

WORSHIP 12 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Lord be with you,
and also with you.

HYMN: At the name of Jesus:

1 At the name of Jesus
every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him
King of glory now:
'tis the Father's pleasure
we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning
was the mighty Word.

2 Humbled for a season,
to receive a name
from the lips of sinners
unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it
spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious,
when from death he passed:

3 Bore it up triumphant
with its human light,
through all ranks of creatures,
to the central height,
to the throne of Godhead,
to the Father's breast;
filled it with the glory,
of that perfect rest.

4 In your hearts enthrone him;
there let him subdue
all that is not holy,
all that is not true:
crown him as your Captain
in temptation's hour;
let his will enfold you
in its light and power.

5 Brothers, this Lord Jesus
shall return again,
with his Father's glory,
with his angel train;
for all wreaths of empire
meet upon his brow,

and our hearts confess him
King of glory now.

Credit: Caroline Maria Noel

YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVyHJJ-343o&list=RDsVyHJJ-343o&start_radio=1&rv=sVyHJJ-343o&t=198

We say together:

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith. Firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in peace with all.

**All: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed. Through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name.
Amen**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon *you*, pardon and deliver *you* from all *your* sins, confirm and strengthen *you* in all goodness,
and keep *you* in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

THE COLLECT

O Lord, as Peter confessed you as the Christ, give us boldness to proclaim your redeeming love and saving power in the world; may we be ready to bear the cross and give ourselves for others and the advancement of your kingdom; we ask this in your name, Jesus Christ our Lord, who with the Holy Spirit are one God, now and forever.
Amen.

READING: MARK 8:27-end NIV

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Predicts His Death

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

The Way of the Cross

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

REFLECTION

Today, I want to tell you a story. It's not a story of great deeds, or power, just a bit of a story about ordinary people.

One cold autumn day, many years ago, wearing a long brown maxi coat, carrying all I owned in a small backpack, I was dropped outside the Odeon Cinema Newcastle aged just 17, alone and homeless. Yet I have had an incredible life full of adventure, sadness and joy. I have hitched my way around Europe, crossed Mount Blanc on an old BSA motorbike, which broke down almost every day. I managed to read the whole of The Lord of the Rings during breakdown stops; often being rescued by caravan towing tourists where they stopped to help because they fondly remembered their youthful adventures on such a bike.

I have travelled the world, often alone with my very young children and lived in Peru and India, and constantly been amazed at the help and kindness of strangers.

I am no stranger to death, losing many pregnancies and family members. I have worked in hospices and hospitals accompanying the last journey for so many as they leave this life.

And through all these times, I have known the presence of God, The Christ with me. I know I have been rescued from dangerous situations and held close to the heart of Jesus

in times of pain and placed in the arms of God's church which became my family. Just as we are told in psalm 68:6 God places the lonely in families. My friends the word of God is true.

So why am I telling you this now? Because for the first time in decades I have spent almost three weeks, organising and taking the funeral of a young man who was the son of my best lifelong friend, who sadly committed suicide whilst his mum was with me in Cumbria. In Liverpool I was living amongst hundreds of people not just indifferent but some hostile to the Christian God and the church. Oh yes some gave ascent to some kind of spirituality, many gods, speaking to the dead, something beyond this life. Interestingly, finding most acceptance from those of the Jewish and Muslim faith, we had common ground in believing in One God and respect for our differences in faith.

This place in modern inner-city Britain, is not so different from the physical setting of our Gospel today. Jesus and his followers are near Caesarea Philippi, a very Roman setting and once the limit of ancient Israel's northward extension. It's in this place, this borderland, where Jesus wants to discuss his reputation and suddenly asks the question: "Who do people say that I am?"

We know of course that Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah. But Peter may have got the name right but not what the Messiah was expected to be. The Jewish idea of the Messiah is of one who will purify society, re-establish Israel's supremacy among the nations, and usher in a new era of peace and holiness. Peter is expecting big things from Jesus.

So, when Jesus "began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him." This wasn't the Messiah he was expecting!

This is so like those many, many people who reject God because they will say, "Well how can there be a God when there is so much death and suffering in the world, where is there signs of power?" We have climate change, refugee crisis, poverty, wars, death, so obviously no God.

But our God shown through Jesus does not act in a big authoritarian way. He works through the poor, the little powerless people. Jesus — just like the Gospel author — embarks on a project of recasting who "the Christ, the Messiah" is and what he will do. Jesus won't wield power over others; instead, powerful and cynical people will have their way with him.

When Jesus tells Peter, "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns" he is saying you're looking at things from a human perspective. Still today our media is full of so-called powerful people, whether that be world leaders, captains of industry or so-called celebrities. The height of success is portrayed as money, huge houses, influence, power, authority.

And here is Jesus saying, forget all that if you want to follow me you can expect rejection, have to carry a cross and deny yourselves. Not really the best recruitment advert to make you rush out and join up!

Just to be clear, when Jesus calls for self-denial, it's not primarily about squashing our desires so we can feel holy. It is more about separating ourselves from what defines us. A person in Jesus' culture was defined by those to whom he belonged — usually household or kin. Jesus calls people to embrace new understandings of identity. Disciples join a community defined by association with Jesus: they enter a new family comprising all of Jesus' followers. Self-denial is not self-annihilation, but complete redefinition.

And so, after my time in the borderlands of today's England, I have come home to my family of God. A family not of the rich, famous or powerful but just like me, ordinary people who have chosen to follow Jesus.

I sat quietly at the Beacon coffee morning listening to the people of St John's as they spoke to one another. What I found was deep love, kindness, Tim bringing playful granddad-like joy to a little girl, a willingness to serve others, Paula serving coffee, Adele and others moving tables and chairs, a gift of flowers for me, a beautiful prayer station placed by Julie. A desire to be of practical help with all sorts of goods donated for our refugee community, a prayer team busy praying for our needs, a family of Jesus' followers. What is here in St. John's is very special and a more powerful witness to the living reality of Jesus than you realise. For, as we are told in John 13:35, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.". Thank you. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Fill, O Lord, your church with wisdom, that it may reflect your love and light and be an image of your goodness. Lord may we, confess Jesus as our Christ and saviour, not only in word but by the way we live, and so bring others to a deeper awareness of your love.

Father hear us,
In the name of Christ our Lord.

We pray for the many refugees now made homeless from Afghanistan and many others who seek asylum in this and other countries. We pray for those left behind in Afghanistan, both those who have to live under, and those who are afraid for their very lives under this new regime. Give them hope and your peace and the knowledge of Jesus as Christ.

Father hear us,
In the name of Christ our Lord.

Lord support all who are fearful and anxious, all who are afraid to venture out. we pray for all who doubt their own abilities or your love. We remember all who are lonely or desperate, we pray for the suicidal, or in pain and distress. In the quiet of our hearts, we lift those known to us who need your loving touch.

Father hear us,
In the name of Christ our Lord.

We pray for all who have departed from this life, and for those who are left behind. Comfort them in their grief.

Father hear us,
In the name of Christ our Lord.

THE PEACE

Christ is our life, Christ is our saviour, Christ is our hope. Christ is our peace.
The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

Yours Lord is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour, and the majesty.
For everything in heaven and on earth is yours.
All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord is here.
His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right,
it is our duty and our joy,
at all times and in all places
to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King,
almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

For he is your living Word;
Through him you have created all things from the beginning,
and formed us in your own image.
Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin,
giving him to be born of a woman and to die upon the cross;
you raised him from the dead
and exalted him to your right hand on high.
Through him you have sent upon us
your holy and life-giving Spirit,
and made us a people for your own possession.

Therefore, with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and *saying*:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
[Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.]**

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his blood.

Who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

**Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.**

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself, made once for all upon
the cross;
We proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
We look for the coming of his kingdom, and with this bread and this cup we make the
memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise.
And as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty,
Renew us by your Spirit,
Inspire us with your love,
and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him.
In the unity of the Holy Spirit.
With all who stand before you in earth and in heaven.
We worship you, Father Almighty,
In songs of everlasting praise.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
Be yours for ever and ever.
Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**Jesus, Lamb of God,
Have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, bearer of our sins,
Have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.**

GIVING OF COMMUNION

Draw near with faith.
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Which he gave for you.
And his blood which he shed for you,
And feed on him in your hearts with thanksgiving.

**We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,**

trusting in our own righteousness.
But in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs from under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
That our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.
Amen.

The president and the people receive communion.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory. Amen**

HYMN: All my days

All my days I will sing this song of gladness,
give my praise to the Fountain of delights;
for in my helplessness you heard my cry,
and waves of mercy poured down on my life.

I will trust in the cross of my Redeemer,
I will sing of the blood that never fails,
of sins forgiven, of conscience cleansed,
of death defeated and life without end.

*Beautiful Saviour, wonderful Counsellor,
clothed in majesty, Lord of history,
you're the way, the truth, the life.
Star of the morning, glorious in holiness,
you're the Risen One, Heaven's champion,
and you reign, you reign over all!*

I long to be where the praise is never-ending,
yearn to dwell where the glory never fades,
where countless worshippers will share one song,
and cries of 'worthy' will honour the Lamb!

Beautiful Saviour...

Credit: Stuart Townend, Copyright © 1998 Thankyou Music (Admin. by Integrity Music Ltd)
YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S17GChJ44-E>

BLESSING:

God give you grace to confess the faith of Christ crucified. God give you strength to offer yourself to him; and may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**