

Parish of Whitton:

A Service of the Word: 6th September 2020

“God’s Judgement & God’s Mercy”

Dial: 020 3481 5240 or 020 8080 6591
(or join us via the internet using ZOOM if you are able)

Meeting ID: **948 3407 2630** password: **343860**

If you wish, please join in the words in **plain bold type**

Welcome, Introduction & Opening Words

Welcome in the name of Christ – God’s grace, mercy and peace be with you:
And also with you.

“Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” - Matthew 18:20

As we are gathered – even virtually by telephone and over the internet – Jesus is here!

We come together from our scattered lives to meet with God;
let us recognise His presence with us:
As God’s people we have gathered today:
Let us worship Him together.

The Collect for today

Almighty God, You search us and know us:
May we rely on You in strength and rest on You in weakness,
Now and in all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

We listen to the words of a hymn

<https://youtu.be/v9g0hZolUe8>

There's a quiet understanding, when we're gathered in the Spirit:
It's a promise that He gives us, when we gather in His name:
There's a love we feel in Jesus; there's a manna that He feeds us:
It's a promise that He gives us, when we gather in His name.

And we know when we're together, sharing love and understanding,
That our brothers and our sisters feel the oneness that He brings:
Thank You, thank You, thank You, Jesus for the way You love and feed us
For the many ways You lead us, thank You, thank You, Lord.

Ted Smith (c) 1973 Hope Publishing

**We listen to the next instalment of our Old Testament readings - Exodus 12: 1-14
– preparation for the Passover in Egypt**

As we think about how the Israelites must have felt as they prepared for safe passage through a dangerous night, the following words would have been a comfort to them – and can be a comfort to us also:

We listen to the words of a Taize chorus <https://youtu.be/q-TIUXM1gns>

My peace I leave you, my peace I give you – trouble not your hearts.
My peace I leave you, my peace I give you – be not afraid.

We listen to a Gospel reading - Matthew 18: 15-20 – the need for repentance; the promise of forgiveness; the assurance of Jesus' presence.

We think about the readings

Confession and Forgiveness

We pray together:

**Lord our God,
In our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement; bind up our wounds and revive us;
In Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.**

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins and restore us in his image;
To the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

As forgiven people, let us affirm our faith in God:

**We believe and trust in God the Father, who is the source of all being and life,
the One for whom we exist.
We believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died and rose again.
We believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world.
This is our faith – we believe and trust in one God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN**

We bring our prayers before God

We join in the prayer that Jesus taught us:

**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 us our sins as we forgive others.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are Yours:
Now and for ever. AMEN**

As we recognise that it is only through Jesus' atoning sacrifice that we can stand confidently before God:

We listen to the words of our final hymn

<https://youtu.be/hv72Q23llp0>

Only by grace can we enter - only by grace can we stand.
Not by our human endeavour, but by the blood of the Lamb.
Into your presence you call us - you call us to come;
Into your presence you draw us - and now by your grace we come.

Lord if you mark our transgressions, who will stand?
Thanks to your grace, we are cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.

Gerrit Gustafson (c) 1990 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

Final prayer and Dismissal

God bless to us the time that is ours.
God bless to us the time that is now.
God bless to us the time that he has given.
God bless to us each day, each hour, each passing moment,
that we may pass it in his presence and find him in it. **Amen**

So, let us go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

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Reflection

As we follow the Journey of Faith for Moses and the people of Israel in Egypt, we come to the point where God intervenes in a dramatic way – here we see God’s awesome power at work – God’s judgement on the Egyptians who have so badly treated the people of Israel – and a Pharaoh that just would not listen!

God is about to give Pharaoh a very hard lesson – a very harsh lesson for him and his people!

God’s judgement is harsh on the godless – but his mercy is generous for the people who believe and trust in Him as the one true God.

We also, when we think and do those things that are contrary to God’s purposes, deserve God’s harsh judgement – but Jesus assures us that when we acknowledge our failings – when we turn aside from wrongdoing – when we turn to Christ as our saviour – then He will save us from the consequences of our sinful ways – he will be our advocate in heaven and intercede for us.

The Israelites did as God commanded, marking their dwellings with the blood of a lamb – so that when God’s judgement fell on Egypt, they would be spared – death would pass over them.

God was merciful to his chosen people, even if they were not always faithful to Him!
And God is merciful to us who put our faith and trust in Him.

In our Gospel treading, Jesus has been teaching his disciples about the importance of faithfulness.

He also gives them a lesson in how to deal with conflict within the fellowship of believers:

Step 1 – if there is an issue with a fellow believer – sort it out one on one – if you sort it out – you’ve made a friend.

Step 2 – if you cannot sort it out between you both, take two or three others with you – to keep things honest between you – and try again.

Step 3 – if that doesn’t work, tell the fellowship – the church – and if that still doesn’t work – well....

Step 4 – back to square one – restate the need for repentance – but also ... restate the gift of God’s forgiving love!

And remember, Jesus tells them, when you take things to God in prayer – God our Father will act – and Jesus our Lord and Saviour will be there with you.

So, let us pray – let us acknowledge our own failings – let us repent and seek forgiveness – in full assurance of God’s mercy and love for us.
