

The **Methodist** Church

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet – 28th June

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for you by Rev Bill Rowell

You may wish to light a candle at the start of this time of worship.

May the grace, mercy and love of God be with us all. **Amen.**

Call to worship

God says, my servant will bring justice to every nation:

We long for your justice, O Lord.

God says, my servant will bring lasting justice to all:

Help us to serve the cause of right.

From Isaiah 42, vv 1 and 3

Hymn: In Christ alone my hope is found

To listen to this hymn in a new tab: press **Shift** and **Ctrl** together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1** In Christ alone my hope is found,
he is my light, my strength, my song;
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
here in the love of Christ I stand.
- 2** In Christ alone! — who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save:
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied
for every sin on him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

3 There in the ground his body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain:
then bursting forth in glorious Day
up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory,
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am his and he is mine —
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

4 No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

Keith Getty (b. 1974) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963)
Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 351

Prayer of Confession

God our saviour, look on this wounded world in pity and in power; hold us fast to your promises of peace won for us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Help us now to call to mind our sins, and with an honest and open heart, to make confession to our heavenly Father.

You were sent to heal the contrite:	Lord, have mercy.
You came to call sinners:	Christ, have mercy.
You plead for us at the Father's right hand:	Lord, have mercy.

May the God of love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins, and assure us of his eternal love, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen

Romans 6:12-23

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway in a new tab press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 10:40-42 - Jesus speaks

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway in a new tab press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'

Amen.

Reflection

Slavery played a bigger part in the history of our land and in the process that formed our modern western society than we sometimes like to think. The National Trust is wrestling with that issue just now, having discovered just how many of the great houses it administers and opens to the public have a slavery connection. The mission agency I used to work for owned slaves on Barbados, and went on owning them after the slave trade ended, until the ownership and use of slaves became illegal some thirty years later.

The fact that slavery was a fact of life for people like Paul played its part in assuring otherwise faithful Christian people that it was all right, even divinely sanctioned. As of course did the sort of unthinking racism - or perhaps I should say racial stereotyping - that allowed a white man to say that because an African looked different from him he was actually inferior, and to deduce from that that God had placed the African peoples on this earth in order to provide labour for those superior peoples who happened to have white skin. We find such views so utterly offensive now that it can be hard to comprehend that for many people they were unquestioned, and just a fact of life, 250 years ago or less.

Now in Paul's day slavery was not like that. It was not the enslavement of one race by another. Anyone could be a slave, and any slave might become a free person. A slave could rise to a high status in society, though of course many or most would not. You became a slave as the result perhaps of being on the losing side in a war, or finding yourself grossly in debt. Or you might even choose to be a slave. The Greek word is the same for slave as for servant; to be a slave might be a neat and effective career move, like the person today whose ambition is to be a butler.

And that's why Paul can talk as freely as he does about slavery without causing offence. Society then saw nothing wrong in the idea of one person owning another. A slave was of course bound to obey his or her master; you would be bound to him. So choose whose slaves you will be, says Paul. You were slaves to sin, but you've been emancipated,

you've been set free. So don't go back there. No longer put any part of yourself at sin's disposal. Be instead a slave to righteousness.

Sin tends to be thought of in predominantly sexual terms these days. And as the list of things society believes it's OK to do widens, so the list of things that get classed as sin gets shorter and narrower. We could find ourselves honestly believing that sin has no hold on us, that really we're doing all right, and certainly we're no worse than the next person along. But Paul is asking us, reminding us, to take sin seriously. He'd heard people saying that surely, now that we no longer are bound by the law, and having to worry about keeping every little last rule in the book, we can live as we choose, we can make our own decisions, decide on our own truth, so as we please. They sound quite modern, don't they?

But advocates of "anything goes" were as wrong then as they are now. We are freed from the rigidity of the law, but not freed from the responsibility to care for one another and to avoid any action that might damage or hurt our neighbour or our planet. And anyway, sin isn't only about doing bad stuff. The Greek word we translate as sin isn't so much about doing things that are wrong as not getting it right. Sin is missing the mark, falling short, messing up. our sins of commission (things we do that are bad) are well outnumbered by our sins of omission (the good stuff we somehow just don't get round to doing). And unless we recognise that, and address it, we're not taking sin seriously.

A slave is 100% owned, and therefore must be 100% alert, responsive and reliable. There is an old tradition that if someone saves your life you belong to them, and Paul I guess is thinking along those lines here. The wages of sin, after all, are death (everyone knows that saying, and most don't know where it comes from, but you do - Paul to the Romans, chapter 6). So if we are free from sin, we are free also from death, and we owe our lives and our very selves to the one who saved us. Paul knew this as a personal truth. "I am no longer my own," he said. "I belong to Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." Amen.

Statement of faith

**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 bring before God our needs and the needs of our world.

Lord, may your light and wisdom guide those who hold positions of responsibility and power in our nation and in our world, especially at this difficult and testing time.

Lord, in your mercy: [Hear our prayer.](#)

Lord, break the chains of those who are misused and exploited by others, and those in our world who are still the slaves of others. And hear our prayer for those who live as refugees and in places of vulnerability and poverty.

Lord, in your mercy: [Hear our prayer.](#)

Lord, make your church in every place strong and courageous in your service. Aware of our own frailty, may we seek your power and be open to your love; so may we truly present you to others, both in word and in action.

Lord, in your mercy: [Hear our prayer.](#)

Lord, hear us as we pray for all in need today: those who are grieving, lonely, worried or anxious, and all who are ill, including those infected by the Covid 19 virus. We pray for their care, treatment and recovery, and for the health and safety of all who are caring for them, and for all front-line workers.

Lord, in your mercy: [Hear our prayer.](#)

Lastly, Lord, we pray for ourselves, and for our families and friends. As we begin to come out of lockdown we pray for the life of our communities: for schools, shops and all places of work. As we re-open society may we do so safely, and always with care and thought for others. We think of those who have lost jobs or businesses, and we pray for those who are continuing to self-isolate, for all who feel they remain vulnerable. May we all act with care, looking out for one another and keeping safe ourselves.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen*

Hymn: Jesu, Lover of my soul.

To listen to this hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1 Jesu, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly,
while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high;
hide me, O my Saviour, hide, till the storm of life be past;
safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last!

- 2 Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on thee;
leave, oh, leave me not alone, still support and comfort me.
All my trust on thee is stayed, all my help from thee I bring;
cover my defenceless head with the shadow of thy wing.

- 3 Thou, O Christ, art all I want; more than all in thee I find;
raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, and lead the blind.
Just and holy is thy name, I am all unrighteousness;
false and full of sin I am, thou art full of truth and grace.

- 4 Plenteous grace with thee is found, grace to cover all my sin;
let the healing streams abound, make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art; freely let me take of thee;
spring thou up within my heart, rise to all eternity.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)
Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 355

Blessing

May the wounds of Christ, who bore our sins in his body on the cross,
be for us healing and peace; and may the blessing of God, Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, surround and sustain us now and always.

Amen.