

This short act of worship has been produced for you.
If you are well enough and able,
why not spend a few moments with God, perhaps at a time
when you would normally be sharing with others in church and
pray for them as they pray for you.

On this third Sunday after Pentecost, we give God thanks and praise for waking us up this morning. We thank Him for life and breath and that, although we are still unable to meet in our church buildings, He has made it possible for us to fellowship together by sharing in this service. Father God, with our eyes fixed on you and our hearts open and willing, let us be filled with Your presence.

Hymn What a faithful God (Singing the Faith 58)

Sing / read / pray / proclaim the words or listen to it here:

<https://youtu.be/iuljQ3ueaxk>

Lord, I come before your throne of grace;
I find rest in your presence
and fullness of joy.
In worship and wonder
I behold your face,
singing what a faithful God have I.

What a faithful God have I,
what a faithful God.

What a faithful God have I,
faithful in every way.

Lord of mercy, you have heard my cry;
through the storm you're the beacon,
my song in the night.
In the shelter of your wings,
hear my heart's reply,
singing what a faithful God have I.

What a faithful God have I,
what a faithful God.
What a faithful God have I,
faithful in every way.

Lord all sovereign,
granting peace from heaven,
let me comfort those who suffer
with the comfort you have given.
I will tell of Your great love
For as long as I live,
singing what a faithful God have I.

What a faithful God have I,
what a faithful God.
What a faithful God have I,
faithful in every way.

Robert Critchley (b. 1959) and Dawn Critchley (b. 1965)

Prayer of adoration

Gracious and Loving Father blessed be Your name.
You are worthy of all praise and adoration.
Hallelujah be to you on high, our King of kings and Lord of lords,
maker of heaven and earth and all good things,
we give you praise.
God of majesty and power,
who spoke and this world was,
who breathed and this world lived,
who counts the hairs upon our head,
who sees our thoughts and reads our hearts,
who loves us more than we deserve,
who can be compared to you?
No one Lord.
For your love for us is immeasurable and your peace surpasses
all understanding.
You are everything that we desire, be with us now.
Bless us that we might be a blessing to others.
We will continue to praise you not just in this time,
but forevermore;
in Jesus name we pray. **Amen.**

Prayer of confession

Merciful God, we humble ourselves in your presence asking for
your forgiveness for all the wrong things we have said, thought
about and acted upon, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

Forgive us Lord for when we have carried anger in our hearts
and refused to let go of what others have done to us.
We are asking for your forgiveness for when we have failed to
see each other as you see us.
We are sorry Lord, for leaning on our own understanding and
not including you in our plans, and for continually putting others
and possessions before you.
We pray that you keep us on the path of righteousness, work in
us, transform us and make us anew.
We thank you God, that through your son our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ, you hear our prayers and our sins are forgiven.
Amen.

Gospel reading Matthew 10:24-39 (NCV)

²⁴ "A student is not better than his teacher, and a servant is not
better than his master. ²⁵ A student should be satisfied to
become like his teacher; a servant should be satisfied to become
like his master. If the head of the family is called Beelzebul, then
the other members of the family will be called worse names!

Fear God, Not People

²⁶ "So don't be afraid of those people, because everything that
is hidden will be shown. Everything that is secret will be made
known. ²⁷ I tell you these things in the dark, but I want you to
tell them in the light. What you hear whispered in your ear you
should shout from the housetops. ²⁸ Don't be afraid of people,
who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. The only one you
should fear is the one who can destroy the soul and the body in

hell. ²⁹ Two sparrows cost only a penny, but not even one of them can die without your Father's knowing it. ³⁰ God even knows how many hairs are on your head. ³¹ So don't be afraid. you are worth much more than many sparrows.

Tell People About Your Faith

³² "All those who stand before others and say they believe in me, I will say before my Father in heaven that they belong to me. ³³ But all who stand before others and say they do not believe in me, I will say before my Father in heaven that they do not belong to me. ³⁴ "Don't think that I came to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ I have come so that 'a son will be against his father, a daughter will be against her mother, a daughter-in-law will be against her mother-in-law. ³⁶ A person's enemies will be members of his own family.' (Micah 7:6)

³⁷ "Those who love their father or mother more than they love me are not worthy to be my followers. Those who love their son or daughter more than they love me are not worthy to be my followers. ³⁸ Whoever is not willing to carry the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Those who try to hold on to their lives will give up true life. Those who give up their lives for me will hold on to true life.

Reflection

These verses that were just read from the book of Matthew, is at the time when Jesus sends out his twelve disciple and gives them the authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. He tells them that the journey of taking

up the cross will not be easy and they will be faced with prosecution; however, they must stay committed and bold. The disciples know that prophets of the past and including Jesus himself have gone through persecution, and that it was highly likely that they too will experience a rough treatment.

Today we know that in our society we as Christians do not receive persecution as harshly as they did back then, but unfortunately there are still countries in the world that are not free to or openly proclaim the name of Jesus or even dare to call themselves Christians, and we continue to pray for them.

From verse 27 - 31 Jesus says, 27 I tell you these things in the dark, but I want you to tell them in the light. What you hear whispered in your ear you should shout from the housetops. 28 Don't be afraid of people, who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul. The only one you should fear is the one who can destroy the soul and the body in hell. 29 Two sparrows cost only a penny, but not even one of them can die without your Father's knowing it. 30 God even knows how many hairs are on your head. 31 So don't be afraid. You are worth much more than many sparrows.

Like the disciples, we have also been commissioned to testify of the good news and to do His will; and that we should not be afraid but be bold to speak up, speak out and act on what Jesus has taught us and what we hear the Holy Spirit is telling us. We

should do this confidently knowing that our Almighty Father will protect us.

The power that people have is extremely limited, in comparison to our Heavenly Father who can take both the body and soul. But God loves us so much that the metaphor used that he has numbered each strain of hair on our head and if any sparrow was to die he will know about it is beautiful, it's an example of God's caring nature. This is to show that even if the sparrow is deemed to be of less value, God cares for them, how much more human beings, especially those of us who serve and believe in Jesus Christ?

Jesus then goes on to tell them that whoever confesses me I will confess them to my Father in heaven and whoever denies me I will deny to the Father. Jesus who had already died for our sins and is the risen Lord, his loyalty with us remains if we stay loyal to Him too. Not just by our words but by our actions too should we acknowledge Jesus, and not only on a Sunday or at mid-week bible studies. In my opinion those days should be used as pit stops or our refuelling on the word days, to keep us topped up and equipped to face the week ahead.

Jesus said I came not to bring peace but a sword. A sword in this sense represents conflict and that we should expect conflict even from our family members who may not share our faith. This can be hard to deal with, because typically we may deem

our family to be our refuge. In verse 37 of our Matthew reading, Jesus is not anti-family; according to the commandments we are told to honour our father and mother. Instead He calls us to place loyalty to God above loyalty to family.

But what do we do today, at a time like this when we are faced with opposition and distraction from things that tries to take our focus away from the Lord? For example, when most of the world has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the racial injustice of black people? Are we crippled with fear or do we say, "it doesn't affect me directly" or "it's okay, others will speak up about it, they won't need me"?

According to **Matthew 22:39** the word of the Lord says, love your neighbour as yourself, and I'm sure we would like someone to help or support us in our time of need? and **Proverbs 31:8** speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed.

We are created to worship God, to do His will and purpose, and to speak out for Him. We are chosen to be the light in the world. Therefore, to stay silent when our brothers and sisters are hurting is to deny Christ.

Maybe you have been directly affected by racial injustice and are tired of being unable to breathe or affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, either by losing a loved one, losing your job or just unable to cope with the changes it brings. God is your comforter, your protector, your strength. He said, he will never

leave you nor forsake you, **Hebrews 13:5** and remember the promises he said to you, **Psalms 91** so do not fear - take up your cross, trust in the Lord and remain hopeful in His promises. Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Dear God, we humbly come before you today in appreciation for all that you have done for us. Thank you, Jesus, for your sacrifice so that we may be reconciled to God and set free from the bondage of sin. Thank you for enduring so much suffering on our behalf. We pray that we will have the same kind of strength to endure life for your sake.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly father, we believe that you are able to do the impossible things and Covid-19 appears impossible to the world. You are the God of possibilities, so please help us to overcome this pandemic. We lift up all those who are facing illness today. We ask that you would bring healing, comfort and peace to their bodies. Calm their fears and let them experience the healing power of your love.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Jesus, you said 'blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted'. You wept at the death of your friend, grant us the comfort of your presence in our loss. Send your holy spirit to give us courage and peace. Console those who are now grieving

the loss of a loved one. Let them be comforted in the remembrance of your promises in the midst of their tears. You are the resurrection of life and we know and believe this. Let the despairing find hope and the broken hearted receive the consolation of your presence and your love.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Bless all the fathers in the world. Father, we ask that you guide them to be good role models and loving to their children. We ask that you help them to be a father like you are. Give them grace and patience to handle situations in a loving way. Shower your blessing upon all fathers. Grant them wisdom to guide their children along the right path. Grant them strength to forgive when their children stray from those paths. Grant them perseverance as they provide their family's needs. May your love shelter them in times of needs, and expand their capacity for forgiveness, kindness, and compassion. You, who are a father to us all, hold all fathers in your warm and generous heart.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Dear Lord Jesus, thank so much for all the precious children and young people in the world. We know they mean so much to you. We pray you would help us do all we can to protect and give them the start in life they deserve. Lord we bring to you all of the wonderful work being done to release children and young people from poverty, and we pray that you would bless every

pair of hands that works for you. Increase and bless their efforts.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Dear God, in our effort to dismantle racism, we understand that we struggle not merely against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities. Those institutions and systems that keep racism alive by perpetuating the lie that some members of the family are inferior and others superior. Create in us a new mind and heart that will enable us to see brothers and sisters in the faces of those divided by racial categories. Give us the grace and strength to rid ourselves of racial stereotypes that oppressed black and brown people where we live, as well as those around the world. Heal your family, God, and make us one with you, in union with our brother Jesus, and empowered by your Holy Spirit.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly father, whose own beloved son suffered violence and death for the salvation of the world, listen to our cry for all who are being persecuted for their faith. In your great mercy, comfort them with the Holy Spirit. Give them strength in the face of hostility and courage in the face of trial. Open the eyes of those who raise their hands in violence to see others as their brothers and sisters and children of the father of all. By your grace, turn their hearts from hatred to love. Through the powerful intercession of the immaculate king of peace, may

justice and peace prevail so that all may have the freedom to worship you, the one true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

When we pray God hears more than we say. He listens and gives more than we can imagine. But in his own time and in his own way so please keep the faith, believe, be still and know that he is God and he is in control.

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.**

Hymn Will you come and follow me (Singing the Faith 673)

Sing / read / pray / proclaim the words or listen to it here:

<https://youtu.be/zk6IUaIJ3sk>

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?

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?

Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean,
and do such as this unseen,

and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?

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?

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.

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)

Fathers Day prayer

Almighty God,
we lift all the fathers of the world to You with adoration and
love.
We know fathers play an integral role in the lives of our children,
as mentors, providers, caregivers and so much more, and

provide a firm foundation on which our children stand.
Thank you, God for Your provision, and for showering them with
Your divine blessings.
We pray that You would consecrate fathers and set them apart
for Your purpose. In Jesus name. **Amen.**

Blessing

May the love of Jesus Christ
bring us wholeness;
the grace of God the Father
grant us peace;
the breath of Holy Spirit
instil passion;
and the unity between them
give us strength
for this and every day. **Amen.**