

Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit

Home Worship Sheet – 16th August

This short act of worship has been prepared and written for you by Mr John Harbron.

Call to worship:

Happy are they who find the grace,
the blessing of God's chosen race,
the wisdom coming from above,
the faith that sweetly works by love.

Charles Wesley

Psalm 67 - A Song of Thanksgiving

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.

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine on us –
so that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.

May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.

May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples with equity
and guide the nations of the earth.

May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.

The land yields its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.

May God bless us still,
so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

New International Version

Hymn: Amazing grace, how sweet the sound

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

- 1 **Amazing grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I'm found,
Was blind, but now I see.**

- 2 **'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.**

- 3 **Through many dangers, toils and snares
We have already come,
'Twas grace that brought us safe thus far
And grace will lead us home.**

- 4 **When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.**

John Newton

I am not the man I
ought to be, I am not
the man I wish to be,
and I am not the
man I hope to be,
but by the grace of
God, I am not the
man I used to be



Prayers of Praise, Thanksgiving and Confession

Lord, we praise you for your creative love and the compassion that takes our breath away with its generosity.

We praise you for your love that was and is the source of all creation

and for your grace that is for ever seeking the lost, the broken, the defeated and the forgotten.

We praise you for the way your mercy clothes your justice and your forgiveness cleanses our sinful, selfish lives.

We thank you for the love your Son, Jesus Christ has shown us by living our life and experiencing our earthly pain.

We thank you for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who holds our lives and transforms our attitudes.

We thank you for the way you fill our minds with your word and our lives with your service.

We thank you Lord for the wonder of your creation which sustains our bodies and our lives, without you, we are nothing.

We praise you that in Christ and the Holy Spirit you have revealed enough of your love and holiness, your grace and your authority to enable us to know you and call you Father.

Father, forgive our narrow mindedness and our prejudices. Forgive us for accepting only that which we can understand, and those with whom we agree.

Forgive our too easy rejection of other people and their ways of living, their hopes and their fears.

Forgive our unwillingness to be enriched by each other's insights, each other's prayers and each other's praise.

Forgive us Father and warm our cold hearts, awaken our closed minds, invigorate our tired praise.

Set our lives ablaze with your love so that we may love, serve and hear you all the time and everywhere.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, our Saviour and our Light.

AMEN

Matthew 15:21 – 28

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.

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.’

Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, ‘Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.’ He answered, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.’

The woman came and knelt before him. ‘Lord, help me!’ she said.

He replied, ‘It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.’

‘Yes it is, Lord,’ she said. ‘Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.’

Then Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.’ And her daughter was healed at that moment.

New International Version

Reflection

The gospel reading today follows a passage where Jesus is talking to Pharisees and Teachers of the Law about being clean and unclean.

Matthew follows this immediately after with the encounter between Jesus and a Canaanite woman.

The disciples want Jesus to send her packing. A noisy troublemaker.

But she’s desperate for Jesus’ attention because her daughter is very ill.

Jesus apparently ignores her because his focus is on sorting out the people of Israel, God’s chosen people who are doing their own thing rather than following God. It is proving to be time and energy consuming.

Eventually Jesus talks to the Canaanite woman.

I thought of a hymn which would go along very well with this story – “Amazing grace” which we had earlier.

Relooking at the story, I realise now the hymn is not about this woman. She wouldn't consider herself "a wretch" saved by Jesus.

Her only indiscretion was being born a foreigner, a gentile living in the lands of the Jews, God's chosen people.

I wish Matthew had added more detail into the conversation between Jesus and the Canaanite woman. On the other hand we can add our own take on it. I think Jesus had a twinkle in his eye when he talked about tossing the children's food to the dogs. She knew, as a gentile, she was considered to be a "dog". I think her reply that "even dogs feed off the crumbs of their master" would have caused Jesus to roar with laughter.

"Touché!" Her incisive response was just what he was renowned for.

They were both of a similar mind set. I think he would have gone on to tell her, if only God's Chosen People had the same understanding that she had, his job would be so much easier.

He'd love to hear them singing "Amazing grace"!

I think he would have apologised for not going in person to heal her daughter, but when she got home she would find her daughter healed.

Something to think about:

"Why didn't Jesus go in person to heal the daughter?"

So here we are, nearly 2000 years later and we find in many countries, divisions and frictions between different groupings and factions.

Who says the bible is out of date and irrelevant with our times?

The death of George Floyd in America has reinvigorated a festering sore which has been going on for many decades. It seems each time the sore comes to a head, it is lanced to take the heat out of the situation, but efforts to tackle the root causes are avoided.

Much of this goes back to the "slave trade" carried out by European countries and the creation of Empires covering the world. We often turn to John Newton who was the captain of a slave ship carrying slaves to America and the Caribbean. A reformed character who rediscovered Christ and wrote this wonderful hymn "Amazing Grace". This hymn was not written about his opposition to slavery, that came later. The

hymn was about himself finding Christ, acknowledging his past and his commitment to the future with Christ.

Possibly the greatest challenge for an individual or a nation is to recognise and acknowledge the past. To apologise for wrongs done can be trite and easy to do or say. Acknowledging failures in the past means living with them now and ensuring they do not adversely affect our lives and in particular the lives of others.

I do like irony and paradox. The plight of the Canaanite woman in the gospel reading reminded me of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin.

A 4.9 acres site in the middle of Berlin built on the former Nazi Headquarters acknowledges the atrocities carried out by Germany on Jews throughout Europe. What happened has not been airbrushed out or relegated to the small print at the back of the history book, it is there for all to see and experience.

John Newton became a good friend and supporter of a fellow Christian, William Wilberforce in the campaign to end slavery. A channel for the peace Jesus Christ can bring to people's situations and lives.

As we read and see the news about people who feel inequalities and prejudice against them, we need to be a channel of the peace Jesus can bring. For those wronged, it may be a reality or it may be a persecution complex. Whichever it is, it is very real and needs rectifying.

Where there is hatred, prejudice, and injustice, let me bring your love.

Father, make me a channel of your peace.

AMEN

Prayers for others and ourselves

Father, we pray for all those who are suffering and enslaved.

For those who today are suffering
political oppression, persecution or imprisonment
because of their faith or beliefs.

May the hope of Christ set them free.

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

We pray for all victims of violence;

For all who are despised or rejected;

For all who are restricted through illness, pain, illiteracy or poverty.

We pray for all who are slaves to addiction;

such as drinking to excess, gambling or drugs.

May the power of Christ free set them.

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

We pray for all oppressors;

For all leaders and governments

who fail to give their people freedom

to be able to think, act or choose for themselves;

For all who look after themselves rather than care for their people

by exploiting other people's weaknesses and fears.

May the truth of Christ set them free.

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

We pray for all relationships where there is a desire to dominate;

For families that are ruled by authoritarian members.

For relationships where emotional blackmail is used

to gain power or control over each other;

May the joy of Christ set them free.

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

We pray for those who sigh and cry to be respected for who they are.

Those who long to know that the prejudices of the past are no more.

The future is in God's hands

And today is his gift to us all to be used to create a good tomorrow.

We pray for those who hold the broken,

sharing the pain of the hurting

and walking with those who are lost.

May the love of Christ set them free.

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

We pray for ourselves.

**May Christ touch our thoughts, our words and our dreams
so that every corner of our lives might be open to his will
and his love and truth will shine through us.**

May the power of the Spirit

**light up our lives with peace and understanding
so the light of Christ sets us free.**

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

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who sets us free.

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: Make me a channel of your peace.

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

1 Make me a channel of your peace.

**Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:**

2 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.

**O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.**

3 Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving to all men that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sebastian Temple (1928–1997)
from the *Prayer of St Francis*

Blessing

**Father, take hold of our lives, fill us with your Spirit and send us out into
your world as examples of your grace and witnesses of your love.**

HALLELUIAH! AMEN



Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin