

## Worship at Home – Sunday 2 October 2022

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home. We invite you to spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people across the Methodist Connexion are sharing this act of worship with you.

### Call to Worship

This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:  
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,  
His mercies never come to an end; they are  
new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

### Lamentations 3 vv. 21-23

### Hymn: StF564 O Thou who camest from above

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words or listen to it here: <https://youtu.be/fSqcy4JyU7E>

O thou who camest from above  
the pure celestial fire to impart,  
kindle a flame of sacred love  
on the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for thy glory burn  
with inextinguishable blaze,  
and trembling to its source return,  
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
to work, and speak, and think for thee;  
still let me guard the holy fire,  
and still stir up thy gift in me --

Ready for all thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat,  
till death thy endless mercies seal,  
and make the sacrifice complete.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

### Let us pray together

Great God, Weaver of galaxies, Forger of stars,  
You do not slumber or sleep.  
We praise you for Your sustaining love.

Lord Jesus, You shared our human life of work

and rest, You loved us to the end and fashioned our salvation from the wood of the cross.

We praise You for your tireless love.

Generous and transforming Spirit, at work in our communities and churches and our lives.  
We praise You for Your inexhaustible love.

As we lift our hearts to You, we know that we are part of a great multitude, whose voice of prayer is never silent, whose song of praise never dies away. Faithful One, grant us to know Your presence with us now. Amen.

When we have taken You and Your care for granted, *Lord have mercy.*  
When we have not responded to Your voice in the need of our neighbour, *Christ have mercy.*  
When we have turned away from Your loving and redemptive purpose, *Lord have mercy.*

God sent His Son not to condemn the world but to save it. With joy we receive the gracious word that all our sins are forgiven. May our souls praise our merciful Lord who crowns us with love and compassion. Amen

**Today's Reading from the New Testament 2**  
Timothy 1:1-14

**Today's Gospel Reading:** Luke 17:5-10

### Time to Reflect

At first reading, this is a de-motivating parable. It might have us turning back to Luke 12 vv. 35-8 in which the master rewards his diligent servants by insisting that they take it easy while he serves them. The role reversal in this parable is more subtle. At the start

Jesus casts the listening disciples in the role of the master (disquietingly for us, the role of a slave-owner) to make a simple point about how those with financial power/ clout expect to 'get what they have paid for' as a right, not a favour.

Jesus then turns the tables, the disciples switch from the role of entitled master to that of unappreciated servants, who say 'they have only done their job'. They admit themselves unworthy of special appreciation as they have not 'added value' or 'gone the extra mile'.

Grace and gratitude seem absent from this workplace. The boss who never says 'thank you', the person for whom all your efforts are never enough, or, on the other hand, the worker who never seems to put in more than the strict letter of their contract, we recognise these, perhaps they are painfully familiar, but what are they doing here? Who or what is this story really about? Where are we or God in this?

We could say that the story reminds us that however much we feel we do for God this does not establish an obligation, or, to state it more positively: 'we do not to ask for any reward, save that of knowing that we do Your will' (Prayer of Ignatius Loyola). But it is relevant that this parable is a response to the disciples' direct request: 'Increase our faith!'. If a mustard seed of faith is enough to power surreal tree-shifting, then it is not the raw quantity of faith that matters but that it is used. This is where the parable's emphasis on 'being put to work' starts to make more sense.

Jesus offers his disciples no formula for increasing personal faith, but instead describes a long, and gruelling workday, the

unglamorous process of getting on with what you know you must do and are expected to do, indeed in our Christian daily lives 'all that faith can do' (StF 499). It is an honest and familiar picture of keeping going whether or not we feel appreciation or see results.

But as 'our acts of faith and love repeat' (StF 564) we may find that God has grown the faith which we have exercised or put to work. Indeed, the turbulent and challenging conditions, which sometimes bring us 'to the end of ourselves', may be where that growth can happen when we can continue to hang on in there, and hold and use our faith, small and fragile as it is.

It can be hard to see the good news in this parable, but the assurance that God can grow our faith in the sometimes unpromising conditions of our lives and that we can find the purpose it brings strengthened through our hard and apparently unrewarding work for the Kingdom, might be the best news of all.

*"it only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith...living unreservedly in life's duties, problems, successes and failures. In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God, taking seriously, not our own sufferings, but those of God in the world. That, I think, is faith."* Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Take a time to sit quietly

#### **A time of prayer**

Let us hold in prayer our world, created in beauty, redeemed at measureless cost, touched and transformed by God's Spirit.

May God give wisdom to all in authority that they may serve the welfare of people and planet, uphold justice and defend the vulnerable.

May God give deliverance to those whose lives are broken by war and oppression, poverty and disaster.

May God give guidance and hope to all who seek a way forward in their lives, the lives of their communities and the life of the Church.

May God give comfort and healing to broken hearts and bodies.

May God give us assurance of God's presence all our days, renew our faith, hope and love and sustain us and all God's faithful people until we see God face to face. Amen

**The Lord's Prayer**  
*Our Father .....*

**Hymn StF 628 Faithful One**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etiM9vYRacs>  
**or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind**

Faithful One, so unchanging,  
Ageless One, you're my rock of peace.  
Lord of all I depend on you,  
I call out to you again and again.  
I call out to you again and again.  
You are my rock in times of trouble.  
You lift me up when I fall down.  
All through the storm your love is the anchor,  
my hope is in you alone.

*Brian Doerksen (b. 1965)*

### **A prayer of blessing**

May God surround you, sustain you and renew you. In your waiting and working, may God increase in you faith, hope and love and assure you that you are never alone, **Amen.**

Original Materials by Miriam Stevenson, local preacher in the Leicester Trinity Circuit

All

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We are grateful to all the Ministers and Local Preachers from around the Connexion who have contributed to Worship at Home. This resource is administrated by Ministries: Vocations and Worship in the Connexional Team and will end at the end of 2022.

For more worship resources see

[The Bible \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

[Singing the Faith Plus \(methodist.org.uk\)](http://methodist.org.uk)

### **Lamentations 3: 19-26**

19 The thought of my affliction and my homelessness

is wormwood and gall!

20 My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me.

21 But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,

his mercies never come to an end;

23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

24 'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him.'

25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him,

to the soul that seeks him.

26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

### **Psalm 137**

By the rivers of Babylon—  
there we sat down and there we wept  
when we remembered Zion.

2 On the willows there  
we hung up our harps.

3 For there our captors  
asked us for songs,  
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,  
'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!'

4 How could we sing the LORD's song  
in a foreign land?

5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
let my right hand wither!

6 Let my tongue cling to the roof of my  
mouth,

if I do not remember you,

if I do not set Jerusalem

above my highest joy.

7 Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites  
the day of Jerusalem's fall,

how they said, 'Tear it down! Tear it down!

Down to its foundations!'

8 O daughter Babylon, you devastator!

Happy shall they be who pay you back

what you have done to us!

9 Happy shall they be who take your little  
ones

and dash them against the rock!

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## 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of  
God, for the sake of the promise of life that is  
in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father  
and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I am grateful to God—whom I worship with  
a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—  
when I remember you constantly in my  
prayers night and day. 4 Recalling your tears, I  
long to see you so that I may be filled with joy.

5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith  
that lived first in your grandmother Lois and  
your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives  
in you. 6 For this reason I remind you to  
rekindle the gift of God that is within you  
through the laying on of my hands; 7 for God  
did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but  
rather a spirit of power and of love and of  
self-discipline.

8 Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony  
about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join  
with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on  
the power of God, 9 who saved us and called

us with a holy calling, not according to our  
works but according to his own purpose and  
grace. This grace was given to us in Christ  
Jesus before the ages began, 10 but it has now  
been revealed through the appearing of our  
Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and  
brought life and immortality to light through  
the gospel. 11 For this gospel I was appointed  
a herald and an apostle and a teacher, 12 and  
for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not  
ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have  
put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to  
guard until that day what I have entrusted to  
him. 13 Hold to the standard of sound  
teaching that you have heard from me, in the  
faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.  
14 Guard the good treasure entrusted to you,  
with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

## Luke 17:5-10

5 The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our  
faith!' 6 The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the  
size of a mustard seed, you could say to this  
mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in  
the sea", and it would obey you.

7 'Who among you would say to your slave  
who has just come in from ploughing or  
tending sheep in the field, "Come here at  
once and take your place at the table"?

8 Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare  
supper for me, put on your apron and serve  
me while I eat and drink; later you may eat  
and drink"? 9 Do you thank the slave for doing  
what was commanded? 10 So you also, when  
you have done all that you were ordered to  
do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have  
done only what we ought to have done!" '