

Worship at Home – 29th June 2025 (13th Sunday in Ordinary Time)
A short act of worship for use in people's homes prepared by Claire Simpson.

Introduction

My name is Revd Claire Simpson, and I'm delighted to be sharing in worship with you this week. I'm also delighted that joining me is Heather Symons. I work alongside Heather as we share pastoral duties in the Basingstoke part of the Berkshire and Hampshire Borders Circuit. We shall be hearing from Heather in our service today and she will be joining in the responses in our prayers (they are in the bolder type if you are following the printed order of service).

Call to worship

Jesus calls us into his presence now.

He knows our thoughts, our hopes and fears, our doubts.

He knows we are willing to follow him, but sometimes things hold us back.

Today, in these moments, we try to focus completely on our freedom in Christ, on being the best people we can be and showing kindness to everyone we meet.

Hymn – STF 59 – Shine, Jesus, shine Graham Kendrick (born 1950)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Lord, the light of Your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining:
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon
us;
set us free by the truth You now bring
us, shine on me, shine on me.
<i>Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and
mercy:
send forth Your word,
Lord, and let there be light!</i> | 2 Lord, I come to Your awesome presence,
from the shadows into Your radiance;
by the blood I may enter Your brightness:
search me, try me, consume all my
darkness, shine on me, shine on me.
<i>Chorus</i> |
| | 3 As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
so our faces display Your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory:
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story,
shine on me, shine on me.
<i>Chorus</i> |

A prayer of confession and assurance of forgiveness

Lord God, we praise you.

We marvel that all through the ages you have called people to follow you.

And when they have listened and followed your call, amazing things have happened.

And so you call us! For you trust us to be part of your plans and purposes.

Thank you for the new life we have in you.

We owe absolutely everything to you.

You give us freedom to be our best selves as we bring our worship to you.

We are set for freedom, not bound by our old ways.

But we confess, Lord, sometimes we find that so hard.

Sometimes the past creeps up on us

when we are not kind, when we don't consider others,

forgive us, Lord. Teach us to love our neighbours as ourselves.

When we are in disagreement with someone, so sure that we are right,

forgive us, Lord. Teach us to love our neighbours as ourselves.

when we don't appreciate our freedom in Christ, or use it for our own ends, forgive us, Lord. Teach us to love our neighbours as ourselves.

God calls us to be free.

He forgives our sins, not so we can sin again, but so we can serve one another, humbly, in love. We belong to you, Lord, we are forgiven and made whole. **Amen**

Bible reading – Luke 9:51-62

The Samaritans Do Not Welcome Jesus

⁵¹ The time grew near for Jesus to be taken up to heaven. So, he made up his mind to go to Jerusalem. ⁵² He sent messengers on ahead. They went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him. ⁵³ But the people there did not welcome Jesus. That was because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴ The disciples James and John saw this. They asked, "Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them?" ⁵⁵ But Jesus turned and commanded them not to do it. ⁵⁶ Then Jesus and his disciples went on to another village.

The Cost of Following Jesus

⁵⁷ Once Jesus and those who were with him were walking along the road. A man said to Jesus, "I will follow you no matter where you go." ⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens. Birds have nests. But the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." ⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let dead people bury their own dead. You go and tell others about God's kingdom." ⁶¹ Still another person said, "I will follow you, Lord. But first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." ⁶² Jesus replied, "Suppose someone starts to plough and then looks back. That person is not fit for service in God's kingdom."

Bible reading – Galatians 5: 1, 13-25

Christ Sets Us Free

¹ Christ has set us free to enjoy our freedom. So, remain strong in the faith. Don't let the chains of slavery hold you again.

¹³ My brothers and sisters, you were chosen to be free. But don't use your freedom as an excuse to live under the power of sin. Instead, serve one another in love. ¹⁴ The whole law is fulfilled by obeying this one command. "Love your neighbour as you love yourself." ¹⁵ If you say or do things that harm one another, watch out! You could end up destroying one another.

The Works of the Flesh

¹⁶ So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. ¹⁷ The desires controlled by sin do not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit does not want what the desires controlled by sin delight in. The two are at war with each other. That's why you are not supposed to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of the law.

¹⁹ The result of sin's control in our lives is clear. It includes sexual sins, impure acts and wild living. ²⁰ It includes worshiping statues of gods and worshiping evil powers. It also includes hatred and fighting, jealousy and fits of anger. Sinful desire is interested only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little groups. ²¹ It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties. It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who live like this will not receive God's kingdom.

The Fruit of the Spirit

²² But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful ²³ and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful desires to his cross. They don't want these things anymore. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Hymn – STF 673 – Will you and follow me John L Bell (b 1949) & Graham Maule (1958-2019)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 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? | 2 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? |
| 4 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? | 5 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. |

Reflection on the readings

Today we are focusing on what it means to follow Jesus, how he has set us free to be filled with the fruits of the Spirit through faith.

People can choose to follow lots of things in their lifetime. Maybe you follow a football team or another sport with lots of enthusiasm. Maybe you follow a particular political party. Maybe you follow someone in the public eye with great interest because of their line of work. If you are on Facebook, you will follow other folk, and other folk might follow you. In fact, your popularity could be determined by how many followers you have on social media!

When we think of our own lives we might follow lots of different things but choosing to follow Jesus *feels* different and *is* different. I wonder if you can remember when you first made the decision to follow Jesus? It might feel like a long time ago or possibly in the more recent past. Was it a dramatic moment or a gradual realisation that Jesus gave his life for you and was calling you to respond? In terms of my own journey of faith, I was born into a Methodist family and so I have always been in the Methodist Church. When I was confirmed at the age of 15, I definitely felt the presence of the Holy Spirit (even if I couldn't articulate this at the time) and since then I have tried to follow Jesus and serve Him in my life.

Heather, I wonder about your story of faith – when did you make a commitment to follow Jesus?

My parents weren't church goers themselves, but my dad took us all to Sunday School at the local Baptist Church every week. I'm one of six children so I think possibly he wanted to give my mum some peace and quiet for a few hours on a Sunday morning as he would always take us to the park afterwards!

I loved Sunday School and as I got older, I joined the Youth Group at the church and when I was about 14 a group of us went to a rally at Westminster Central Hall in London. I can't remember who was speaking there but it was for me the day I committed myself to Jesus and became a Christian. I remember vividly the Spirit moving me and although we were up in the dress circle, I felt compelled to leave my seat and my friends and go down to the front to accept Jesus into my life. I was quite a shy girl back then and so this was quite out of character for me. It was an amazing experience and even now, all these years later when I recall that day, I can remember the power of the feeling of the Holy Spirit within me.

When we choose to follow Jesus this changes everything. I wonder if this is the point that Jesus is making in the reading from Luke set for this week. We are called to live a particular way of life and to give our full attention and full commitment to God. In return we receive so much. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, makes it clear that we are given freedom – set free to be the people that God has called us to be. Within that we are also called to a disciplined way of life and to nurture the fruits of the Spirit. Sometimes that will be easy for us, but sometimes we will need to deny ourselves to live out our Christian calling. As I mentioned at the start of our service this week, Heather has just begun pastoral work in the Basingstoke part of our circuit. She is also about to be commissioned as an Anna Chaplain (someone who is trained to work with older people and understand the particular spiritual needs that folk might encounter in later life).

So Heather, I wonder if you can see how, through this work, God is working some of his spiritual fruits in and through you? Pastoral caring is a real privilege, and I am enjoying my new position very much. It really is an opportunity to understand and share my experience of receiving God's love and care in my own life. We all need pastoral care and although caring takes many forms, my work enables me to reach out in friendship to others; to listen, to express interest, gentleness, friendliness and concern. I hope and pray that in offering myself in service to others, God is working some of his fruits in and through me.

Thank you, Heather, I know that God is doing exactly that, and we are thankful for the ministry you are offering.

So, as we reflect on our own journeys of faith and what it means for us to follow Jesus, we pray that the fruits of the Spirit might be seen in us and that in being with others we might share something of God's love and care for all people, whoever and wherever they are.

Prayers for the world, others and ourselves

Loving Father, in this week's Gospel reading we see Jesus responding to the situation he found himself in with calm. In Galatians we read that one of the fruits of the Spirit is peace.

So, as we seek to follow you in today's world, we pray for calm and peace where there is violence, war and turmoil, trouble and distress.

We pray for those who mediate, negotiate and work for justice and peace. May they listen carefully and speak with wisdom. We pray for patience, consideration and kindness to be more evident in your world today and especially in those places of great suffering.

Loving Father, **listen to our prayer.**

We also pray for those who are anxious, ill, struggling in their daily lives and worried about what the future holds. Bring your calm and peace in times of upset. Help us to respond to others with gentleness and generosity.

Loving Father, **listen to our prayer.**

Loving Father, in this week's reading, when Jesus arrived in a village, he was not given a welcome. We live in a world full of displaced people, many of whom experience what it is like to be unwelcome. We know that you see everyone who has been forced to leave their home; everyone who has fled in terror and everyone whose future is highly uncertain. Remind us to keep praying for people even when they no longer occupy the headlines. Thank you for the people who work diligently with asylum seekers and refugees, for those who advocate for others and speak for people who have no voice. For those who share your love and care.

Loving Father, **listen to our prayer.**

Loving Father, in this week's reading we see that the call of Jesus requires us to pay whole-hearted attention to the work of the kingdom. As we move through this coming week help us to notice signs of your kingdom. Help us to see your presence in situations and to experience something of your joy and kindness through others, praying that we may be channels of your joy and kindness to others as well.

Loving Father, **listen to our prayer.**

Loving Father, this week's reading reminds us that we need to decide to follow Jesus every day. So, help us to make space for Christ. Help us to prioritise our relationship with you, Lord, and to make time to learn more and grow in prayer.

Loving Father, **listen to our prayer.**

We offer them all in Jesus' name. Amen

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

Hymn – STF 504 – May the mind of Christ my Saviour Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | May the mind of Christ my Saviour
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do and say. | 2 | May the word of God dwell richly
in my heart from hour to hour
so that all may see I triumph
only through his power. |
| 3 | May the peace of God my Father
rule my life in everything,
that I may be calm to comfort
sick and sorrowing. | 4 | May the love of Jesus fill me,
as the waters fill the sea;
him exalting, self-abasing,
this is victory. |
| | 5 | | May I run the race before me,
strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus
as I onward go. |

Closing words

As this time of worship draws to a close,
help us to move forward into this coming week as people of love, joy, peace and kindness.
Make us servant-hearted, willing to love our neighbour as ourselves. **Amen**

And now may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us, with all those who we know and love, and with those we are called to love, now and forever more. **Amen**

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

All hymns reproduced under CCLi 570443

Other material from © Roots for Churches Ltd