

27th June 2021

Gloucestershire Methodist Circuit Worship at Home

Do not fear...only believe

Hymn HP 220

1 God is love: his the care,
tending each, ev'rywhere,
God is love, all is there!
Jesus came to show him,
that we all might know him!

Refrain:

Sing aloud, loud, loud!
sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good! God is truth!
God is beauty! Praise him!

2 None can see God above;
we can share life and love;
thus may we Godward move,
finding him in creation,
holding ev'ry nation. [Refrain]

3 Jesus lived on the earth,
hope and life brought to birth
and affirmed human worth,
for he came to save us
by the truth he gave us. [Refrain]

4 To our Lord praise we sing,
light and life, friend and King,
coming down, love to bring,
pattern for our duty,
showing God in beauty. [Refrain]

Do not fear... only believe

Today we have a passage from Mark's gospel which is a favourite of many. Jesus brings healing to two sets of people – they are very different – however their stories are linked by the theme of despair and fear on the one hand, and that of faith and its effect, on the other.

Firstly, we have Jairus, one of the leaders of the local synagogue, who is on the brink of hopelessness, his daughter is ill, and then he receives the news that she has died. Secondly, the haemorrhaging woman who has suffered for 12 years. They are both in desperate

need, but Jesus's popularity is such that he has drawn a huge crowd, and they are like minnows in a wide ocean, lost and invisible to the majority. But not invisible to Jesus! Recognising their great faith, Jesus brings to them, that which they need. The woman gets cured, and Jairus' daughter is brought back to life.

I am sure that both Jairus and the woman would say to us that in times of hopelessness and fear we need to keep the faith - faith in the power of Jesus. More in a moment.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND CONFESSION

Living and loving Father God, Lord of all creation, we praise you. Give us eyes to see you, ears to hear you and hearts to know you. Forgive us when we walk past you in our haste.

Living and Loving Lord Jesus, you showed us how to live and showed us how to love. You rescued us from sin and darkness. Yet, we still need daily saving from words, deeds and thoughts that spoil our relationship with you.

Through your Living and Loving Holy Spirit, we come seeking change, inspire us that we maybe steadfast in our hearing, in our speaking, in our believing, and our living and especially our loving. We humbly pray. Amen

Mark 5. Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.

At this point in Mark 5 the story of Jairus's daughter is interrupted by the account of the older lady. I am including her story now, from her point of view, then returning to Mark's gospel for the conclusion of the story of Jairus's daughter.

I was sick – sick of body, sick of mind, sick of spirit, fed up with having my hopes raised only to be dashed again, fed up with everything.

I'd suffered for so long. But then I saw him, just a few yards in front of me, this man they were all talking about – Jesus of Nazareth, prophet, teacher, worker of miracles – one glance at him and I knew he was the answer to my prayers.

I was ready to believe anything, but this man was unique, his amazing love for others.

So pushed my way through the crowd and I reached out and touched him, only lightly, yet immediately I felt whole again. But then he turned around... how did he know... I felt terrible... I waited for the rebuke, yet it never came. Instead a question, 'Who touched me?' I knew I couldn't escape, much as I wanted to. I looked at him, he looked at me 'Daughter' he said 'your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be healed of your disease.'

It had gone, but there was so much more. I'd found new purpose, new meaning, new hope, peace such as I never imagined possible.

we continue....

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"

³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha koum!*" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Hymn – STF 322

1. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear;
it soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds
and drives away our fear.

2. It makes the wounded spirit whole,
and calms the troubled breast;
'tis manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary rest.

3. Dear name! the rock on which I build,
my shield and hiding place,
my never failing treasury,
filled with boundless stores of grace.

4. Jesus, my shepherd, guardian, friend,
my prophet, priest and king,
my Lord, my life, my way, my end:
accept the praise I bring.

5. How weak the effort of my heart,
how cold my warmest thought,
but when I see thee as thou art
I'll praise thee as I ought.

6. Till then I would thy love proclaim
with every fleeting breath,
and may the music of thy name
refresh my soul in death.

Having recently stilled a storm and healed a demon possessed man (as well as holding the crowds captive with stories of farmers sowing seeds and giant mustard trees) Jesus is **unsurprisingly** very popular, and by now, many people are sensing that he may be the answer to their needs. But with so many people wanting him, who should he minister to first? Should it be the top notch people, or those who can do something back? Course not, knowing Jesus as we do, we are aware that it's usually to people the other end of the scale that he reaches out. And here we see this happening. A 12 year old girl and a woman who has been ill for 12 years.

Yes, the girl may have a father who is a leader in the synagogue, but she is still a female! And females were second class. And the older woman, well she had an illness which made her 'unclean' in the sight of everyone around her, an illness which prohibited her from joining in family life and worship, basically she is treated as an outcast.

Yet she has heard about this Jesus and she has the desperate faith that if anyone can do anything for her, it will be him. Human doctors have all failed. And so she pushes through the crowd, she knows that people will stand back from her as they won't want to touch her and become unclean themselves. *Jesus won't want to touch her either, will he?* she ponders. *Course he won't, he would be breaking the law, but what if I touch his cloak? Maybe he won't even know!*

But he does know!! What will happen next?

Hymn STF 519

Father, I place into your hands
The things I cannot do,
Father, I place into your hands
The things that I've been through.
Father, I place into your hands
The way that I should go,
For I know I always can trust you.

Father, I place into your hands
My friends and family.
Father, I place into your hands

The things that trouble me.
Father, I place into your hands
The person I would be,
For I know I always can trust you.

Father, we love to see your face,
We love to hear your voice.
Father, we love to sing your praise
And in your name rejoice.
Father, we love to walk with you
And in your presence rest,
For we know we always can trust you.

Father, I want to be with you
And do the things you do.
Father, I want to speak the words
That you are speaking too.
Father, I want to love the ones
That you will draw to you,
For I know that I am one with you.

What happens next???!!! Jesus turns around and says ' Who touched my clothes?' He knows who has done it, so is he going to humiliate her in front of this huge crowd? Absolutely not, he knows her great faith, he knows what it has taken to be there and to reach out and touch him, and it is that great faith that makes her stay. She doesn't run away, instead she falls to her knees. By falling down low, she can be raised up high and that is what Jesus does- in fact he raises her on a pedestal that she has never known before.

'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease.'

No longer an outcast who creeps through the crowd, this woman is named as a faith-filled daughter of God, is healed and walks away in peace.

Surely that is enough excitement for one day... but what about the 12 year old girl? Will this all turn out tragically because Jesus took a detour with this unclean woman. No, Jesus has time for everyone. Even another unclean person! He takes the girl (who everyone else believes has died) by the hand and says '***Little girl(daughter) get up...and by the way just to prove she is alive make a snack for her to eat!)***'

In these two stories I am reminded that our Lord does care, it doesn't matter who we are and the

circumstances that we find ourselves in. It doesn't matter whether the world thinks we are undeserving or not, for in the end it is not about us, but it is about our faith in him.

Like the characters we have met today, we all have dis-ease of one sort or another – let us not fear, but trust him to minister to that. Amen

Prayers

A time of prayer – please join me in prayer

Lord, today, I pray for the Methodist Church as conference opens. I pray for all who are gathered to confer, limited numbers at the conference and many more watching through their computers, that you will help them in their deliberations and decision making, so that our church can be seen to shine out your Love to all in our land and be a place of welcome and inclusion. Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer.

Lord I give thanks for the outgoing President Revd Richard Teal, and Vice President Carolyn Lawrence and ask for your blessing upon them as they return to their daily lives. Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer.

Lord, I pray for your blessing upon our President and Vice President designates Revd Sonia Hicks and Barbara Easton, and all those who will be ordained, bless them in their ministries. Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer.

Lord I give thanks for the narrative of healing and restoration in our Gospel reading today and bring to you.....(*name those you know who need healing and restoration today*).. bring them to healing and restoration too.

Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer.

Thank you Lord, that you hear my prayers, and that you know my every need. Grant me sufficient love, forgiveness, grace, hope, healing and joy for this day, that I may follow you and shine your love out to the world. Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father ...

Hymn STF 331

King of kings, majesty,
God of Heaven living in me,
gentle Saviour, closest friend,
strong deliverer, beginning and end,
all within me falls at your throne.

*Your majesty, I can but bow.
I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty.*

Earth and Heaven worship you,
love eternal, faithful and true,
who bought the nations, ransomed souls,
brought this sinner near to your throne;
all within me cries out in praise.
Your majesty, I can but bow...

Closing prayer

Go into the world, knowing that God is with you.
Go into the world with the peace of Christ upon you.
Go into the world with the blessing of the Holy Spirit.
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
rest upon and remain with us,
this day and ever more.
Amen.

Prayers of intercession from Methodist service sheet

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