



WORSHIP AT HOME FOR SUNDAY 1ST NOVEMBER 2020

ALL SAINTS DAY

PREPARED BY REVD JOHN HELLYER

CALL TO WORSHIP

We spend a few minutes allowing ourselves to relax

And become aware that God is present with us
And with all who have gathered.

We begin by being still.

We listen to the sounds around us, and
acknowledged them.

We deepen our breathing.

We focus on God, quietly expressing our love.

We focus on those who have gathered with us,
Praying for their renewal.

We focus on ourselves.

As we breathe out,

We imagine letting go of all those thoughts,
Wishes, words and actions which cut us off
From a full relationship with God.

As we breathe in, we imagine letting in the
gentle breeze of God spirit -

All that is true and pure and lovely.

We breathe out. We breathe in. We are still.

You wait for us until we are open to you.

We wait for your words to make us receptive.

Attune us to the voice of your silence.

**Speak and bring your Son to us, Jesus, the word
of your peace.** (Oceans of Prayer, NCEC, Eds M
Edwards and J Pickard)

HYMN. SINGING THE FAITH, NUMBER 20.

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,

The Holy One, is here;

Come bow before him now

With reverence and fear

In him no sin is found

We stand on holy ground.

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,

The holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord

Is shining all around;

He burns with holy fire,

With splendour he is crowned:

How awesome is the sight

Our radiant king of light!

Be still, for the glory of the Lord

Is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord

Is moving in this place:

He comes to cleanse and heal,

To minister his grace.

No work too hard for him.

In faith receive from him.

Be still, for the power of the Lord

Is moving in this place.

PRAYERS OF ADORATION AND CONFESSIONS

With voices lifted in adoration

We come to you

With minds searching for truth

We come to you

With hearts aching for love

We come to you.

You are our still centre

And our shout of joy.

You are the rock to which we cling

And the path on which we travel

You are the security of our tradition

And the midwife of all our creativity.

In you we find the safe place in which we can
truly be ourselves.

Your enfolding love reaches into the darkest
corners of our lives

And gives us courage to confess:

What we have been;

The truth of what we are;

And the dreams of what we might be.

Silence

Gentle, merciful God,
Forgive our faintheartedness
Our refusal to use the gifts you give us,
The timidity of our dreams.
Whisper your loving words of forgiveness that
we may hear,
Each in our own way
Your words of life.

We are forgiven and set free.
Thanks be to God. Amen

(Methodist Women in Britain)

THE LORD'S PRAYER

GOSPEL READING. MATTHEW 5: 1-12

THE BEATITUDES

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the

same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

HYMN. SINGING THE FAITH, NUMBER 407.

Hear the call of the kingdom, lift your eyes to the King,

Let His song rise within you as a fragrant offering,

Of how God, rich in mercy, came in Christ to redeem

All who trust in His unfailing grace.

Hear the call of the Kingdom to be children of light,

With the mercy of heaven, the humility of Christ.

Walking justly before Him, loving all that is right

That the life of Christ may shine through Him.

*King of Heaven, we will answer the call,
We will follow, bringing hope to the world,
Filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim*

Salvation in Jesus' name.

Hear the call of the Kingdom to reach out to the lost,

With the Father's compassion in the wonder of the cross,

Bringing peace and forgiveness, and a hope yet to come;

Let the nations put their trust in Him.

REFLECTION

This is the first sermon that Jesus is recorded as preaching in Matthew's gospel, so it's not surprising that Jesus uses it to set out some of the themes that will be central to his ministry and mission. He wants people to know what it will be like to live under God's rule in the "Kingdom of heaven." In that kingdom the established order will be reversed: the forgotten people who live at the edges will take centre stage and those who think they

deserve special honour will be left wondering why they have missed out on what is most important.

The list of nine blessings which we call “the Beatitudes” (because of the word for “Blessed” in the Latin version of the new Testament) sums up what Jesus’ call to discipleship means. It is a call to live as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. This is one of the reasons why the passage is read on All Saints Day. It links together the daily life of disciples with future promise - present reality and hope for the future.

But what does it mean to be “blessed?” Some modern translations use the word “happy.” But that does not really fit after all it is hard to think of happiness going alongside mourning and persecution. In the Old Testament to bless can mean “to bow down” which is what is intended when the Psalmist says, “Bless the Lord O my soul.” It can also mean “to walk on the right road” which is what is intended in Psalm 1 which opens with the words “Blessed is the one who walks not in the way of the wicked.”

This helps us make sense of the Beatitudes. You are walking on the right road when you are poor in spirit, mourn, meek, hungry and thirsting for righteousness and so on. Each of the sentences is a reminder of the right road for Christian discipleship.

Some of the Beatitudes take us by surprise, after all we would much rather be rich rather than poor in spirit. But Jesus says “no,” perhaps because of the danger of spiritual pride and the false belief that riches and success are a sign of God’s approval and blessing. It is much better to be aware of your spiritual poverty before God.

You might like to take a moment and reread each of the Beatitudes and replace the word

“blessed” with “You are walking on the right road when you...” The sentences then become an opportunity for examination and self-discovery. They become an invitation not only to change our attitudes but to change our way of living in relationship with each other and with God.

If the right road in the present means everything that is found in the Beatitudes, including those things that might make great demands on us then we also need to remember that each blessing also contains a promise. Peace making can be a hard and dangerous road. Those who specialise in mediation know that often each side turns on them and blames the mediator for their own failures. Knowing you will have the honour to be called children of God makes the journey worthwhile. Many hunger and thirst for justice and only experience small successes in their campaigns because they find themselves up against powerful forces, but Jesus encourages them with the promise that their hunger will be filled.

It is not hard to see how these words were also lived out in Jesus’ relationships with people and most poignantly led to his crucifixion. This means that the Beatitudes become an invitation to share in Jesus’ journey and walk along the road with him. Best of all this means that he walks beside us in a journey that no matter what challenges we encounter will lead to the fullness of life.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION AND THANKSGIVING

In these prayers there is space for you to pause and include your own concerns.

Glorious God, we bring you our prayers for the world, and all the situations where your peace is needed. We think of ...

May your peace and glory transform the world.

We bring you our prayers for the leaders of the nations, those whose actions govern the lives of many. We think of ...

May your love and Spirit guide their actions and transform the world.

We bring you our prayers for the Church, the worldwide body of Jesus Christ. We think of areas where there is apathy about your word, areas where there is persecution. We think of ...

May your peace, glory and love transform the world.

We bring you our prayers for those in need of your love, those who are bereaved, those who are the victims of injustice. We think of ...

May they know your peace and love and be transformed.

We bring you our prayers for those in need of healing, those in hospital, those who are troubled in body mind or spirit. We think of ...

May they know your glory and healing power and be transformed.

We bring you our prayers for ourselves, for your Spirit to fill us and enable us to glimpse your glory in others and in all situations ...

May we know your love and peace, that they may transform your world in the name of Christ. Amen.

HYMN. SINGING THE FAITH, NUMBER 745

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!

Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their
might;
thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought
fight;
thou, in the darkness drear, their one true
light.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

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!

O blest communion, fellowship divine,
we feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
yet all are one in thee, for all are thine.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

And when the fight is fierce, the warfare long,
steals on the ear the distant triumph song,
and hearts are brave again, and arms are
strong.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

The golden evening brightens in the west;
soon, soon to faithful warrior cometh rest;
sweet is the calm of paradise the blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

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!

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!

BLESSING

The Lord bless and keep you;
The Lord make his face to shine on you
And be gracious to you;
The Lord looked upon you with kindness
And give you peace. Amen