

## **Worship at Home – 25th May 2025 (6th Sunday of Easter)**

A short act of worship for use in people's homes prepared by Marilyn Britt.

### **Introduction**

Good morning and welcome to worship at home on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2025. My name is Marilyn Britt, and I am here to lead worship. I am all prepared with some flowers from the garden and a candle reminding me that Christ is the light of the world. When I look back at the things I have done, I know that even if I didn't realise it, God has so often been at my side and has guided what I have done. I didn't ever think I would do some of the things I have – and neither would have my parents. We hear today about how Paul and friends travelled to Macedonia – northern Greece to help spread the word of Jesus Christ.

### **Call to worship (John 14:26-27)**

<sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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.

### **Hymn – STF 418 – We have a gospel to proclaim** Edward J Burns (born 1938)

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| 1 | We have a gospel to proclaim,<br>good news for all throughout the earth;<br>the gospel of a Saviour's name:<br>we sing his glory, tell his worth. | 2 | Tell of his birth at Bethlehem<br>not in a royal house or hall<br>but in a stable dark and dim,<br>the Word made flesh, a light for all.           |
| 3 | Tell of his death at Calvary,<br>hated by those he came to save,<br>in lonely suffering on the Cross;<br>for all he loved his life he gave.       | 4 | Tell of that glorious Easter morn:<br>empty the tomb, for he was free.<br>He broke the power of death and hell<br>that we might share his victory. |
| 5 | Tell of his reign at God's right hand,<br>by all creation glorified.<br>He sends his Spirit on his Church<br>to live for him, the Lamb who died.  | 6 | Now we rejoice to name him King:<br>Jesus is Lord of all the earth.<br>This gospel-message we proclaim:<br>we sing his glory, tell his worth.      |

### **Prayers of praise, adoration, confession and assurance of forgiveness**

Lord God, we come to give you praise and adoration. We know you love us, and we need you to direct us to right way to live and to tell others about you. We know the story of your salvation for us, that you died on the cross and rose again on the third day. You told us of the coming of the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us the power to do what you have planned. You are there for us whatever day of the week it is, and always know what is best for us, you wait patiently for us to come to you. You want us to be still and listen and, when we do, you amaze us with your loving kindness. You call us to journey on through difficulties and challenge us with us every step of the way. We love you and worship you, O Lord.

Lord we are sorry we don't get things right. We are often reluctant to do as you ask even though we know deep down that it is the right thing to do and you will be with us. We are frightened of putting our whole trust in you. We get stuck in our old ways, nervous of what you might call us to do. Forgive us, Lord, when we fall so far short of your best for us. Be our guide in all the storms of life, teach us to trust you and lead us forward.

God, you who are always there, help us to feel you close when our journey through life becomes bumpy. God, who knows all things, help us to follow you through the unexpected. God, who loves us, help us to always know that love. Because of Jesus, God's love and light will shine upon us and because of Jesus, we are loved and forgiven. **Amen**

### **Bible reading – Acts 16:9 – 15**

<sup>9</sup> During the night Paul had a vision. He saw a man from Macedonia standing and begging him. "Come over to Macedonia!" the man said. "Help us!" <sup>10</sup> After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia. We decided that God had called us to preach the good news there.

#### *Lydia Becomes a Believer in Philippi*

<sup>11</sup> At Troas we got into a boat. We sailed straight for Samothrace. The next day we went on to Neapolis. <sup>12</sup> From there we travelled to Philippi, a Roman colony. It is an important city in that part of Macedonia. We stayed there several days.

<sup>13</sup> On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate. We walked down to the river. There we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered together. <sup>14</sup> One of the women listening was from the city of Thyatira. Her name was Lydia, and her business was selling purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to accept Paul's message. <sup>15</sup> She and her family were baptized. Then she invited us to her home. "Do you consider me a believer in the Lord?" she asked. "If you do, come and stay at my house." She succeeded in getting us to go home with her.

### **Hymn – STF 443 – Come, let us sing of a wonderful love Robert Walmsley (1831-1905)**

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| 1 | Come let us sing of a wonderful love,<br>tender and true;<br>out of the heart of the Father above,<br>streaming to me and to you:<br>wonderful love<br>dwells in the heart of the Father above.  | 2 | Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,<br>joyfully came;<br>came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,<br>sharing their sorrow and shame;<br>seeking the lost,<br>saving, redeeming at measureless cost. |
| 3 | Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;<br>why do they roam?<br>Love only waits to forgive and forget;<br>Home! weary wanderers, home!<br>Wonderful love<br>dwells in the heart of the Father above. | 4 | Come to my heart, O Thou wonderful<br>love,<br>come and abide,<br>lifting my life till it rises above<br>envy and falsehood and pride;<br>seeking to be<br>lowly and humble, a learner of Thee.               |

### **Reflection on the reading**

Isn't it lovely to be with a group of friends chatting over a cup of tea talking about this that and the other. In so many ways it is how friendships and communities grow. It also helps us grow. We learn from our own experiences but also listening to others gives us an insight into other people's experiences. We all see the world in different ways. Our upbringing influences the way we think and do. I was fortunate to be brought up in a home where Christian values were taught, expected and valued. But we always knew that there were some families who were different. Not everyone has a steady job, a warm home, good nutritious food on the table, shoes on feet and know they are loved.

Before Paul was a believer, he persecuted Christians who started obeying Christ's final command to take the gospel worldwide. Paul's personal encounter with Jesus changed his life. His fierce intensity was channelled for the gospel. Paul was very religious, and his intentions and efforts were sincere. He was a good Pharisee, who knew the Bible and sincerely believed that the Christian movement was a danger to Judaism. So, Paul hated the Christian faith and persecuted Christians without mercy. Paul had been asked to go to Damascus to capture Christians and take them back to Jerusalem. God stopped him on the Damascus road. Paul personally met Jesus Christ, and his life was never the same again.

Until Paul's conversion little had been done to carry the gospel to non-Jews. But Paul was transformed to a preacher of Christ. He preached for Christ throughout the Roman empire on three missionary journeys. He was sensitive to God's leading and, despite his strong personality always did as God directed.

So, when Paul had a vision of a man wanting him to go to Macedonia (northern Greece) to help them, he went. Paul was with Silas, Timothy and Luke (who wrote the Acts of the Apostles) and they got ready to go immediately. Paul recognised the Holy Spirit was sending him on another journey. They went to Troas and boarded a ship and sailed to the island of Samothrace, then on to Neapolis, the port for the city of Philippi. The Aegean Sea has really strong northerly winds making travel on the sea difficult. It would have taken Paul and his friends several days to get there and have been quite an effort

Paul goes down to the river outside Philippi where he joins a group of women who gathered for prayer outside the city wall. (Worshipping was prohibited against an unrecognised religion within the walls of Philippi). Lydia, an influential businesswoman, was a dealer in purple cloth, so she was probably wealthy as purple cloth was valuable and expensive. It was worn as a sign of nobility or royalty. Lydia was a worshipper of God and opened her heart to God through Paul's teaching and encouraged her household to be baptised and it became a Christian home.

Paul was not the only person to travel to preach the gospel and talk about God and Jesus Christ. Many, many people have continued to do it too. It had to be done face to face or word of mouth as there wasn't the technology. There were many itinerant preachers and of course John and Charles Wesley travelled up and down Britain and further afield into Europe and the Americas. We can remember David Livingstone in Africa. Many Christians have gone to far off countries to take the message across and nowadays help with so many other projects to help those where life is more difficult.

Wherever we are we can explore our faith and be open to the Holy Spirit. Wherever God is leading us, he will be with us and giving us the resources to share. We may be sitting down over that cup of tea and sharing the good news together which can lead to deepening our faith and love.

I am going to read Psalm 67, we don't know who wrote it, but it is joyful. Joy comes from spreading the news about God around the world.

### **Bible reading – Psalm 67**

God, have mercy on us and bless us.

May you be pleased with us.

<sup>2</sup> Then your ways will be known on earth.

All nations will see that you have the power to save.

<sup>3</sup> God, may the nations praise you.

May all the people on earth praise you.

<sup>4</sup> May the nations be glad and sing for joy.

You rule the people of the earth fairly.

You guide the nations of the earth.

<sup>5</sup> God, may the nations praise you.

May all the people on earth praise you.

<sup>6</sup> The land produces its crops.

God, our God, blesses us.

<sup>7</sup> May God continue to bless us.

Then people from one end of the earth to the other  
will have respect for him. **Amen**

### **Prayers for the world, others and ourselves**

God, we bring you the world in which we live. We come to you for your wisdom and guidance about many things. Over the last few weeks, it has been brought home to us how serious climate change is. The wind, fire and floods have brought devastation and death to different countries, and we too notice the change in our seasons. We pray for our farmers anxious about the lack of rainfall and the future during the last few weeks. We remember all those affected by these catastrophes:

Gracious God, we pray for all those fleeing persecution, terrorism, war torn countries and those places where people are unsafe. We pray for understanding, kindness and care so that wherever they are they may be safe and loved. We remember those in the mission fields and pray for their calling and safety and the importance of making a difference.

We pray for those who are broken. In particular we pray for young people and their families who have been affected by knife crime. We pray for those who pick up the pieces from terrible crimes – that you will strengthen them, be with them, comfort them. We pray for justice and peace and that love can prevail.

We pray for those struggling in this country in our economic crisis. Those who are hungry, homeless, jobless, ill, struggling with mental and physical health and probably emotional and spiritual health too. We pray that both professional and voluntary agencies can continue to resource those who need help.

We pray for those in ill-health and those unable to care for themselves. We pray for those suffering from whatever cause particularly those bereaved, anxious and worried about what they can't control. We pray that they will realise it is in your hands.

Gracious God, there are not words deep enough to thank you for all your goodness, no deeds great enough to thank you for all your love, no gifts costly enough to thank you for your gift in Jesus Christ. We want to make some kind of response to express our gratitude for all you have done for us. We offer ourselves in our different ways and use it reach out to others so they may know of your love. In joyful and grateful praise. **Amen**

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

## Hymn – STF 410 – Lord, your Church on earth is seeking Hugh Sherlock (1905- 1998)

- 1 Lord, your Church on earth is seeking  
your renewal from above;  
teach us all the art of speaking  
with the accent of your love.  
We would heed your great commission:  
Sending us to every place-  
preach, baptise, fulfil my mission,  
serve with love and share my grace.
- 2 Freedom give to those in bondage,  
lift the burdens caused by sin.  
Give new hope, new strength and courage,  
grant release from fears within:  
light for darkness; joy for sorrow;  
love for hatred; peace for strife.  
These and countless blessings follow  
as the Spirit gives new life.
- 3 In the streets of every city  
where the bruised and lonely dwell,  
let us show the Saviour's pity,  
let us of his mercy tell.  
In all lands and with all races  
let us serve, and seek to bring  
all the world to render praises,  
Christ, to you, Redeemer, King.

### Blessing

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us – so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

And may the blessing of God, Jesus Christ his Son and the power of the Holy Spirit be with us and those we meet now and always. **Amen**

Bible readings from [New International Reader's Version \(NIRV\)](#)

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