

## 2026 06 07 WORSHIP AT HOME BEYOND HOPE?

Dear friends,

Into June already! How the time goes by. I hope that you manage to find time to stop and just 'be'. I know that it isn't always easy – there always seems to be something else which must be done. However, it is important for each of us to find that time to let the 'busyness' go, to just 'be'. As always, I hold each of you in my thoughts and prayers and wish you every blessing. Margaret

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### **Call to worship:**

When we think we are beyond hope – God's restoring love offers a fresh start.

When life is too messed up, seems beyond hope – God's restoring peace gives hope in our darkness.

When we think we are not good enough – Jesus comes offering hope beyond hope.

Jesus saw Matthew sitting in his tax collector's booth and knew the man needed help.

'Follow me,' he said. And Matthew did.

Lord – however beyond hope we might feel, may we hear your call, unable to resist you.

May we do as Matthew did and follow you. Amen.

### **The words to 'Will you come & follow me' by John L. Bell [b. 1949] and Graham Maule [b. 1958]**

#### **Singing the Faith 611**

1 Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

2 Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?

Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

3 Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?

Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unsees,  
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

4 Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?

Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?

Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

5 Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.

Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

### **Prayer**

God of many surprises, we come before you now.

We marvel as we see Matthew follow, the woman healed, the girl raised from the dead.  
God of wondrous healing, no one is beyond hope with you.  
Your people believed and were healed. Grant us the same ability to come to you in simple trust.  
How marvellous are your ways, O God. We worship you. Amen.

Lord God, forgive us when we do not show love to others;  
forgive us when we do not show compassion to people in times of need;  
forgive us when do not show kindness to those we meet;  
forgive us when we are harsh and uncaring to those around us;  
forgive us when we do not act as you want us to do towards family, friend, neighbour or stranger;  
forgive us when we ignore the needs of those who come to us;  
forgive us when we neglect the world around us;  
forgive us if ever we deliberately do wrong for our own benefit;  
forgive us whenever we are dishonest or untruthful.  
Lord God, forgive all who truly repent for your name's sake. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you lived and died for us – and you live now for us. You live to love and forgive.  
Accept our confessions and wash us clean that we may know that we are loved and forgiven. 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.

**Matthew 9: 9-13 and 18-26 – taken from Holy Bible, New Living Translation copyright 1996 by  
Tyndale Charitable Trust**

As Jesus was going down the road, he saw Matthew sitting at his tax-collection booth. 'Come, be my  
disciple,' Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

That night Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to be his dinner guests, along with his fellow tax-  
collectors and many other notorious sinners. The Pharisees were indignant. 'Why does your teacher  
eat with such scum?' they asked the disciples.

When he heard this, Jesus replied: 'healthy people do not need a doctor – sick people do.' Then he  
added: 'Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture- *'I want you to be merciful; I do not want your  
sacrifices.'* For I have come to call sinners, not those who think they are already good enough.'

As Jesus was saying this, the leader of a synagogue came and knelt down before him. 'My daughter  
has just died,' he said, 'but you can bring her back to life again if you just come and lay your hand upon  
her.'

As Jesus and the disciples were going to the official's home, a woman who had had a haemorrhage for  
12 years came up behind him. She touched the fringe of his robe, for she thought: 'If I can just touch  
his robe, I will be healed.' Jesus turned round and said to her: 'Daughter, be encouraged! Your faith has  
made you well.' And the woman was healed at that moment.

When Jesus arrived at the official's home, he noticed the noisy crowds and heard the funeral music.  
He said: 'Go away, for the girl isn't dead; she is only asleep.' But the crowd laughed at him. When the

crowd was finally outside, Jesus went in and took the girl by the hand and she stood up! The report of this miracle swept through the entire countryside.

**Comment:**

Matthew tells the same story as in Mark [Mk 5:21-43] but in far fewer words, and with the call of Matthew thrown in for good measure. The picture that emerges is that Jesus is busy in the mission God has given him – there is no time to waste. That is why he quotes Hosea 6:6 [about God wanting our love not sacrifices] to the religious leaders. It is not the time to sit around debating theology; it is a time to show God's mercy to people of all kinds.

So, Jesus has invited a tax collector into his ramshackle band of travelling companions and then gone to dinner with all of Matthew's mates, people the Pharisees would not have crossed the street to kick! He is doing this because, like a physician, he needs to be spending time with the sick [hence Hosea quote]. Then – as if to prove it – a father with a sick daughter turns up and a woman with a chronic illness interrupts his journey to the man's house. In Mark, the official is named – Jairus – and the daughter is ill. In Matthew, the focus is on both the urgency and the enormity of the man's request – and his daughter is already dead! Jesus doesn't hesitate and they set off to the man's house. On the way, an unnamed woman interrupts his journey by touching his cloak. This anonymous person receives healing a word of love and encouragement from Jesus, who calls her 'daughter'. Perhaps he wanted to emphasise that this woman, for all her ritual uncleanness, is a daughter of Abraham as much as anyone else in Israel. Then they are at the leader's house where the mourning rituals have begun. The mourners laugh at Jesus when he says the girl is sleeping. What Jesus is suggesting and is about to do seems so absurd that laughing is the only response. But the girl is raised, and Matthew says news of this spread around the district. You bet it did! Jesus had interrupted death with life, and Matthew intends us to see this as an example of what the Gospel does in people's lives. God has come to have mercy, and the story invites us to be people caught up in this – to be people who live merciful lives in the wake of our Lord.

**Prayer:**

We pray that God's mercy, God's love without limit may be made real in the life of the world. God of steadfast love, hear our prayer for a world broken by sin – for nations at war – for peace. Hear our prayer for the Church of the living God in every place – for the broken body of Christ on earth – for unity of faith and action, that together in love we may be good news. God of steadfast love, hear our prayer for all who feel they are outsiders – for those whom we might exclude from our fellowship for reasons of taste or culture and for all victims of open or hidden persecution. Lord, hear our prayers for they are made in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Close:** God of mercy and justice, as we walk alongside those in our communities who seek mercy, kindness or forgiveness, open our eyes to see them, & our minds and hearts to reach out to them, that we may be moved to share your love and compassion in practical ways – and in Jesus' name. Amen.

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