

13th September 2020 – Morning Service

Rev Josephine Soon

Call to Worship

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise him all creatures here below

Praise him above ye heavenly host

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost

The words of God speaks to us today: (Exodus 12: 2 & 14)

This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

Lord, we choose to praise and worship You today.

You know how to break through the difficulties in our life.

We choose not to be overwhelmed with circumstances,
but instead we choose to behold your beauty and greatness.

We choose to say blessed be Your name. You are my victorious God.

We will praise Your name and proclaim Your salvation day after day.

We will declare Your glory among the nations, Your marvellous deeds among all peoples (Psalm 96:1-3).

We will sing to the Lord a new song.

Opening Prayers

Let us pray together:

Our Father and our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new Connexion year, academic year, we confess our need of Your presence and Your guidance as we face the future.

We are aware that so many people are still unable to gather in a church or chapel to worship you. We know you hear our prayers from wherever we are, but for many our desire is to gather together for mutual support and to praise your name. Hear the prayers of our minds as we try to find new ways to worship you. Hear the prayer of our souls as we long to draw closer to you.

We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us-but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives during this coming year.

In the midst of life's uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of Your unchanging love. In the midst of life's inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to You for the stability and comfort we will need.

In the midst of life's temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in Your sight, regardless of the cost.

In the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world.

Help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need.

May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist:

"Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end" (Psalm 119:33).

We pray for our nation and its leaders during these difficult times,
We pray for all those who are seeking to bring healing and justice to our dangerous and troubled world.
We pray especially for Your protection on all those who serve in our Health and care services as well as the
work of the research for the vaccine,
we thank You for their commitment to defend our health, even at the cost of their own lives.
Be with their families also, and assure them of Your love and concern for them.

Bring our divided nations together, and give us a greater vision of what You would have us to be.
Your Word reminds us that "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).

As we look back over this past year, we thank You for Your goodness to us-far beyond what we have
deserved. May we never presume on Your past goodness or forget all Your mercies to us, but may they
instead lead us to repentance, and to a new commitment to make You the foundation and centre of our
lives this year. And so, our Father, we thank You for the promise and hope of this new year, and we look
forward to it with expectancy and faith. This I ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour, who by His death
and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come.**Amen.**

Song – I surrender all

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| 1) All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live. | 3) All to Jesus I surrender,
Make me, Saviour, wholly Thine;
Let me feel Thy Holy Spirit,
Truly know that Thou art mine. |
| Ch) <i>I surrender all, I surrender all;
All to Thee, my blessed Saviour,
I surrender all.</i> | 4) All to Jesus I surrender,
Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power,
Let Thy blessing fall on me. |
| 2) All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow;
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,
Take me Jesus, take me now. | 5) All to Jesus I surrender,
Now to feel Thy sacred flame;
O, the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory to His name! |

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Reading: Matthew 18:21-35 – Forgiveness & the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded

with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Reflection – One in God – remember the Lord your God

Matthew 18 is devoted especially to those who follow Jesus, i.e., church.

This is not teaching us about how to live with people of different faiths, because Kingdom people seek different blessings and benefits, and have different attitudes to those of the world (Matthew 5).

This is for people who by the Spirit, believe in the Lord Jesus and know God the Father.

- 'The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven' - the greatest one in the church is he/ she who humbles himself/herself
- 'The Parable of the Lost Sheep' - God through Church mission – attention and effort are given to those who are lost/ weak in faith/ sin
- 'A Brother who sins...' - Confront the sin but love one another.
- 'The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant'

We are One Body – God's dwelling place. God is Holy and through His Spirit has sanctified us, set us apart from the world, we now are Holy. The tensions and trials which arise from the sins we commit against one another do have an impact not just on individual relationships, but on the community's salvation as a whole (Mat 18:17 and Matthew 5:29-30).

Remember, it was and is through Christ only, we are taken together as One Body. This is a composite picture of the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom we practise, both of which are driven by forgiveness. We are brought together as One Body by forgiveness: God forgave our sins..., enabled us to forgive those who have sinned against us. Invite the Spirit to cleanse His Holy Temple – the Church. 'Be Holy, for I am Holy.'

Where there is sin, Jesus says, confront it directly, one-to-one, face-to-face. (The flow of the passage is important to make note of, as there is movement from the individual to the communal. If this does not solve the problem, include someone else in the conversation, and if all else fails take it to the community as a whole. From individual confrontation to communal attention, the movement of the passage is a progression that follows the development of the hypothetical conflict from its origins in individual matters to its conclusion at the community level. At each point along the way sin has implications for everyone involved).

StF 338 – There is a redeemer

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| 1) There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son.
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One. | 2) Jesus my Redeemer,
Name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
O for sinners slain. |
| Ch) <i>Thank You, O my Father,
For giving us Your Son,
And leaving Your Spirit till
The work on earth is done.</i> | 3) When I stand in glory
I will see His face,
And there I'll serve my King for ever
In that holy place. |

Reflection – Lordship: - Remember who is your Lord

Today, the message of God comes to us, first: Remember who is your Lord.

Matthew 18:21, 'Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me,...' The disciple, Peter, was conscious about his personal relationship with Jesus as 'Lord – servant/slave' model. As Christians, we have only one Lord, Jesus Christ (1 Cor 8:6 as we declared in our Baptism creed).

Jesus expects us to imitate him. Christians following their Lord by imitating his life and obeying his commands. Remember: We were bought at a price. We belong to Jesus.

We are His purchased possession. When a person yields to the lordship of Jesus Christ, he or she acknowledges His ownership and gives up his or her personal rights.

Yielding to the Lordship of Jesus Christ also involves total and unreserved obedience.

If Jesus is the Lord of your life, you are going to do what He tells you to do.

Jesus expects us to deny ourselves in following him (Luke 9:23). People are willing to pay a high price for something they value.

First, through Jesus Christ, I (we) have been forgiven and the Lord encourages me (we) to forgive other believers in turn. In Matthew's discourse on the Church, Peter has a problem about forgiveness and makes a generous suggestion of forgiving a person seven times, only to get an astounding response from Jesus that he should forgive a person seventy-seven times. Rather than getting into the possibilities of doing this we might benefit from a reflection on The Lord's Prayer in which we ask to be forgiven only in so far as we forgive others.

In your life at this moment:

- Is there someone who might have promised you something but was unable to fulfil their promises to you?
- Is there someone who made an agreement/contract with you but now they turn away from their commitments?
- Is there someone who has turned away from you, postponing or refusing to give the things you deserved to have?

Today, Jesus throws light on the person who is called to forgive, based on the nature of God's forgiveness.

Today, Lord Jesus Christ calls you to forgive from the heart, not just with words.

Today, if you forgive from the heart, you will claim the blessings of God in you, by which you will grow to have the very nature of God: merciful, humble, obedient, faithful and peaceful.

Tell God that you are ready to forgive those who sins against you and pray the prayer he taught us - 'forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.'

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the
glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are
yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Dear Lord our God,

Loving God we hold before you today:

Those who began their their period as a Probationary Minister this week...how to meet the church?

Those ministers who have moved home this summer....Rev Helen Croft & Rev Ruth Child...

Those preachers, who have not led worship for many months....call to preach the Gospel..

For churches who are struggling to know when to re-open....

For churches who are started to worship together ... new way to grow in fellowship...

We pray for those we love:

For those who had died before us...

For those who mourn...

For those who have been ill...

For the frontline workers..

For those struggling to find a job or those who worry might lost their job...

For those who have started or who are about to start school...

We pray for your world:

For those parts of the world devastated by COVID19.

For refuges and those living in fear.

We pray for ourselves – in a moment of quiet hold before God what is on your heart today.

Binding all our prayers together we (sing) say:

Song – I have decided to follow Jesus

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| 1) I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
I have decided to follow Jesus;
No turning back, no turning back. | 3) The world behind me, the cross before me;
the world behind me, the cross before me,
the world behind me, the cross before me;
No turning back, no turning back. |
| 2) Though none go with me, I still will follow;
though none go with me, I still will follow;
though none go with me, I still will follow;
No turning back, no turning back. | |

Anon

Closing Prayer/Blessing

May the Grace of the Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, for evermore, **Amen.**