

Sunday 28th June 2020

Call to worship - An opening prayer

God of welcome, throughout scripture, and throughout history, you invite people to be a part of your larger story, the story of your love.

God of welcome, you have invited us to worship you today and we respond with joy.

Jesus, you were invited to a wedding and you transformed the ordinary into the special.

Jesus, you were invited into the homes of sinners and you brought salvation and rejoicing.

Jesus, you were invited into the homes of friends and you offered blessing and grace.

Jesus, you came amongst us as a human child and we respond with joy.

Holy Spirit, you were welcomed by the prophets of old who testified in your power.

Holy Spirit, you were welcomed by the early church who witnessed in your power.

Holy Spirit, you were welcomed into every generation of the church who sought to live in your power.

Holy Spirit, we welcome you today into our worship, our prayers, our hearts and our service.

Amen.

Song O Lord my God

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed;

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I
wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain
grandeur
and hear the brook and feel the gentle
breeze:

Then sings my soul...

And when I think that God, his Son not
sparing,
sent him to die – I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin:

Then sings my soul...

When Christ shall come with shouts of
acclamation
and take me home – what joy shall fill my
heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, 'my God, how great thou
art!'

Then sings my soul...

CCLI Song # 14181

Copyright 1949 and 1953 Stuart Hine Trust CIO Stuart K. Hine
Trust (Admin. by Integrity Music)
www.ccli.com - CCLI Licence No. 632441

Reading Matthew 10 : 24 – 39

²⁴⁻²⁵ "A student doesn't get a better desk than her teacher. A labourer doesn't make more money than his boss. Be content—pleased, even—when you, my students, my harvest hands, get the same treatment I get. If they call me, the Master, 'Dungface,' what can the workers expect?"

²⁶⁻²⁷ "Don't be intimidated. Eventually everything is going to be out in the open, and everyone will know how things really are. So don't hesitate to go public now."

LAIRG CHURCH OF SCOTLAND & ROGART (ST CALLANS) CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SCO20871 and SCO10035

²⁸ “Don’t be bluffed into silence by the threats of bullies. There’s nothing they can do to your soul, your core being. Save your fear for God, who holds your entire life - body and soul - in his hands.

²⁹⁻³¹ “What’s the price of a pet canary? Some loose change, right? And God cares what happens to it even more than you do. He pays even greater attention to you, down to the last detail - even numbering the hairs on your head! So don’t be intimidated by all this bully talk. You’re worth more than a million canaries.

³²⁻³³ “Stand up for me against world opinion and I’ll stand up for you before my Father in heaven. If you turn tail and run, do you think I’ll cover for you?

³⁴⁻³⁷ “Don’t think I’ve come to make life cosy. I’ve come to cut - make a sharp knife-cut between son and father, daughter and mother, bride and mother-in-law - cut through these cosy domestic arrangements and free you for God. Well-meaning family members can be your worst enemies. If you prefer father or mother over me, you don’t deserve me. If you prefer son or daughter over me, you don’t deserve me.

³⁸⁻³⁹ “If you don’t go all the way with me, through thick and thin, you don’t deserve me. If your first concern is to look after yourself, you’ll never find yourself. But if you forget about yourself and look to me, you’ll find both yourself and me.

Reflection

I’ve chosen to read this gospel passage today from The Message. I find that when I hear familiar words in this more modern, down to earth language it often speaks to me in a fresh way. There are a number of juicy bits in this passage, a few attractive sound-bites and a couple of pretty hard sayings. It is important that we don’t just pick out the bits we like and ignore the rest. When it comes to the trickier passages we need to take them in context. This is particularly important if a superficial reading seems to put a section at odds with the rest of the Bible. For example, take verses 34-37: Don’t think I’ve come to make life cosy. I’ve come to cut - make a sharp knife-cut between son and father, daughter and mother, bride and mother-in-law - cut through these cosy domestic arrangements and free you for God. Well-meaning family members can be your worst enemies. If you prefer father or mother over me, you don’t deserve me. If you prefer son or daughter over me, you don’t deserve me. Whoa! If we only had that part of the Bible, what sort of person would we think Jesus was? We must look to other parts of the Bible to find other passages, some that support this, and others that contradict? On their own, these verses paint a terrible picture. Jesus came to bring the sword and destroy families? Surely that can’t be right. No, certainly not. When we take this verse in the context of the passage, the gospel, and the whole message of the Bible, it makes much more sense. Jesus is describing the effect that his message will have – some will accept joyfully, others will angrily refuse – and different family members might

LAIRG CHURCH OF SCOTLAND & ROGART (ST CALLANS) CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SCO20871 and SCO10035

have very different responses. Even Jesus's own family were divided at first (see Mark 3:20-21). The Christian message of salvation is good news for those who realise that they need saving, but a bad smell in the noses of those who think they have no need of salvation, and folk react accordingly.

How have you experienced opposition to the gospel? How can we make sure that we are not making the message harder to receive? This passage comes as part of Jesus' pep-talk to his disciples before he sends them out to spread his message. (Now I have to say, it's not the most encouraging team talk I've ever heard, but perhaps is it as well to be prepared. Life isn't always a bed of roses) The whole talk can be summarised by verse 24: "A student doesn't get a better desk than her teacher. A labourer doesn't make more money than his boss. Jesus is saying, "so don't expect anything different yourselves. Sometimes it will be rough, I'm not going to lie to you. Following me is not some little hobby for when you have nothing better to do. This takes commitment. Are you up for it?"

Do we sometimes treat our faith as if it were a hobby? We pick it up and do a bit when we feel like it but then put it away again in a box or cupboard and it's forgotten. What can we do about that? This outing for the disciples was short-term and was limited to just the "lost sheep of Israel". Later, Jesus expanded the mission to Jerusalem, Samaria, Judea and the ends of the earth. He also expanded the mission team, from the original twelve disciples to eventually include all of us. And what's the mission? To do Jesus-stuff. To be Jesus in our communities. Our calling is to be like him. Our confession is that we belong to him. Our destiny is to follow him.

How will you fulfil this calling in your situation today?

Prayers for Others

The Psalmist writes; (Psalm 13)

"How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long?"

Sometimes we feel like that – for ourselves and for others around the world whose suffering seems endless. In our prayers for others today we express something of that longing for things to change. We will use periods of silence in which to reflect on all that is wrong.

We hold in silent prayer the groaning of this world, the sense of hopelessness at the effects of pollution and climate change, of plastic waste and rising sea levels... Silence
How long, O Lord?

We hold in silent prayer the grief of so many around the world, mourning the loss of family and friends to incurable illness, and especially to coronavirus, to starvation and to war
Silence

How long, O Lord?

We hold in silent prayer the great needs of our own society, these islands, our villages, our street, those who live around the church where we normally worship... Silence
How long, O Lord?

**LAIRG CHURCH OF SCOTLAND & ROGART (ST CALLANS) CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
SCO20871 and SCO10035**

We hold in silent prayer our own families, knowing there are hurts we cannot heal,
grievances we cannot solve, challenges we cannot answer... Silence
How long, O Lord?

We hold in silent prayer our own needs, our fears and anxieties, our sins and selfishness,
our desire to change and our failure to do so... Silence
How long, O Lord?

In our longing and our lament, we hear again the words of the psalmist;
'But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the
Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me'

We offer our prayers in the name of the Creator God who brought light out of darkness, in
the name of Jesus Christ who brought life out of death and in the name of the Holy Spirit
who brought order out of chaos.

So today Lord, hear our prayers. We ask that you free us from all our sins, we ask that we
clearly hear your words of grace, that our sins are forgiven. And today dear Lord we say
here I am, use me.

Lord's Prayer

HOW LONG, O LORD

Verse 1

Every valley will be lifted high
And the weak will be the strong
When You come like lightning in the sky
How long, O Lord, how long?

Verse 2

Kings on earth will scatter when they hear
Thundering sounds of angel songs
Hearts will tremble, filled with holy fear
How long, O Lord, how long?

Chorus

All our hopes are fixed on You
That Your promises are true
And one day You will return
All our treasures here will fade
So, we long to see Your face
Until then our hearts will burn
How long, O Lord?

Blessing

Creator of the universe,
Lord of all time and space,
You are present in this place, in this moment.
We go into the days ahead, seeking to encounter more of you, our God. AMEN

Verse 3

You will conquer every evil thing
Every sorrow, pain, and wrong
They will cease with Your return, our King
How long, O Lord, how long?

Tag

How long, O Lord? (How long, O Lord?)

CCLI Song # 7096632

*Music and words by Doug Plank © 2017 Sovereign Grace
Worship/ASCAP Sovereign Grace Music, a division of
Soverign Grace Churches . All rights reserved. Used by
permission. (adm worldwide at
www.CapitolCMGPublishing.com, excluding the UK &
Europe which is adm by Integrity Music).
www.ccli.com - CCLI Licence No. 632441*

<https://youtu.be/S8qapiKjp-4>