triumph song,  
and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong: Alleluia, alleluia!

6 The golden evening brightens in the west; soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest;  
sweet is the calm of paradise the blest: Alleluia, alleluia!

7 But lo, there breaks a yet more glorious day: the saints triumphant rise in bright array;  
the King of Glory passes on his way! Alleluia, alleluia!

8 From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast, through gates of pearl streams in the countless  
host,  
singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Alleluia, alleluia!

**Closing Prayers:**

May God who seeks and saves,  
who invites and welcomes,  
who loves and cherishes,  
be your strength today and every day.

And may the love of God – the Father who created us – the Son who found us and saved us – and the Holy Spirit who lives and works within us – be with us and all whom we love, and all for whom we pray this day and for all eternity. **Amen**