

worship@home resources for 17 May

How do we express our love for Jesus? How do we live the life Jesus spoke about and experience the peace he promises to give? And what is the role of the Holy Spirit in connecting us with Jesus and with God? These are all questions that arise from our readings this week.

CALL TO WORSHIP (inspired by Psalm 66)

Come and hear
the good news of God

Come and see

what Jesus has done

Come and explore the truth of the gospel

Come and receive afresh the Holy Spirit of God

HYMN TiS 217 Love divine, all loves excelling

Love Divine, all loves excelling
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return and never,
never more thy temples leave:
thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be,
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love and praise.

Charles Wesley 1707-88 *alt.*

YouTube version here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQrNMJrgbyM>

PRAYER

Holy God, we come to worship,
as people who would like to think that we love you
with all our hearts and souls, and with all our might ...

**... but there are so many other things in our lives
that clamour for our attention
that we often relegate you to Sundays.**

Most of us really do want to hear your voice
above all of the other voices in our lives.
But we get bogged down in the daily routine.

We forget who we are.

We forget who you are.

We forget what the church is supposed to be.

So here we are, coming to seek your face today,
asking that you would make yourself known to us,
**that you would help us to recognise your presence in our lives,
that you would continue to challenge us, inspire us,
and make us into the people you want us to be.**

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Praise God, who listens when we pray,
and who responds with unfailing love!

We praise you for hearing our prayer.

BIBLE READINGS

John 14:18-27

‘I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’ Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.’

‘I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.’

Acts 17:22-31

Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, 'Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps reach out for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we too are his offspring." Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.'

REFLECTION



The reading from John's Gospel continues last week's passage. Jesus is reassuring the disciples of how they can continue to live with love, hope and peace when he is no longer physically present. The key is the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst who will remind the community of all that Jesus taught, and especially the command to love one another.

- Is our love for one another – following the commandment of Jesus – the prerequisite for experiencing God's love, or is Jesus' example and ministry of love the inspiration and source of our love? How does this work in your life?

The peace that Jesus promises comes from God's Spirit, a deep and abiding peace.

- When have you experienced this peace in these challenging times?
How is this peace different to the peace that the world gives?

HYMN TIS 699 A new commandment
A new commandment I give unto you
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this will others know you are my disciples
if you have love one for another;
by this will others know that you are my disciples
if you have love one for another.

Source unknown.

For a YouTube version of this song watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yy7W8avIXIY>

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

*Spend some time in contemplation, bringing to mind people and situations that need prayer.
Then when you are ready, pray like this ...*

Merciful God,
we bring before you today those you have placed on our heart ... (*name the people*)
... may they know that they are loved by you.

Even as we pray for those we have named who need your care,
we ask that you would empower us to be your instruments
of healing and peace.

Reveal your presence with them and with us, God of life,
we may be empowered to serve your world,
and so give glory to you;
for we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BENEDICTION

We are not alone: God's love is in us

This is the truth

God knows our hopes, our fears, our questions

This is the truth

God is leading us into justice and wonder

God is joyfully walking us home

SENDING SONG TIS 782 Go now in peace

Go now in peace, go now in peace,
may the love of God surround you
everywhere, everywhere, you may go.

Words and music N. Sleeth. Used with permission.

To listen to this song as a round, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRW1E0FzXek>