

**Worship for 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (complete text. A video version is also online)**  
**Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.**

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*Thank you to all who have been involved in preparing our worship: Jemima Strain who brings us a reflection, Michael Sharman and Candy Evans for the readings and choosing the songs, Richard Wilde and Trevor Pethick for preparing the prayers. Thank you also to Kate Tennyson for pulling it all together and Tim Pearson for editing the video which can be found on YouTube using the link in the letter above. If any of you would like to take part, then please get in touch with Barbara on [barbara.greenwood@methodist.org.uk](mailto:barbara.greenwood@methodist.org.uk)*

THE PREPARATION

*Call to worship*

The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer. My God is my rock in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. (Ps 18 v2)  
Let us draw near to the God of love.

StF 673 – Will you come and follow me

- 1. Will you come and follow me  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?**
- 2. Will you leave yourself behind  
if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer  
in you and you in me?**
- 3. Will you let the blinded see  
if I but call your name?**

**Will you set the prisoners free  
and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean,  
and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean  
in you and you in me.**

- 4. Will you love the 'you' you hide  
if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound  
in you and you in me?**
- 5. Lord, your summons echoes true  
when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go  
where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.**

*Prayer of adoration*

Loving and gracious God, we rejoice in your presence among us in every time and place. You are the source of all that is good. You are the fountain of all love. Your Grace descends on us like refreshing mist.

From the privacy of our homes we praise you. From the openness of our towns and villages we praise you. From the beauty of our parks and gardens we praise you. From the bottom of our hearts we praise you.

You sent your Son to show us the way. His teaching and example guides us each day of our lives. When we feel lost or lonely we turn to him.

He makes the gap of two millennia disappear in an instant. Our society may be very different yet he seems to have anticipated every emotion, every feeling. He weeps, we weep. He grieves, we grieve. He rejoices, we rejoice. He hurts, we hurt.

Yet, more than that, he also died for us, giving us a chance, a way back. An act we had no right to expect, an act of pure selflessness, the ultimate demonstration of love for those, like ourselves, he never knew.

So, as we turn our hearts and minds to worship you we sense your transforming power at work in our lives. Fill us with your Spirit so we may fulfil our calling, and become more like Him.

#### *Prayer of confession*

Loving God, we are sorry for the times we stray from your will, putting ourselves first and neglecting the needs of others. Forgive us when we stand idly by, watching injustice continue, taking the easy path. Help us to be slow to anger, quick to forgive.

#### *Silence*

Grant us forgiveness. Fill us with the peace which can come only from you. Lift the burden of our anxiety and fear. Free us to serve as you desire, and become true disciples for your kingdom.

#### **Amen**

StF 424 –God forgave my sin in Jesus’ name

**1. God forgave my sin in Jesus’ names;  
I’ve been born again in Jesus’ name,  
and in Jesus’ name I come to you  
to share his love as he told me to.**

***He said:***

***‘Freely, freely you have received,  
freely, freely give;  
go in my name and because you believe,  
others will know that I live.’***

**2. All power is given in Jesus’ name  
in earth and heaven in Jesus’ name;  
and in Jesus’ name I come to you  
to share his power as he told me to.**

***He said:***

***‘Freely, freely you have received,  
freely, freely give;  
go in my name and because you believe,  
others will know that I live.’***

#### THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

1<sup>st</sup> Reading Jeremiah 20:7-13  
(New International Version)

#### *Jeremiah’s Complaint*

<sup>7</sup>You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived;  
you overpowered me and prevailed.

I am ridiculed all day long;  
everyone mocks me.

<sup>8</sup>Whenever I speak, I cry out  
proclaiming violence and destruction.

So the word of the Lord has brought me  
insult and reproach all day long.

<sup>9</sup>But if I say, “I will not mention his word  
or speak anymore in his name,”

his word is in my heart like a fire,  
a fire shut up in my bones.

I am weary of holding it in;  
indeed, I cannot.

<sup>10</sup>I hear many whispering,

“Terror on every side!

Denounce him! Let’s denounce him!”

All my friends

are waiting for me to slip, saying,

“Perhaps he will be deceived;

then we will prevail over him

and take our revenge on him.”

<sup>11</sup>But the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior;  
so my persecutors will stumble and not  
prevail.

They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced;

their dishonour will never be forgotten.

<sup>12</sup>Lord Almighty, you who examine the righteous  
and probe the heart and mind,

let me see your vengeance on them,  
for to you I have committed my cause.

<sup>13</sup>Sing to the Lord!

Give praise to the Lord!

He rescues the life of the needy  
from the hands of the wicked.

*Psalm Psalm 69:1-10*

(New International Version)

<sup>1</sup>Save me, O God,  
for the waters have come up to my neck.

<sup>2</sup>I sink in the miry depths,  
where there is no foothold.

I have come into the deep waters;  
the floods engulf me.

<sup>3</sup>I am worn out calling for help;  
my throat is parched.

My eyes fail,  
looking for my God.

<sup>4</sup>Those who hate me without reason  
outnumber the hairs of my head;  
many are my enemies without cause,  
those who seek to destroy me.

I am forced to restore  
what I did not steal.

<sup>5</sup>You, God, know my folly;  
my guilt is not hidden from you.

<sup>6</sup>Lord, the Lord Almighty,  
may those who hope in you  
not be disgraced because of me;

God of Israel,  
may those who seek you  
not be put to shame because of me.

<sup>7</sup>For I endure scorn for your sake,  
and shame covers my face.

<sup>8</sup>I am a foreigner to my own family,  
a stranger to my own mother's children;

<sup>9</sup>for zeal for your house consumes me,  
and the insults of those who insult you fall on  
me.

<sup>10</sup>When I weep and fast,  
I must endure scorn;

<sup>11</sup>when I put on sackcloth,

people make sport of me.

<sup>12</sup>Those who sit at the gate mock me,  
and I am the song of the drunkards.

<sup>13</sup>But I pray to you, Lord,  
in the time of your favour;

in your great love, O God,  
answer me with your sure salvation.

<sup>14</sup>Rescue me from the mire,  
do not let me sink;

deliver me from those who hate me,  
from the deep waters.

<sup>15</sup>Do not let the floodwaters engulf me  
or the depths swallow me up  
or the pit close its mouth over me.

<sup>16</sup>Answer me, Lord, out of the goodness of your  
love;  
in your great mercy turn to me.

*Epistle Romans 6:1-11*

(New International Version)

*Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ*

<sup>1</sup>What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning  
so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>By no means! We  
are those who have died to sin; how can we live  
in it any longer? <sup>3</sup>Or don't you know that all of us  
who were baptized into Christ Jesus were  
baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were therefore  
buried with him through baptism into death in  
order that, just as Christ was raised from the  
dead through the glory of the Father, we too  
may live a new life.

<sup>5</sup>For if we have been united with him in a death  
like his, we will certainly also be united with him  
in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup>For we know that our  
old self was crucified with him so that the body  
ruled by sin might be done away with, that we  
should no longer be slaves to sin— <sup>7</sup>because  
anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

<sup>8</sup>Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we  
will also live with him. <sup>9</sup>For we know that since  
Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die  
again; death no longer has mastery over him.

<sup>10</sup>The death he died, he died to sin once for all;  
but the life he lives, he lives to God.

<sup>11</sup>In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

*Gospel*      *Matthew 10:24-39*  
(New International Version)

<sup>24</sup>“The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. <sup>25</sup>It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

<sup>26</sup>“So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. <sup>27</sup>What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.

<sup>28</sup>Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. <sup>29</sup>Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. <sup>30</sup>And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup>So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

<sup>32</sup>“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. <sup>33</sup>But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

<sup>34</sup>“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup>For I have come to turn  
“a man against his father,

    a daughter against her mother,  
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—  
<sup>36</sup>a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’

<sup>37</sup>“Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup>Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

<sup>39</sup>Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

*Sermon*

Believe the hype...

Do you believe something because it’s real and true... or sometimes do you get dragged into believing the hype and the latest fad? #EatClean Was one of those popular diet movements that has been trendy for quite some time. Promoting eating only whole grain foods, fruits, vegetables, unrefined and unprocessed food. My Instagram and Social media accounts were full of the Hash tag #EatClean. My social media was full of these perfect meals, beautifully presented and an inspirational story underneath. I’ve always wondered if some of those bloggers would ever go out for a sneaky McDonalds, or if their whole life was dedicated to eating clean.

In 2017 we saw the #MeToo movement of solidarity and empathy. Breaking the silence on women who have survived sexual abuse. Following the exposure on the widespread sexual abuse allegations against Harvey Weinstein, the movement began to spread virally on Social media. I was one of the millions of people who used the hashtag as we revealed the extent of the problem of sexual harassment.

‘In a world where you can be anything #BeKind’. Words written by the TV presenter Caroline Flack on Instagram in December 2019 before she chose to take her own life. Tens of thousands have used the hashtag #BeKind in a clamour for change, pressing both the media and individuals to think more carefully about the impact of their words online. And so I changed my profile picture on Facebook to include the tagline ‘Be Kind’.

This year I have made rainbows with my children, Clapped for Key workers on a Thursday at 8pm. Made a children’s online video joining in the ‘BLACK LIVES MATTER’ movement, joined in Black Out Tuesday and said ‘its ok to not be ok’.

Apart from the #EatClean fad, I do believe in all of these causes and would like to see their trend increase so that they have a longer lasting

impact and change made to society than the latest Fads, which are short-lived and rooted in novelty and popular culture. Each of these campaigns highlight and bring voice to an issue that needs to be heard.

Why are we joining in? Is it earnest, authentic and sincere? Do we believe the Hype?

So I want to turn to look at the passage from Matthews Gospel

He's got crowds flocking around Him, all very excited by what he's doing: the astonishing healings, his remarkable teaching which stands up and challenges even the leaders and the Pharisees, those with power and influence in the society of that time. This man who welcomes the sinner and the unclean. This man who was anointed and clearly a prophet.

Has Jesus become the Hype?

Neither the gathered crowd nor the 12 have any idea where he's headed. That his calling, purpose, anointing would ultimately lead him to Jerusalem and the cross. And I question the longevity of the crowd.

And so here Jesus is again, with a large crowd not only around him, but my bible says traveling with him; following to make sure they hear all of his teaching. Have you heard... everyone is talking about...

And here's when Jesus teaches again- This time he cuts through the hype and is really honest about the cost of following in his footsteps.

Cutting through the hype and of course on the way bringing the equal blessing and challenge of the gospel of self-sacrifice and grace. You are loved and known. You have worth. Even the hairs on your head are counted.

Take up your cross and follow me.

I mean Jesus talks in a lot of parables doesn't he... so on hearing that they would have to pick up their cross and follow him... he's speaking metaphorically, surely?

Jesus is saying when the hype goes... when the next big fad or even trend is here... who will stand up and be counted?

When the crowds turn against me, and vote to crucify me, will you even say that you knew me?...

So let's start addressing what the passage actually says...

Anyone else struggling to read this passage with the hating of father, mother, wife and children in this week's passage??

Like – it's Father's Day, this passage is a little severe and even cruel to have on a day like today. HAPPY FATHERS DAY by the way dad.

So, this passage sounds harsh to our 21<sup>st</sup> century ears right!

Family is the single most important influence in a child's life. From their first moments of life, babies and children depend on parents to protect them and provide for all their needs.

Parents and family form a child's first relationships. I read a book recently called 'Why Love matters' lent to me by a psychologist. The affection that we receive from an early age even from babies shapes our brains and the way that we will form relationships in the future. Loving relationships are crucial to our capacity to be human.

It's how we were created. We were created for relationship with God and with one another. And it's one of the reasons why many of us are finding lockdown so hard.

I truly believe the importance of families. Family and those whom we choose to be family and how we do community are central to the Gospel and our heavenly Father's plan for us.

Throughout the rest of the gospels, the new testament, the old testament, even the 10 commandments express the importance of family life. The responsibility to love and care for one another and our children. With so much turmoil out in the world, surely our homes that we build are meant to reflect a place of refuge

from the storm

You can't talk to me for more than a few minutes without me telling you a story about one of my small humans.

So, is this passage from Matthews gospel a conflict for me? Does it contradict the rest of the bible...

The theologian Tom Wright explains the passage in this way:

'Imagine if you will a politician standing on a soap-box addressing a crowd.

*'If you are going to vote for me, he says, you're voting to lose your homes and families; you're asking for higher taxes and lower wages; you're deciding in favour of losing all you love best! So come on then, who's on my side?'*

The crowd wouldn't even bother heckling him, or throwing rotten tomatoes at him. They would just be puzzled. Why on earth would anyone try to advertise themselves in that way?

But this is pretty much what Jesus is doing in this passage.

*'Want to be my disciple, do you? Well, in that case you have to learn to hate your family, give up your possessions and get ready for a nasty death'...*

hardly the way to make friends and influence people.

But wait a minute. Supposing, instead of a politician, we think of a great leader of a great expedition, forging a way through high and dangerous mountain pass to bring urgent medical aid to villagers cut off from the rest of the world...

*If you want to come any further, the leader says 'you'll have to leave your packs behind. From here on the path is too steep to carry all that stuff. You probably won't find it again. And you'd better send your last post cards home; this is a dangerous route and it's likely that several of us won't make it back.'*

We can understand. We may not like it, but we can see why it would make sense.

And so Jesus, in what he's saying is more like the second person than the first. He's more like the Leader of the great expedition than the politician. *The way to Easter goes through Good Friday. The way to the resurrection goes through the crucifixion. To have new life there is always death. To be reborn you must die to your old self.'*

Christianity has quite rightly been associated with what we call family values... so it comes as a shock to hate your parents, wife, children and siblings. And then even the challenge goes one step more, to hate yourself and be prepared for a shameful death- to take up your cross- which wasn't simply a figure of speech in Jesus world....

Well, then we start to see what's going on.

Jesus is not denying the importance of family and living in harmony with them. But that there is an urgent task to be done and everything else, including one's own life, must be put at risk for the sake of the kingdom.

A few of the commentaries I read suggested that instead of 'hate' a better translation is to 'love less'-

*Are you willing to love less your mother, father, children, husband, wife, brother, sister,*

*Are you willing to love yourself less - in that you love Christ more and thus embrace a fuller more deeper love?*

*Are you willing to give up on your 'idea' of church so that Christ may be known?*

Jewish Hyperbole- apparently a rabbinic way of over emphasising in order to get the point across about just how much we should love God and put him first.

It's in fact, the same word that Jesus used when he talked about serving two masters, must love one and hate the other...

Therefore it's about priorities and knowing our utter dependence on the toehold of God... But it's still a tough passage.

'What is demanded of disciples... is that in the network of many loyalties in which all of us live,

the claim of Christ and the gospel not only takes precedence but, in fact, redefines the others. This can and will necessarily involve some detaching, and some turning away.' Its more to do with detachment and attachment-our strongest attachment is to the call of Christ

Bonhoeffer talks about cheap grace and costly grace- in discipleship.... 'Being a Christian is about following Christ first and foremost, no matter what that may bring, what it calls us to let go of'

How far would we be willing to follow Christ?  
To the cross?

To stand up for social justice... and not just what is trendy to stand up for

To stand up for God when others condemn  
To love those we don't think it's possible to love?  
For the cost of discipleship is love  
And often love is to sacrifice one's self for those that we love. Self-giving. Pure Agape Love.

Our call first is to Love God, with all your heart, mind, body, strength and soul. To have no other God before me... to have no other, before God.  
To love God first is to sacrifice all others.

A bit like a marriage, Jesus calls us to not enter into this lightly or selfishly, for it involves the giving of oneself wholeheartedly. Christ in his self-giving comes to our help, for he loves us and gave himself for us.

There's a precedent and an order.  
To love God, to follow Christ, and then to love others and love ourselves.

May we be willing to lose our life and the culture norms imposed on us, so that we stand up and speak out about the issues of justice and injustice that God has given us. May we know the deepness of the love of God. May we know our worth and value as Children of God that even the hairs on your head are counted. But may we not take lightly the call and obedience of being a disciple of Jesus.

StF 628 – Faithful One

**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.**

**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.  
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,  
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**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.**

THE RESPONSE

*Prayers of thanksgiving*

We offer prayers of thanks to God:

We pause and think back through what we have read or heard today. Any particular word or sentence that gives you hope, comfort or challenge.....

Things in the past week for which you want to thank God – a phone or social media call.....

something you read, saw or heard.....  
An act of kindness that you were able to give, or receive.....  
Or over the last few months – a spark of light in these dim days.....  
An answer to prayer.....  
Something you now value more than ever.....  
And the gospel story its-self that caught you, held you, and will hold you.  
For all of this and more we say:

**Thank you Lord for loving me and holding me now and always.**

And now the prayer for day 21 and its written by Hildegard of Bingen (1098 – 1179)

**O Holy Spirit, breath of all creatures, purifier of all souls and healer of all wounds; be fire to our heart, light to our path and friend for our journey. Amen**

StF 293 – All heaven declares the glory of the risen Lord

- 1. All heaven declares  
the glory of the risen Lord;  
who can compare  
with the beauty of the Lord?  
For ever he will be  
the Lamb upon the throne;  
I gladly bow the knee  
and worship him alone.**
- 2. I will proclaim  
the glory of the risen Lord,  
who once was slain  
to reconcile us to God.  
Foe ever you will be  
the Lamb upon the throne;  
I gladly bow the knee,  
and worship you alone.**

*Prayers of intercession*

We bring the needs of others and ourselves to God. Let us pray:

Gracious God, whose Spirit helps us in our weakness and guides us in our prayers, we pray for the Church and for the world. in the name of Jesus Christ. Renew the life and faith of the Church; strengthen our witness; and make us one in Christ. Today we pray for our partners in mission in Japan, naming long term mission partner Sheila. We recognize the disappointment and economic cost of delaying the summer Olympics and Paralympics for organisers, athletes and hosts.

We pray too for Christians in North and South Korea whose faith and witness offer hope of reunification.

In this country today we are partnered with the Lancashire District and its chair, Paul. In a moment of quiet name your own church and family in Christ.....

Grant that we and all who confess that Christ is Lord may be faithful in your service and filled with the Spirit, that the world may be turned to you.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Guide the nations in the ways of justice, liberty and peace; and help them to seek the unity and welfare of all people.

Grant wisdom to national leaders on how to safely lead out of restrictions and find a new normal.....

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Comfort those in sorrow; heal the sick in body or in mind and deliver the oppressed . . .

We pray for all carers and providers .....

Grant us compassion for all who suffer, and help us to be informed about past injustices but not in bondage to them. ....

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive our thanks and praise for all who have served you faithfully here on earth, and those coping with bereavement.....

May we and all your people share the life and joy

of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer*

We say the Lord's prayer:

**Our Father in Heaven,  
Hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil,  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory  
are yours, now and forever  
Amen**

*The Offering & prayer*

Many of us make bring our gifts and offerings through standing orders, through charitable gifts that we make, giving our time and our availability, our care and our compassion. We offer all we give as part of this worship this morning. We say together:

**Gracious God, accept these gifts, and with them our lives to be used in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

THE DISMISSAL

Go forth and tell (Tune StF 186 – Tell out my Soul)

- 1. Go forth and tell! O church of God, awake!  
God's saving news to all the nations take.  
Proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour Lord and King  
That all the world, his worthy praise may sing.**
- 2. Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;  
He will in grace respond to all who call.  
How shall they call if they have never heard  
The gracious invitation of his word?**

**3. Go forth and tell! Where still the darkness lies,  
In wealth or want, the sinner surely dies:  
Give us, O Lord, concern for heart and mind,  
A love like yours which cares for humankind.**

**4. Go forth and tell! O Church of God arise!  
Go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies.  
Go till all the nations his great name adore  
And service him, Lord and King, for ever more**

*Prayer & blessing*

Together we pray:

**The Spirit of truth lead us into all truth, give us grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and to proclaim the word and works of God; and the blessing of God, Spirit, Son and Father, remain with us always. Amen.**

We go into the world in the power of the Spirit to fulfil our high calling as servants of Christ.

**Thanks be to God. Amen.**