

Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit
SERVICE AT HOME:
Sunday 04 August 2024
Prepared by Graham Hepburn

Call to worship

God sees our hearts and loves us more than we will ever know. Let us come to him trusting in his mercy and his care.

Amen.

Listen, read, pray or sing along

We begin with the hymn 'Jesus the first and last' (StF 329),

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsu4ZgyNZrk>

Jesus, the first and last,
on you my soul is cast:
you did your work begin
by blotting out my sin;
you will the root remove,
perfecting me in love.

Yet when the work is done,
the work is but begun:
partaker of your grace,
I long to see your face;
the first I prove below,
the last I die to know.

Charles Wesley(1707-1788)

Our prayers today are taken from Roots on the web.

A gathering prayer

Holy God, you know our hearts and all that has happened in our lives this week.

(Pause, and think about the events in your life during the past week.)

Draw us to yourself, convict us of anything that keeps us from you and transform us by your redeeming love.

Amen.

A prayer of adoration

God, you are everywhere.

We worship and adore you.

You see what we try to hide, yet you love us.

We worship and adore you.

You see our failings, yet you still see goodness in us.

We worship and adore you.

You challenge us when we get it wrong, helping us to do better.

We worship and adore you.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

Bible Readings - Nathan rebukes David after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, 2 Samuel 12 v 1 -13a

The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, 'There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. 'Now a traveller came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveller who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.'

David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, 'As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.'

Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore,

the sword shall never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.”

‘This is what the Lord says: “Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.”’

Then David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.

Eph 4 v 1-7, Unity and maturity in the body of Christ

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Reflection

How do you feel about apologies by public figures? You know the scenario. The public figure, be they politician, sportsperson, media celebrity, is reported as having said or done something inappropriate. They then issue an apology for the actions, and to anyone who may have been affected by their indiscretion. Perhaps they will claim that they ‘misspoke’, or that there was some other mis-understanding.

Why do people apologise, and to whom?

The Old Testament lesson is a very well known story. David has committed adultery with Bathsheba. In his efforts to cover up his sin, in the next battle fought by the forces of Israel, David gives instructions to his commanders to place Bathsheba’s husband, the soldier Uriah, in the part of the battle where the fighting is fiercest. This inevitably results in the death of

Uriah. So David can be said to be guilty not only of the sin of adultery with Bathsheba but also the murder, or manslaughter, of her husband Uriah.

The set Psalm for today, Psalm 51 is attributed to David following this meeting with Nathan. This psalm gives us (at least) four pointers of how David, and we, should react to sin.

Firstly, the recognition that ultimately all human sin is a sin against God (verse 4) ***Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.***

I imagine that our mythical celebrity would be shouted down if he failed to apologise to those humanly affected by his transgression, and apologised only to God. David had sinned against both Bathsheba and especially Uriah, but he realised that his real failing was in falling away from the standards which he knew he should follow as the leader of the nation of Israel.

Secondly, there is a deep flaw in human nature (verse 5) ***Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*** David acknowledges his inherent sinfulness, as a fact of his humanity. He is not using it as an excuse or as a means of lessening his own culpability for his actions.

Thirdly, If we are to be healed, God himself must take the initiative - we have no power ourselves to do it (verse 7) ***Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.***

Fourthly, the rebuilding of human holiness is a gift in God’s activity in us (verses 10 to 12) ***Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.***

In respect to both the third and the fourth points, God took the initiative by sending Jesus to heal us and to pay the price for our sin. Read again

the lesson from Ephesians, which shows us the qualities we can inherit in our lives if we set out to live the life which Jesus Christ intends for us.

Listen, read, pray or sing along

Our next hymn is 'More like you, Jesus, more like you'(StF 505)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FcZx59wpbnw>

More like You Jesus, more like You
Fill my heart with Your desire
To make me more like You
More like You Jesus, more like You
Touch my lips with holy fire
And make me more like You.

Lord You are my mercy
Lord You are my grace
all my deepest sins have
forever been erased
Draw me in Your presence,
lead me in Your ways
I long to bring You glory
in righteousness and praise

Lord you are compassion,
and never ending love,
for you have redeemed me
by your precious blood.
Create in me a clean heart,
a spirit that is new,
the joy of my salvation
is only found in you.

Scott Wesley Brown

A prayer of confession and an assurance of forgiveness

Today, O God, we consider how much you forgave David;
how great were his sins, and he the king!
Yet still you saw the goodness in him,
the potential to be what you wanted him to be;
when he truly repented, you forgave him.
Thank you, Lord God, for the assurance that you will do likewise for us.
Confront us when we have become complacent;
show us the wrongness of our ways,
so that we may repent and return

and rejoice in your generous forgiveness.
Amen.

Intercessory prayer

Jesus, bread of life,
help us to trust in your provision for us.

Lord, we come to you with all our cares and our needs, trusting that you will provide for us. So often we tell you what we *want* rather than asking for what we really need. Teach us to listen to your voice so that our wills join with yours and so that our asking becomes harmonious with what you want for us. As we lay our petitions before you, remind us that what you give us is what we truly need even if we don't always recognise it.

Jesus, bread of life,
help us to trust in your provision for us.

We commend all athletes to you, Lord, as they compete in the Olympic Games. We thank you for the joy that sport brings to so many, whether watching or participating.

Jesus, bread of life,
help us to trust in your provision for us.

Lord, we bring our land to you today, remembering the needs of people in our community or across our land which lay heavily on our hearts at this time. We give thanks and pray for all who set out to meet their needs and to make our communities and our land a better place for all people.

Jesus, bread of life,
help us to trust in your provision for us.

We pray for all school children during this summer holiday season. We ask your peace for those awaiting exam results. We pray that families and especially teachers and all who work in schools will have opportunities to have rest and relaxation during the summer. Lord, we particularly bring to you those children for whom the long summer holidays means going hungry, and ask that they will be provided for.

Jesus, bread of life,
help us to trust in your provision for us.

We thank you, Lord, for the church communities within our circuit. Fill us with your Spirit as we praise you so that we may go out from here enriched and ready to serve you in the wider world. Help us to encourage one another and build each other up, that our churches may be places of affirmation, acceptance and love. We ask that you will provide our leaders, both locally and nationally, with wisdom, patience and grace.

Jesus, bread of life,
help us to trust in your provision for us.

Lord, in the coming week, teach us not to take your gifts for granted, but instead to keep our eyes fixed on you. Draw us constantly back to you to find the energy, strength and refreshment that we need for our daily living.

Jesus, bread of life,
**help us to trust in your provision for us,
to feed on you and draw our strength from you,
and help us to be truly blessed by the nourishment you give us.
Amen.**

Offering and Prayer of Dedication

If you give your weekly offering through an envelope scheme or in cash, please set it aside, and pray with those who give using Standing orders.

Gracious God, accept these gifts, our money, and all our offerings, and with them our lives, to be used in mission and service through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Listen, read, pray or sing along

Our final hymn is 'Jesus, all for Jesus; all I am and have and ever hope to be,' (StF 555)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glvnLI-vvOo>

Jesus, all for Jesus
All I am and have and ever hope to be

Jesus, all for Jesus
All I am and have and ever hope to be

All of my ambitions, hopes and plans
I surrender these into your hands
All of my ambitions, hopes and plans
I surrender these into your hands

For it's only in your will that I am free
For it's only in your will that I am free

Jesus, all for Jesus
All I am and have and ever hope to be
Jesus, all for Jesus
All I am and have and ever hope to be

Jennifer Atkinson and Robin Mark

A sending out prayer

Holy Lord, you are just and true. We receive your forgiveness and carry it with us this week. Help us to be completely humble, gentle, patient and bearing with one another in love. Inspire us to speak in a way that will help all we meet to hear your voice and live according to your love.

Amen

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