



Sunday Worship
at Home
28th February
Second Sunday in Lent

WE PREPARE

Holy God, we come from our busy lives.

We often forget that you walk with us.

As we gather now, help us to be more aware of who you are.

**Give us the courage to admit when we don't understand,
so that we might grow more like you in all we do. Amen.**

HYMN *[note the words of v. 4!]*

The God of Abraham praise,
who reigns enthroned above,
ancient of everlasting days,
and God of love.
Jehovah, great I Am!
by earth and heaven confessed,
we bow and bless the sacred name
for ever blest.

The God of Abraham praise,
at whose supreme command
from earth we rise and seek the joys
at his right hand.
we all on earth forsake,
its wisdom, fame, and power,
an him our only portion make,
our shield and tower.

The God of Abraham praise,
whose all sufficient grace
shall guide us all our happy days,
in all our ways;
he is our faithful friend;
He is our gracious God;
and he will save us to the end,
through Jesus' blood.

[4].... He by himself has sworn –
we on his oath depend –
we shall, on eagles' wings upborne,
to heav'n ascend;
we shall behold his face,
we shall his pow'r adore,
and sing the wonders of his grace
forevermore.

The whole triumphant host
give thanks to God on high;
"Hail, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"
they ever cry.
Hail, Abraham's God, and ours!
We join the heav'nly throng;
and celebrate with all our pow'rs
and endless song.

Bible Reading

Romans 4: 13 – 25

¹³ It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. ¹⁴ For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, ¹⁵ because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations."¹⁸ He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

¹⁸ Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."¹⁹ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. ²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. ²² This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."²³ The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, ²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. ²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

We say, 'Sorry'...

Lord, whereas it's part of our faith walk to seek and be open to life-changing moments, forgive us when we just plod through life and get despondent with the mundane.

We are sorry, Lord.

Shine on us, we pray.

On the other hand, we can at times get fixated on the spiritual mountain-tops and so miss out on what's happening below in the everyday. When things are going well for us, we can get wrapped up in the moment and be forgetful of others.

We're sorry, Lord.

Shine on us, we pray.

There are many voices tuned into today's world telling us how to live and what's best. But you, Lord, are our authority in life. Forgive us when we fail to test things against your word.

We're sorry, Lord.

Shine on us, we pray. Amen.

...and receive the assurance of God's pardon

Jesus was handed over to be crucified because of our sins. He died and rose again to make us right with God. Through him we are forgiven. Let us follow the Lord our God, giving our lives as he gave his for us. **Amen.**



HYMN

I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
or to defend His cause;
maintain the honour of His word,
the glory of His cross.

Jesus, my God, I know His name;
His name is all my trust;
nor will He put my soul to shame,
nor let my hope be lost.

Firm as His throne His promise stands;
and He can well secure
what I've committed to His hands,
till the decisive hour.

Then will He own my worthless name
before His Father's face;
and in the new Jerusalem
appoint my soul a place.



Bible Reading

Mark 8: 31 – 38

³¹ Jesus then began to teach the disciples that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

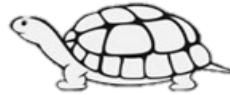
³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life^ἡ will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

Reflection



As a hedgehog or a tortoise?
How do you see yourself
when coping with disagreement?



Each of us reacts differently when people disagree with us, or one with another. Some can become quite feisty and prickly like hedgehogs and enjoy the argument; others can become silent and withdrawn like tortoises and retreat into their shells.

What about Christians? You and me? Is the best way to remain peaceful and calm, never to disagree? Maybe yes, when the things about which we are disagreeing, aren't very important; but what if the matter at the root of our disagreement is important or about truth and justice?

WWJD. What Would Jesus Do

How many of us owned bracelets saying WWJD, reminding us to consider, 'What Would Jesus Do' whenever a question faced us? Jesus is trying to teach his disciples that the kind of Messiah that they have in mind isn't quite right. They still seem to think that that Jesus is going to be powerful and conquer the world.

As we know from the Gospels. Peter often spoke for all the disciples. In singling Peter out for rebuke, Jesus may have been addressing all of them indirectly when he spoke of his suffering and death. Peter, cannot agree and he rebukes Jesus' for his words about dying.

God's plan included suffering and death for the Messiah. This didn't make sense to Peter.

Unknowingly, the disciples were trying to prevent Jesus from going to the cross and thus fulfilling his mission on earth.

The disciples, like us possibly, were motivated by love and admiration for Jesus; nevertheless, their job, like ours, was not to guide and protect Jesus, but to follow him. Only after Jesus' death and resurrection would they fully understand why he had to die.

Jesus then called the crowd of people and the disciples. and us, to himself.

Gathering round, they heard Jesus speak these words.

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself,
take up his cross and follow me."

That crowd understood the image of a man carrying a cross.

Execution

Following Jesus, would mean identifying with Jesus and his followers,

facing oppression and ostracism, and no turning back.

For some, taking up the cross might indeed mean death.

But Jesus' words mean that his followers have to be prepared to obey God's Word and follow his will, without disagreement, no matter what the consequences, for the sake of the Gospel.

When someone first decides to 'come after' Jesus and follow him, it is a once-for-all act. From then on, that person belongs to Jesus.

To *follow Christ* is also a moment-by-moment decision, when we are called to deny self and take up our cross;

putting God first, sacrificing our desires, stepping out with Jesus.

Following Jesus doesn't mean walking behind him,
but taking the same road of sacrifice and service that he takes.

The blessing for us is that we can fellowship with him along the way,
with or without hedgehogs and tortoises!

HYMN

Take up thy cross, the Saviour said,

If thou wouldst My disciple be;
Deny thyself, the world forsake,
And humbly follow after Me.

Take up thy cross, let not its weight
Fill thy weak spirit with alarm;
His strength shall bear thy spirit up,
And brace thy heart and nerve thine arm.

Take up thy cross, nor heed the shame,
Nor let thy foolish pride rebel;
Thy Lord for thee the cross endured,
And saved thy soul from death and hell.



Take up thy cross then in His strength,
And calmly sin's wild deluge brave,
'Twill guide thee to a better home,
It points to glory o'er the grave.

Take up thy cross and follow Christ,
Nor think til death to lay it down;
For only those who bear the cross
May hope to wear the glorious crown.

To Thee, great Lord, the One in Three,
All praise forevermore ascend:
O grant us in our home to see
The heavenly life that knows no end.

We declare our faith in God...

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

WE PRAY TOGETHER

A prayer of Adoration

All-powerful God of past, present and future,
keeper of promises:

How we love you.

Son of Man, the way, the truth and the life,
loving despite rejection:

How we love you.

Holy Spirit, living Power within,
helping, guiding, testing and transforming:

How we love you.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
your unique relationship – open to us:

How we love you. Amen.

We pray for others...

Beginning with your thumb, hold each digit in turn and pray for these groups of people. In prayer, place them, and yourself, into God's hands.



And we draw together all our prayers...

Our Father...

OUR SERVICE DRAWS TO A CLOSE

HYMN

When we walk with the Lord
in the light of His word,
what a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
and with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey,
for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus,
but to trust and obey.*

Not a burden we bear,
not a sorrow we share,
but our toil He doth richly repay;
not a grief nor a loss,
not a frown nor a cross,
but is blest if we trust and obey.
Trust and obey . . .

But we never can prove
the delights of His love,
until all on the altar we lay;
for the favour He shows,
and the joy He bestows
are for them who will trust and obey.
Trust and obey . . .

Then in fellowship sweet,
we will sit at His feet,
or we'll walk by His side in the way.
What He says we will do,
where He sends we will go,
never fear, only trust and obey.
Trust and obey . . .

**God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful;
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
in Jesus' name. Amen.**



May the Blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with us and remain with us, always. **Amen.**

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