


Cheshire South Methodist Circuit
Worship at Home Sheet for 28th July 2024

Call to Worship

We come to you, O God, to thank you for what is good. We come to you, O God, to cry out for what is wrong. We come to you, O God, to ask for help and restoration. We come to you, O God, with aching hearts and glad souls. Let us worship God.

A prayer of praise and adoration

Loving God, we praise you, not only when the sun is shining, but when rain seems endless. For just as a seed needs both sun and rain if it is to grow, so faith becomes stronger, lives become more fruitful, if we root them in the rich and solid earth of your love.

For the love you have shown us as sometimes reluctant disciples, your patience in being with us when we decide to go our way, your hand that is there for us as we stumble or are anxious, your gentle whisper reminding us that you will never let us go, for all of this and more besides what can we do but offer you the worship of our hearts and lives.

A song of praise be on our hearts from the moment we are awoken, and later, lying down to rest may that song remain unbroken. **Amen**

A prayer of thanksgiving

Thank you, Lord, for the blessings you have bestowed on our lives. You have provided us with more than we could ever have imagined. You have surrounded us with people who always look out for us. You have given us family and friends who bless us every day with kind words and actions. They lift us up in ways that keep our eyes focused on you and make our spirits soar. In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen.**

A prayer of Confession

Lord God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. Merciful Father, we come before you with repentant hearts, acknowledging our sins and shortcomings. We confess our need for your forgiveness and mercy. Wash us clean, O Lord, and create in us a pure heart. We trust in your unfailing love and rely on your grace to restore and renew us. Thank you for the forgiveness we find in Jesus Christ. Compassionate Lord, we recognise the consequences of our actions and the pain we may have caused others. We not only seek your forgiveness but also your healing touch on those we've affected. Restore broken relationships, mend wounded hearts, and bring reconciliation where there is discord. Thank you for your grace that not only forgives but also heals. In Jesus' name, we pray. **Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

Thank you, our Father God, that we can know that when we confess our sins in the name of Jesus, you will forgive us and cleanse us afresh. ⁴*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. (Ephesians 2:4-5 NIV*

StF no. 331 *King of kings, majesty*

1 King of kings, majesty,
God of heaven, living in me.
Gentle Saviour, closest Friend,
Strong Deliverer, Beginning and End,
All within me falls at your throne:

*Your majesty, I can but bow;
I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve,
I live to serve your majesty.*

2 Earth and heaven worship you,
Love eternal, faithful and true,
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls,
Brought this sinner near to your throne;
All within me cries out in praise :
Your majesty, I can but bow ...

CCL 821965 Jarrod Cooper

Readings: 2 Samuel 11:1-15 David and Bathsheba

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. ² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home.

⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant." ⁶ So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. ⁸ Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

¹⁰ David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?" ¹¹ Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" ¹² Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home. ¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. ¹⁵ In it he wrote "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."

John 6:1-14 Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

Sometime after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee, that is, the Sea of Tiberius, ² and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. ³ Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. ⁴ The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

⁵ When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. ⁷ Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" ⁸ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, ⁹ "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" ¹⁰ Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). ¹¹ Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. ¹² When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." ¹³ So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴ After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." ¹⁵ Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

Message

David was a hero and greatly loved by the Israelites. When we think of David, we think shepherd, poet, giant slayer, king, ancestor of Jesus – in short one of the greatest men in the Old Testament. However, alongside that list stands another – betrayer, liar, adulterer, and murderer. The first list is of qualities we might all like to have – the second, not so. In the Bible we see no attempts to hide David's failures, but he is still remembered for his greatness. In this episode, with Bathsheba, David allowed himself to fall deeper and deeper into sin. Firstly, he abandoned his duty as

King, by staying home from war. Then he focussed on his own desires, and when temptation came along, he looked straight at it instead of turning away. He sinned deliberately – first by finding out who Bathsheba was, and then by knowingly sleeping with another man’s wife. David then tried to hide his sin by deceit and eventually by committing murder to cover it up.

David could have chosen to stop and turn from evil at any stage along the way, but he didn’t. Once sin begins it is difficult to stop. The deeper the mess, the harder we find it to admit we are wrong and to turn around.

Bathsheba then became David’s wife when her husband had been killed. This was nothing new for David. He had added wives before, so now he simply added another. David then became even more of a hero in the eyes of the people. He had taken into his harem, the poor, pregnant wife, the widow of one of his fallen captains, and the people thought, look at the way he stands behind his men. He takes care of their widows when they are killed in battle. What a marvellous king!

But David’s sin was eventually exposed, and he was punished: ¹¹ “This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’” ¹³ Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. ¹⁴ But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die.” (2 Samuel 12:11-14)

Despite his many mistakes, David had an unchangeable belief in the faithful, forgiving nature of God. David lived with zest. He sinned many times, but was quick to confess – and he confessed from the heart. His repentance was genuine. God did not hold back from David either his forgiveness, or the consequences of his sins. David experienced the joy of forgiveness, even when he had to suffer the consequences of his sins. We all sin. We all get things wrong. Too often we would rather try to avoid the consequences of our sin, than experience the joy of forgiveness. David was flawed, but his belief in God was steadfast. God used David despite his many serious failings. We should never believe ourselves unfit for kingdom work, because we can all be of service to God.

In our passage from John’s gospel we read of Jesus feeding the five thousand. Jesus asked Philip where he could get enough bread to feed so many people. Philip began to assess the situation and look at the high cost of food for so many people. Often, we can be like Philip – we look at situations and assess how we can address them in our own power. How often is our first thought to turn to God? Jesus showed here how the kingdom of God worked then and continues to operate today – through ordinary people like you and me. Jesus usually worked his miracles through people. In this story a young child offered what little he had, and this led to the accomplishment of a spectacular miracle. Age is no barrier to Christ. Nobody is too old, too young, too rich, too poor – or in fact “too” anything to be of service.

The abundance of the leftovers which were collected after the crowd had eaten their fill tells us that whatever we can offer can be used. Our time, our ability, our resources can all be multiplied in effectiveness beyond our wildest expectations. If we make the first step in making ourselves available to God, he will show how greatly we can all be used to advance the work of his kingdom, no matter who we are or what we have done. God forgives and calls real, seemingly insignificant, flawed, and messy individuals to great things. Remember that David with all his flaws and his numerous failings, and a small child with a handful of bread and fish were used to incredible ends by God. Each of us is no lesser than these, and with faith we too can be used mightily in the kingdom of the Lord. **Amen.**

A prayer In your compassionate love, O God, you nourish us with the words of life and bread of blessing. Grant that Jesus may calm our fears and move our hearts to praise your goodness by sharing our bread with others. Sustainer of the hungry, like a mother you long to feed your children until each is satisfied. Turn our eyes to you alone, that, aware of our own deepest longings and temptations, we

will turn to you for strength, and reach out with Christ to feed others with the miracle of your love.
Amen.

Psalm 32 *Of David.*

¹ Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. ² Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. ³ When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. ⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin. ⁶ Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them. ⁷ You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. ⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. ⁹ Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you. ¹⁰ Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him. ¹¹ Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!

StF no. 664 *Lord, you call us to your service*

1 Lord, you call us to your service,
Each in our own Way.
Some to caring, loving, healing;
Some to preach, or pray;
Some to work with quiet learning
Truth discerning, day by day.

2 Life for us is always changing
In the work we share.
Christian love adds new dimensions
In the way we care.
For we know that you could lead us,
As you need us, anywhere.

3 Seeing life from your perspective
Makes your challenge plain,
As your heart is grieving over
Those who live in pain.
Teach us how, by our compassion,
You may fashion hope again.

4 Lord, we set our human limits
On the work we do.
Send us your directing Spirit,
Pour your power through,
That we may be free in living
And in giving all for you.

CCL 821965 Marjorie Dobson

A prayer of Intercession

God of salvation, who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost, hear our prayers on behalf of those who are lost in our day, receiving these petitions and thanksgivings with your unending compassion.

We pray for the world - that leaders may seek peace and fairness, and that nations may join together in action to care for the earth as well as the people.

We pray for your church throughout the world, in its many diverse forms, and we pray for understanding and co-operation between different faiths.

We pray for our country, our cities and towns, and our local communities.

We pray for our families, our friends, and for ourselves.

Redeeming, sustaining God, visit your people and pour out your strength and courage upon us, that we may hurry to make you welcome not only in our concern for others, but by serving them generously and faithfully in your name. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Closing Prayer

Father God, your loving kindness knows no bounds. Our world is in so much turmoil and we find ourselves fearful at times. Help us to keep our sights firmly on you and to avoid distractions and temptations which may lead us astray. Help us to remember the example you set for us of what unconditional love looks like. Help us to love our neighbour. Fill us with love for those close to us, but also those who differ from us. We ask that you help us to love others as you love us, putting others before ourselves. Thank you for your unfailing love. **Amen.**

This worship service has been prepared by Mrs Sally Graham