

**Worship for Adlington and Chorley**  
**6<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Prayer**

Lord God as we gather for worship today we would ask for your blessing to be upon us. Make us one people, your people and by your Holy Spirit so lift our hearts and our praise that we may not only worship you, but leave here refreshed and renewed and ready to continue as your disciples through the coming week.  
 Amen

**Hymn                    Jesus shall reign**

- 1 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun  
 does His successive journeys run;  
 His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,  
 till moons shall rise and set no more.
- 2 To Him shall endless prayer be made,  
 and princes throng to crown His head;  
 His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise  
 with every morning sacrifice.
- 3 People and realms of every tongue  
 dwell on His love with sweetest song;  
 and infant voices shall proclaim  
 their early blessings on His name.
- 4 Blessings abound where'er He reigns;  
 the prisoner leaps to lose his chains,  
 the weary find eternal rest,  
 and all the sons of want are blest.
- 5 Let every creature rise and bring  
 the highest honours to our King;  
 angels descend with songs again,  
 and earth repeat the loud 'Amen'.

**Reading                    John 14 v 1 - 14**

Jesus said to his disciples, "Don't be worried! Have faith in God and have faith in me.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>2</sup> There are many rooms in my Father's house. I wouldn't tell you this, unless it was true. I am going there to prepare a place for each of you. <sup>3</sup> After I have done this, I will come back and take you with me. Then we will be together. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to where I am going."

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said, "Lord, we don't even know where you are going! How can we know the way?"

<sup>6</sup> "I am the way, the truth, and the life!" Jesus answered. "Without me, no one can go to the Father. <sup>7</sup> If you had known me, you would have known the Father. But from now on, you do know him, and you have seen him."

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father. That is all we need."

<sup>9</sup> Jesus replied:

Philip, I have been with you for a long time. Don't you know who I am? If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. How can you ask me to show you the Father? <sup>10</sup> Don't you believe that I am one with the Father and that the Father is one with me? What I say isn't said on my own. The Father who lives in me does these things.

<sup>11</sup> Have faith in me when I say that the Father is one with me and that I am one with the Father. Or else have faith in me simply because of the things I do. <sup>12</sup> I tell you for certain that if you have faith in me, you will do the same things that I am doing. You will do even greater things, now that I am going back to the Father. <sup>13</sup> Ask me, and I will do whatever you ask. This way the Son will bring honor to the Father. <sup>14</sup> I will do whatever you ask me to do.

**Prayers of Praise and Confession**

Blessed be God the Father, by whose great mercy we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of JC from the dead.

Blessed be God the Son, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification.

Blessed be God the Holy Spirit, who bears witness with our Spirits that we are the children of God.

To you, blessed God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, we ascribe all blessing, honour and glory for ever.

Lord God; we do not always readily confess our helplessness and our need; but you know our works; you know how often we are lukewarm in

your service, how often we have denied you,  
how often we have failed to tend your sheep.

And so now we acknowledge that we are  
sinners, poor and blind and naked.

But you do not leave us forsaken and desolate.  
Your Son JC stands at the door and knocks; help  
us to hear his voice and open the door, that he  
may come in to us and eat with us, and we with  
him.

We ask it in his name.  
AMEN

### Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven,  
hallowed be Your Name.  
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.  
Do not bring us to the time of trial,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom,  
the power and the glory are Yours  
now and forever. Amen.

### Hymn Jesus Lord Redeemer

Jesus, Lord, Redeemer, once for sinners slain,  
crucified in weakness, raised in power to reign,  
dwelling with the Father, endless in your days,  
unto you be glory, honour, blessing, praise.

Faithful ones communing  
towards the close of day,  
desolate and weary, met you in the way.  
So, when sun is setting, come to us and show  
all the truth, and in us make our hearts to glow.

In the upper chamber, where the ten, in fear,  
gathered sad and troubled,  
there you did appear.  
Present with us now, Lord,  
bid our sorrows cease;  
breathing on us, Saviour, say, 'I give you peace.'

### Sermon

What can you usefully say in 280 characters or  
less?

In case you are not up to speed, this is the  
challenge of being a twitter user  
Supposedly you say something funny, poignant,  
newsworthy and do it in less than 280  
characters.

For example (and you know me, it is the funny  
tweets that appeal)  
"Stop saying 20/12/2012 only happens once in a  
lifetime. Every date only happens once in a  
lifetime. That's how time works."

Or

"I just want people to accept me for who I  
pretend to be"

or

"When you say "9 out of 10 fires are caused by  
humans", all I hear is, "There is a bear out there  
who knows how to use matches"

But there have been serious tweets too, sharing  
breaking news.

An earthquake in Japan caused a deluge of  
tweets as those who were trapped sought help  
and relatives tried to contact loved ones.  
Riots in London a few years ago spawned a  
tweet response "Brooms up London" that  
successfully mobilised ordinary people to clear  
up the devastation caused by the mobs.  
I have a twitter account .... I have never used it –  
but maybe I should start because it is quite  
surprising what you can convey in 240  
characters or less.

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the gospel writer John,  
recorded a saying of Jesus that in another time  
would have been a first class tweet.  
Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life!"  
– just 38 characters and yet this is the heart of  
the gospel message. It sums up Jesus's mission  
and in particular the three unique claims that  
Jesus makes –  
Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life!"  
I am the way – THE way.  
Not a way, but THE way.

In 21<sup>st</sup> century multicultural Britain we are  
offered a rainbow of belief systems and ideas –

every faith from Buddhism to Islam to Jedi. And Christianity is often seen as just one amongst many.

And it is very easy to view these faiths almost as we would competing brands in a Supermarket. Washing powders - Daz, Persil, Ariel – you may favour one over another, but at the end of the day you put them into your washing machine and they all do the same thing. And some see faith the same way – Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Christian – it doesn't matter they all do the same thing.

They say that finding God is like trying to find the way to the mountain top – there may be any number of paths but it doesn't matter which route you take as they all get there in the end. Well actually no, our faith says it is not like that - it is more like a maze. There are lots of routes in the maze, but only one will get you to the centre, only one way to find God. It isn't fashionable, may not even be PC, but Christ's claim is that he is not a way, but THE way.

His claim is that he is THE way to know God, because he has a unique relationship with God – God's Son, God come to live among us, God come to know and live human life. Jesus says I am THE way and I am THE truth. A little later in John 14, Philip says to Jesus "Lord show us the Father" – in other words what is God like.

And I can understand his problem. I have great difficulty understanding the wonder of creation – the Higgs Boson particle, the quark and so on, I struggle to comprehend the workings of life – what is life and how can a load of chemicals - which is basically all human beings are – how can we have consciousness and understanding.

And of course the greatest mystery of all, it makes no sense to me why it always rains in Lancashire.

But these are finite problems, these are mere trivia compared to knowing and understanding the God who created and ordered all this.

How can we make sense of a God who has created time and space, who existed before creation, before time itself – and yet is close to each one of us?

Confronted with this huge mystery, confronted with the great questions of life mankind has either sought to control the question – to bring God down to man's level, making idols, engaging in superstition and devising elaborate rituals or else has gone to the other extreme and tried to ignore the question – turning to atheism or agnosticism and pretending that there is no question to ask, nothing beyond our understanding. And by the way if you believe there is no God, then how do you explain creation, how do you make sense of all that we see? You may not have faith in God, but the big questions still remain.

The truth is understanding God, understanding the creator – not creation – but the creator- is beyond our frame of mind.

No wonder Philip says "Lord show us the Father" –tell us what God is like. To Philip and indeed to us, Jesus says "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father". If you want to know what God is like – then look at Jesus, his Son.

When we see Jesus's love, we are seeing the love of God.

When we hear his teaching, we are hearing the teaching of God.

When Jesus challenges or rebukes, this comes from God.

Stilling the storm, healing the sick, raising the dead as Jesus did – this is God's work.

This is the truth about God. You want to know what God is like – look at Jesus.

Jesus says "I am THE way, I am THE truth and I am the life".

I am the Life because the final, the most amazing claim that Jesus makes is that he brings us life.... Through his death. Jesus died for our sins. He died so that everything bad about our lives, everything we have ever done but now regret can be forgiven.

He died to forge a new relationship between God and man so that we could come into God's presence and call him Father.

Only Jesus death could achieve this, only the death of someone perfect, only the death of God's own son, could make up for the wrong things in our lives, redress the balance and bring us back into relationship with our creator.

It could be this today there are things in your life that you regret. Things you've done which now you wish you hadn't – if there aren't I'd be very surprised, no I'd be amazed.

Jesus says those wrong things can be forgiven, they can be wiped clean in him. Simply offer them to Jesus, and say in your heart – Jesus I am sorry for the wrong things in my life – I want to be forgiven.

He offers forgiveness through faith in him – in short he offers you life – both now and eternity.

Jesus says "I am THE way, THE truth and THE life".

It is amazing what you can say in 280 characters or less. You can tell everyone you are going to the chip shop, you can tell them that you've bought a new coat, you can tell them that you liked a TV program or you can tell them the most amazing claim of all time - Jesus says "I am THE way, THE truth and THE life".

It may not be a tweet, but its message is far more enduring.

My hope, my prayer this today is that you will respond to Jesus's claims, that you will know him as YOUR way, YOUR truth and YOUR life – for today and for evermore.

AMEN

### **Prayers of Intercession**

You, Lord, are the Way and though you are no easy way we pray that the world might follow your path:

The path of suffering that leads to salvation;  
The path of sorrow that leads to joy;  
The path of death that leads to life;  
The path of self-giving that leads to true gain.

We pray for all those in our world who undergo suffering and are prepared to die opposing the injustice, oppression and greed of others.

We pray for all those who sorrow at the evil in the world and for the misfortunes of others. We pray for those who sorrow alongside the suffering and the bereaved.

We pray for all those who give themselves in order to serve and care for and love those in need.

We pray that we, too, may have the courage to walk on Christ's Way.

Lord, this is our prayer: *Help us to know and to do your will.*

You, Lord, are the Truth and although your truth is often hard to perceive we pray that the world may be illumined by its light:

Hypocrisy and falsity exposed;

Eternal values glimpsed;

Love's power made known;

Mindless prejudices dissolved;

Honesty and goodness, compassion and

understanding revealed as the real wisdom

allied to the Wisdom of God.

We pray for all those who seek after truth and wisdom, for those who seek God, and for those who share God's word and his love with others.

We pray for all those who shun the truth about themselves, or the realities of suffering and death.

We pray for all those who teach and preach, that they may encourage others to search honestly for what is right throughout their lives.

We pray for ourselves, that we may have the courage to live according to the truths we see in Christ.

Lord, this is our prayer:

*Help us to know and to do your will.*

You, Lord, are real Life

And although that life challenges our comfort and complacency

We pray for your life for the world:

Life with purpose;

Life with joy; .

Life with peace;

Life with adventure;

Life shared with others and with you.

We pray for those who are depressed and anxious, for whom life is a meaningless, agonizing existence.

We pray for those who have been called by God to live in difficult, dangerous or heart-breaking situations.

We pray for those who are lonely or discontent, avoiding life and other people out of distrust and fear.

We pray for ourselves, that we may be filled with the Holy Spirit, and live together in Christ. Lord, this is our prayer:

*Help us to know and to do your will.*

And now we pray Lord for the people and issues close to our hearts at this time –

We pray for Amy

We pray for Marjory

We pray for children and teachers

We pray for Tommy going to UEA, for students and lecturers and for families back home.

We pray for churches as they tentatively resume face to face worship – Father we thank you for all those who have joined us online or through DVD, we thank you for opening our eyes to the technology available to us. We pray that you will continue to challenge and inspire us as we move forward in the new normal, that you would direct our actions and spur our thoughts to use every means to win people for you. We pray that you would help us to respond in love to those who are hurting or have been hurt through the current crisis.

We pray for all who are researching treatments for Covid, for all who are bringing your healing to bear – all working in hospitals, surgeries and clinics

We pray for our communities, that we might remain vigilant in the fight against this disease, that we wouldn't become complacent, or casual and so risk the health of others. Loving God give us the endurance we need to see this through to a successful conclusion.

And finally We pray in quiet for those we know who need our prayers  
In Jesus' name, Amen.

### **Hymn Great is thy faithfulness**

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
there is no shadow of turning with thee;  
thou changest not,  
thy compassions, they fail not;  
as thou hast been thou for ever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness,  
great is thy faithfulness,  
morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided,  
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

2 Summer and winter,  
and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is thy faithfulness, great is thy faithfulness,  
morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided,  
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
strength for today  
and bright hope for tomorrow,  
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is thy faithfulness, great is thy faithfulness,  
morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided,  
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

### **Benediction**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
And the blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
will be with us all, evermore. AMEN