

Worship Service

BY LEIGH JACKSON

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Meditation

First – all humans are sacred, whatever their culture, race, or religion, whatever their capabilities or incapacities, and whatever their weaknesses or strengths may be. Each of us has an instrument to bring to the vast orchestra of humanity, and each of us needs help to become all that we might be.

Jean Vanier[†]

Prelude



PRAISE AND ADORATION FOR THE GOD OF US ALL

Processional Hymn

“From All that Dwells below the Skies” (vv. 1-2)

From all that dwells below the skies,
let the Creator’s praise arise;
let the Redeemer’s name be sung,
through ev’ry land by ev’ry tongue.

Eternal are your mercies, Lord;
eternal truth attends your word;
your praise shall sound from shore to shore,
till suns shall rise and set no more.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748), alt.

Tune: DUKE STREET

Invocation

O God of creation,
your redeeming work in this world is not dictated
by borders, by lines on a map.
We praise you for the unreserved nature of your mercy
and the expansive reach of your love.
You have created all the people of the earth in your image
and care for each one.
Remind us this day of your call for us to be a blessing
to all families of the earth,
and illuminate the fears that cause us to deny your blessing
to those who live as strangers among us. Amen.

Call to Worship

We have heard the story of the children of Israel in the land of Egypt—
how they cried out to you for deliverance, O God;
how you rescued them from Pharaoh
through your mighty acts of power;
how they learned to be your people in the wilderness;
how you called them to remember their slavery in Egypt.

We worship you, O God of Deliverance.

We have heard the story of the family of Jesus—
how they were forced to flee and seek refuge in Egypt.
When threatened by the violence of Herod,
even our Savior knew the uncertainty of life
as an immigrant and stranger.

We worship You, O God of the Displaced.

We live in a world of turmoil filled with injustices
that threaten the lives of your children in every nation.
We trust that your Kingdom transcends earthly kingdoms, O God,
so give us courage to hear the cries for freedom all around us.
Use us as your vessels of justice and mercy
in a world longing for liberation.

We worship You, O God of Justice.

You are present in every corner of this world, O God,
living within us and among us.
May your Spirit breathe fresh your promise of redemption and deliverance
into the hearts of those without peaceful soil
and into the hearts of those who would extend mercy.

We worship You, O God of Hope.

Sung Response

“Gloria Patri”

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.

Anonymous (4th Century)

Tune: GLORIA PATRI (Greatorex)



WITNESS OF GOD'S LOVE FOR THE WORLD

*Greeting**Witness of Scripture: Deuteronomy 24:14-15, 17-22*

You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land in one of your towns. You shall pay them their wages daily before sunset, because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them; otherwise they might cry to the LORD against you, and you would incur guilt....

You shall not deprive a resident alien or an orphan of justice; you shall not take a widow's garment in pledge. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there: therefore I command you to do this.

When you reap your harvest in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings. When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.

When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

“Seek the Peace of the City”

Seek the peace of the city;
make this land your home.
I have set you here to prosper;
make this land your home.

Seek the peace of your neighbor,
enemy or friend.
I can break the hardest heart,
enemy or friend.

Seek the peace of the exile,
stranger on the road.
I will walk along beside you,
stranger on the road.

Seek the peace of the Savior;
I will draw you near.
I will bring you home forever;
I will draw you near.

Seek the peace of the city;
find me in this place.
I have brought you here to know me;
find me in this place.

David Wright (2004), © 2004 David Wright

Tune: SEEK THE PEACE

*James E. Clemens (2004), © 2004 James E. Clemens
(pp. 44-45 of this volume)*



CONFESSING OUR SINS

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, we confess we have failed to see the stranger among us.
We have closed our eyes to the injustices that force people to leave
their homelands and seek shelter in unfamiliar places.

We claim that you are our refuge and security, yet we act as though national borders provide us with our only opportunity for peace. Forgive us for ignoring your call to peacemaking and for only looking after our own interests.

Help us to recall our personal stories as sojourners in a foreign land so that we may fully embody your call to provide for the orphan, widow, and stranger.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Silent Prayer

The Assurance of Pardon: Psalm 103:8-12

Hear now the assurance of God's pardon from the Psalms:

The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.

He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.

Sung Response

"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in his justice, which is more than liberty.

There is welcome for the sinner, and more graces for the good;
there is mercy with the Savior; there is healing in his blood.

But we make his love too narrow by false limits of our own;
and we magnify his strictness with a zeal he will not own.

For the love of God is broader than the measure of one's mind;
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple, we could take him at his word;
and our lives would be more loving in the likeness of our Lord.

Frederick W. Faber (1854), alt.

Tune: WELLESLEY



GIVING OUT OF OUR JOY

Offering of the People

Hymn of Offering

“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

Come, thou Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount! I'm fixed upon on it, mount of thy redeeming love.

Here I raise mine Ebenezer; hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger, wand'ring from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let thy grace, Lord, like a fetter, bind my wand'ring heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love;
here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.

Robert Robinson (1758)

Tune: NETTLETON



GOD'S CALL TO A NEW LIFE

Gospel Reading: Luke 10:25-37

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was

moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon



RESPONSE OF FAITH

Invitation of Response and Commitment

Hymn of Response

"Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior"

Pass me not, O gentle Savior,
hear my humble cry;
while on others thou art calling,
do not pass me by.

*Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry;
while on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.*

Let me at thy throne of mercy
find a sweet relief,
kneeling there in deep contrition;
help my unbelief.

Refrain

Trusting only in thy merit,
would I seek thy face;
heal my wounded, broken spirit,
save me by thy grace.

Refrain

Thou the spring of all my comfort,
more than life to me,
whom have I on earth beside thee?
Whom in heaven but thee?

Refrain

Fanny J. Crosby (1820-1915)

Tune: PASS ME NOT

Spoken Benediction

Go now and live in the wideness of God's mercy,
bearing witness to the truth we have heard this day:
all people of the world are sacred and loved by God.
Go in peace. Amen.

Sung Benediction

"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"

He's got the whole world in his hands. (x3)

He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got the wind and the rain in his hands. (x3)

He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got the little tiny baby in his hands. (x3)

He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got everybody here in his hands. (x3)

He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got the whole world in his hands. (x3)

He's got the whole world in his hands.

Traditional Spiritual, alt.

Tune: WHOLE WORLD

Postlude

NOTE

† Jean Vanier, *Becoming Human* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1998), 14.



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