

Sunday, 24th January 2021

Worship led by: Pastor Adam Venables and Stuart Green


The Methodist Church

Ashbourne Circuit 22/11

Welcome

Opening Prayers

God, we come to worship you this morning.
Wherever we are, whether we are alone or with others, whether we are watching a video online or on DVD or reading these words on paper, whether we are worshipping at 10.30am on Sunday or at some other time, we are part of your worldwide family of the church.

Lord God, we praise you and adore you. Bless our time of worship we pray.

Amen

HYMN – StF 251 In Christ Alone

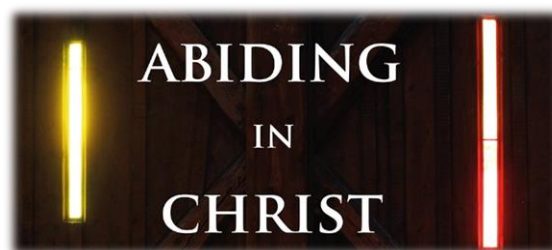
In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! – who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied –
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine –
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Stuart Townend & Keith Getty
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Introduction:

This has been the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It's wonderful that Adam from Elim is able to be with us today, and that other preachers are in different churches. Even while we've been in lockdown and with covid restrictions, the churches in the Ashbourne area have been working very closely together. Together, we raised over £6000 for Christian Aid during Christian Aid Week. Together, we ran an online Alpha course which was very well-supported. Together, we organised the drive-in carol services which were attended by hundreds of people. Together, we have been praying for the new housing developments in the town. And this week, together, we have been praying for unity.

We're going to spend some time giving thanks to God as we pray together. I'd like you to think of things that you are thankful for and either jot them on a piece of paper or just think about them. Those who are on Facebook will be invited to share in the comments. You might like to read these sections from Psalms 62 and 65 as you think. I invite you to join in a resounding amen at the end of our prayers!

Bible readings

Psalms 62: 5-8

Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.
Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I shall not be shaken.
My salvation and my honour depend on God;
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.

Psalm 65: 4-13

⁴ Blessed are those you
choose and bring near
to live in your courts!
We are filled with the
good things of your house,
of your holy temple.



⁵ You answer us with awesome and righteous
deeds, God our Saviour,
the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas,
⁶ who formed the mountains by your power,
having armed yourself with strength,
⁷ who stilled the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
and the turmoil of the nations.
⁸ The whole earth is filled with awe at your
wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy.

⁹ You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.
The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with corn,
for so you have ordained it.
¹⁰ You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.
¹¹ You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.
¹² The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.
¹³ The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with corn;
they shout for joy and sing.

Lord God, we thank you for so many things, but
especially we thank you for sending Jesus.
And as we think about everything you have
done for us, we ask you to help us to respond in
giving of our time, our talents and our money.
Help us to be generous givers.
Amen

The Lord's Prayer Our Father....

Bible reading Jonah 3: 1-5,10

¹Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second
time: ² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim
to it the message I give you."

³ Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to
Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took

three days to go through it. ⁴ Jonah began by going a
day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more
days and Nineveh will be overthrown." ⁵ The
Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and
all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on
sackcloth.

¹⁰When God saw what they did and how they
turned from their evil ways, he relented and did
not bring on them the destruction he had
threatened.

A time to reflect 1

Good morning church. It's so great to be with
you here, as much as I can be with you at
Ashbourne Methodist Church today. As Stuart
has already said, my name is Adam I'm the
minister at Ashbourne Elim Church and it's my
privilege to be with you today. I actually had the
privilege of speaking to you a couple of years
ago at our pulpit swap in 2019 so thank you so
much for having me back.

It really is a shame that it has to be done in this
way because I love the pulpit swap Sundays as
it's so great to see other Jesus followers in our
town, all just playing our part and doing our bit
to partner with God in what He's doing in our
town and the surrounding areas. So, I very
much look forward to seeing you all soon but for
now shall we look at the Word together.

Earlier on in our service we had a reading from
Jonah chapter 3 and I want to look at that
briefly at the start of the message this morning.
We all know the start of the story of Jonah, don't
we? My 3-year-old daughter could give us a
good summary of it. But once the big fish spits
Jonah out on the shore, we tend to stop the
story there. The whole book is only 4 chapters
so it doesn't take us long to get through the
whole story.

And what we've read this morning tells us that
2nd part to the story. You see, Jonah had said no
to doing what God wanted from him, in fact he
physically tried to run away from God. How
many of us know that running away from God is
impossible?

But then, as we constantly see throughout the
bible, we see the God of redemption, the God of
the second chance, come into the situation and
give another way. He sends a storm to the sea
the wind is howling; the waves are crashing
against the boat and the sailors think it's about

to go down. A little side lesson here could be that so often we presume that the storms that we go through are bad things, but here it would appear that sometimes it's God that sends the storm in order to teach us a lesson or set us in the right direction.

The sailors throw Jonah overboard, he gets swallowed up by a big fish and then he wonders what to do. Finally, he decides that listening to God might be a good idea after all, he reluctantly and heart-heartedly says sorry to God and says yes to God's call. So, the fish spits him out onto the beach and then at this point we get to our reading today.

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 'Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.'



And we see Jonah get up and he's ready to go. But I love the detail that we read in scripture here. Nineveh was a big city; it'd take 3 days to walk into it. So how far does Jonah go before he preaches this message that God asked of him? 1 day. He's not even in the centre of the city as he preaches the message that God asks him to do.

But do you know what? God took the little that Jonah reluctantly offered and he multiplied it through His power. Much like the account we read in the gospels of the 5 loaves and 2 fish. We give our very little, sometimes we don't even give all that we can offer, but God is a faithful God, who will use all that we give for His glory.

We see how the message of repentance and salvation spread across the whole city, even to the places that Jonah did not travel to, it even reaches the ear of the king. And in verse 10 we read of God's redemption for Nineveh. *"When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it."*

Because of the, let's face it, half hearted "yes" from one man responding to God's call, we see a city saved.

We're going to move to our next reading now and I'm going to hand over to Becky who will read a passage from Mark chapter 1 for us.



Gospel Reading Mark 1:14-20

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

A time to reflect 2

In this passage here that we've just read we see a slightly different response than what Jonah gave from Simon, Andrew, James and John as Jesus calls them to follow Him. And the response is not half hearted, the response is not initially a no but I'll change my mind if you do something to make me do so. I love it from James and John, Mark tells us they were mending the fishing nets when Jesus called them. And immediately they left their dad in the boat and left. "See you later dad, we've got to follow Jesus."

James and John knew nothing of Jesus, but there was something intriguing about Him,

something pulling them towards this man, maybe they couldn't explain what it was, but they knew they needed to respond. Hey, I don't know who's watching today. But maybe this morning you don't really know much of Jesus, but there is something in your heart pulling you in to make you want to know more. If that's the case then get in touch, drop a comment on facebook or send the church a message I'm sure they'd love to get back to you and help you know more about Jesus.

But, I would hazard a guess that most that are engaging today have said yes to following Jesus. I wonder if I could ask you a question this morning. How much are you still saying yes to Jesus? Because right now he has a role for each and every one of us to expand His kingdom here on earth. So, as He asks of you to follow Him, as He asks of you to go to Nineveh, as He asks of you to deny yourself, pick up your cross and follow Him, is your 'yes' from yesterday or your 'yes' from last year or even your 'yes' from all those years ago still a big yes today?

We see so many passages in scripture that challenge us on this don't we? We see how Jesus talks about the harvest being plentiful but the workers being few. I wonder if God is calling out as He did in the days of Isaiah "Who shall I send, who will go for us?" Church, come on, our response needs to be a continual "here I am, send me!".

And sometimes that looks exactly how you want it to look – but most of the time it doesn't. Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh, even when he finally did go he moaned about it and didn't want to be there. But at least he followed God's call and when he did God used him.

Even if it does look how you want it to look, there's one thing that is for certain, it will cost you. And I'm not talking about money in the offering basket, although I'm sure Tim won't mind me reminding you to do that, but the cost of following the call of God is much greater than money or finances. It will cost you everything.

Is that a price that you are prepared to pay?

We know don't we, Jesus encourages us to count up the cost before making a decision. There's a great song a band called Rend

Collective called "The Cost," if you can do have a search online and listen to it. Count up the cost of following the call of Jesus and decide your answer once again.

Will you say yes to following Him? Will you say yes to His call, whatever it may look like?

And we're told in Luke 14 that one day the cost that we pay will be repaid to us, but we don't do it for that, this isn't an investment opportunity, Jesus isn't asking you to buy bitcoin – this is our way of loving God and loving our neighbour. We love God so much that we can't help but follow His call and share His good news. We love our neighbour so much that we can't let them not know this good news that is for all.

So I ask you one last time, will you say yes, once again, to God?

Hymn STF 673 Will you come and follow me

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?

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?

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 Unseen,
And Admit To What I Mean
In You And You In Me?

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?

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.

Graham Maule, John L. Bell
Words: 1987 Wgrg, Iona Community

Prayers of Intercession

Heavenly father, we pray
for our world once again
in these challenging
times



We thank you for the advancement of medicine
and we thank you for those who are
administering the vaccine, for our doctors and
our nurses, for our frontline workers who are
working so hard. We pray once again for your
protection over them. We pray that you would
continue to empower them to do this good
work.

Father, we pray for those who are lonely in this
time. We recognise the effects of a lockdown on
our mental health and we pray that you would
move on behalf of those who are struggling. We
pray for your presence to be known in the
homes of people through the power of your Holy
Spirit.

And in this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity,
we pray for us as your church, that we would
have a united voice of faith, of hope and of love.
Help us to be your witnesses here on earth.

Speak to us Lord. Help us to hear your voice, to
know your voice, and to respond in your
strength: "Here we are, send us."

We ask this in the mighty and holy name of
Jesus.

Amen.

Hymn StF 691 What Shall Our Greeting Be

What shall our greeting be:
Sign of our unity?
JESUS IS LORD!
May we no more defend
Barriers he died to end:
Give me your hand, my friend:
One Church, One Lord!

What is our mission here?
He makes his purpose clear:
One world, one Lord!
Spirit of truth descend,
All our confusions end:
Give me your hand, my friend:
JESUS IS LORD!

He comes to save us now:
To serve him is to know
Life's true reward.
May he our lives amend,
All our betrayals end:
Give me your hand, my friend:
JESUS IS LORD!

Fred Pratt Green



A prayer of blessing

May the Lord bless us and keep us in his love
as we answer his call to follow and serve him in
the world today. Amen

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