

Welcome to worship

Today we continue our bible month as we reflect on the challenges of discipleship and the way of Christ. As we prepare to worship we still ourselves in the presence of God, who is love. You may also wish to light a candle as a symbol of Jesus, light of the world.

Call to Worship: Psalm 90: 12-17

¹² Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

¹³ Relent, LORD! How long will it be?
Have compassion on your servants.

¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

¹⁵ Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
for as many years as we have seen trouble.

¹⁶ May your deeds be shown to your servants,
your splendour to their children.

¹⁷ May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us;
establish the work of our hands for us –
yes, establish the work of our hands.

HYMN: StF 409 Let us build a house where love can dwell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9bOiAxwi4U>

Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine, and wheat:

a banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet.

Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;

as we share in Christ the feast that free us:

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone

to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.

Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;

let us bring an end to fear and danger:

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard

and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.

Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,

let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place

Marty Haugen (b. 1950)

Prayer of praise

From the moment we awake
to face the day ahead,
you are with us,
through good times and bad,
Your presence enough for our needs.
Every day we will praise you
And extol your name for ever

Through the hours of the day,
in our travels and work,
you are with us;
in decisions we must make,
Your wisdom enough for our needs.
Every day we will praise you
And extol your name for ever

As we lay down to rest
at the end of the day,
you are with us,
as we lay our fears at your feet,
Your peace enough for our needs.
Every day we will praise you
And extol your name for ever

Prayer of Confession

God of all ages,
who from generation to generation
has heard the cries of your children
humbly seeking forgiveness,
and has welcomed sinners
back into your embrace,
hear the thoughts of our hearts,
examine our motives,
forgive us our faults,
of word and action.
We ask this through your Son,
who died that we might know
the true cost of forgiveness.

AMEN

Assurance of Pardon

God hears our prayers and in love pours out his
forgiveness on us. He then calls to us in Jesus 'follow
me.'

**Strengthened by His Spirit may we respond in faith and
joy and go where God leads us. AMEN.**

HYMN: StF 661 Give me the faith which can remove

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHAPOs3IIWO>

1. Give me the faith which can remove
and sink the mountain to a plain;
give me the childlike praying love,
which longs to build thy house again;
thy love, let it my heart o'er-power,
and all my simple soul devour.

2. I would the precious time redeem,
and longer live for this alone,
to spend and to be spent for them
who have not yet my Savior known;
fully on these my mission prove,
and only breathe, to breathe thy love.

3. My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,
into thy blessed hands receive;
and let me live to preach thy word,
and let me to thy glory live;
my every sacred moment spend
in publishing the sinner's Friend.

4. Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
with boundless charity divine,
so shall I all my strength exert,
and love them with a zeal like thine,
and lead them to thy open side,
the sheep for whom the Shepherd died.

Bible reading : Mark 10: 17-31

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

¹⁷ As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and
fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked,
"what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

¹⁸ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one
is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the
commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not
commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give
false testimony, you shall not defraud, honour your
father and mother.'"

²⁰ "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I
was a boy."

²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you
lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to
the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then
come, follow me."

²² At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because
he had great wealth.

²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How
hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said
again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of
God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a
needle than for someone who is rich to enter the
kingdom of God."

²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to
each other, "Who then can be saved?"

²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is
impossible, but not with God; all things are possible
with God."

²⁸ Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to
follow you!"

²⁹ "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left
home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or
children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to
receive a hundred times as much in this present age:
homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—
along with persecutions—and in the age to come
eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and
the last first."



Reflection

What is truly important to you?

If we stop and really think about this question then we will probably come up with a whole range of answers. Our faith, certainly, but we may also include our family, our health, our home, our employment. Our answers will probably all be different and will have been shaped by our experience as well as shaping the way that we choose to live.

The story of the rich young man is one that is often retold and has a whole range of interpretations – could probably find five sermons here, but I'll try to stick to just one! It is one of several encounters that Jesus has following the 'turning point' in Mark's Gospel where Peter names Jesus as Messiah. Jesus has now set his face towards Jerusalem and increasingly his teaching focuses on the cost of discipleship, as he prepares his disciples for his suffering and death.

The rich young man (in some cases the text is translated as ruler) is clearly a figure of some influence. He is young, yet he has wealth and probably because of this has been able to access education. He also holds some level of authority. He is also a man of faith. It is he who makes the approach to Jesus to ask for guidance and he refers to him as 'Good Teacher' so there is a sign that he has heard Jesus and recognises his authority from God.

However, I think we see something of his priorities in the question that he chooses to ask Jesus. He does not ask "What can I do to serve God", but instead "What can I do to inherit eternal life?" His priority is for his own inheritance in terms of his immortal soul.

In his responses, Jesus seems to have the measure of the young man and his motivation. He asks him about his faithfulness to the law and is told that the young man keeps all the commandments. There is no boasting in this response. It seems to be natural that he should adhere to God's law, yet he wants to do more. At this point we are told "Jesus looked at him and loved him."

Often this encounter is re-told in a slightly self-righteous manner – 'the rich man thinks he can buy his way to heaven, but Jesus sends him packing'. Nothing could be further from the message that is given here. Jesus loves this young man, he wants the best for him and you can almost hear the longing in his voice as he gives his response. Will the young man make the leap of faith and leave behind his possessions for something far more precious?

The answer to this is, we do not know. We are told that he went away sad, but not whether he came back to be part of the crowd following Jesus. Did he choose his possessions or was the sadness because he knew that he was going to sell all that was dear to him and do as Jesus asked?

Jesus then turns to his disciples and shares his pain and frustration – 'how difficult it is for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven'. Once again I don't see this as necessarily a condemnation of wealth, but more a comment on priorities. When wealth distracts from God's call then it becomes a burden.

Note that Jesus says it is hard for the rich person, but not impossible. "With God", he says, "all things are possible". Here we return to the rich man's question "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus reminds us that the gift of eternal life is God's doing, it is his action through the grace shown in the love of Jesus that enables the rich man, the disciples and indeed all of us to receive the gift of eternal life. **We** can never **do** anything to earn it and, thanks be to God in Jesus Christ, we do not have to. When we turn to Jesus, the gift is given and all we need to do is receive it and respond. Our response may well involve acts of service and praise, but these are response to the love God has already offered us. In our baptism prayer we are reminded that God has done so much for us, before we even know of it.

So, what is truly important to us? Remembering that God loves us and has called us to be his own, remembering that there is a place prepared for us in his kingdom and living that truth in our lives so that other can know the love of God too. That is our priority as we seek to follow Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN: StF 489 All I once held dear

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4IjusP8Z8w>

All I once held dear, built my life upon
All this world reveres, and wars to own
All I once thought gain I have counted loss
Spent and worthless now, compared to this

Knowing you, Jesus
Knowing you, there is no greater thing
You're my all, you're the best
You're my joy, my righteousness
And I love you, Lord.

Now my heart's desire is to know you more
To be found in you and known as yours
To possess by faith what I could not earn
All-surpassing gift of righteousness.

Oh, to know the power of your risen life
And to know You in Your sufferings
To become like you in your death, my Lord
So with you to live and never die.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for God's world. As we pray for God's world, we are mindful that we have not been wise, loving stewards of it. We have been greedy and selfish, rather than focusing on the beauty and wonder, and encouraging flourishing. The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for world rulers, that they would rule with truth and justice, mercy and grace and that they would remember that all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Jesus Christ. The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

We pray for God's church. We pray for the church worldwide, that we would unite in the common goal to worship and serve God together in a spirit of unity and holiness. We pray for the church where we are and for our circuit, remembering especially Debbie as she prepares to move and asking for blessing upon her retirement. The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

We take time now to pray for those who are known to us. We pray for those who are going through times of trial that they would know God's peace and comfort. We pray for those going through times of joy, that they would know Your love and not take this time for granted. We pray also for ourselves asking that God will guide us in our service to Him. The Lord hears our prayer. **Thanks be to God.**

We bring all of our prayers together as we share in the prayer Jesus gave us
Our Father..

Blessing of our Gifts

Lord, we offer to you our gifts and our lives to be blessed in your service. Help us to do so with joy, knowing that we have already received the greatest gift of all, your love revealed in Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN: StF 341 All for Jesus

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2M1f_34veo

All for Jesus--all for Jesus,
this our song shall ever be;
for we have no hope, nor Saviour,
if we have not hope in thee.

All for Jesus--thou wilt give us
strength to serve thee, hour by hour,
none can move us from thy presence,
while we trust thy love and power.

All for Jesus--thou hast loved us;
all for Jesus--thou hast died;
all for Jesus--thou art with us;
all for Jesus crucified.

All for Jesus--all for Jesus--
this the Church's song must be;
till, at last, we all are gathered
one in love and one in thee.

W.J. Sparrow-Simpson (1859-1952)

A prayer of dismissal

God's love surround you, God's Spirit guide you,
God's whisper cheer you, God's peace calm you,
God's shield protect you, God's wisdom arm you,
wherever God may lead you. **AMEN.**

THE GRACE

We say together...

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all ever more. Amen.**

Some prayers taken from www.faithandworship.org
Intercessions adapted from materials by Matthew Ramsden, a local preacher in Bolton Circuit
CCLI:7749.