

# Worship at Home

18<sup>th</sup> January 2026

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South Molton & Ringsash Circuit

**WELCOME.** This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use at home on your own, or together with others. We hope this will enable you to spend some time with God, and to be encouraged, knowing that there are other people sharing in this act of worship with you.

## MP 564: Praise to the Lord

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation; O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation:  
All ye who hear, brothers and sisters, draw near, Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth, shelters thee under His wings, yea, so gently sustaineth:  
Hast thou not seen? All that is needful hath been granted in what He ordaineth.

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work, and defend thee!  
Surely His goodness and mercy here daily attend thee: ponder anew what the Almighty can do, Who with His love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him! All that hath life and breath come now with praises before Him!  
Let the amen sound from His people again: Gladly for aye we adore Him.

Joachim Neander (1650-80)  
tr. Catherine Winkworth (1829-78)

## Let us pray

Our God and Heavenly Father, we come before you this morning to praise you and adore you.

How awesome is your power, that You can allow the waters to rise and the mountains to crumble.

How great is your wisdom, that You can lead us and guide us, close a door and open another, give us trials

as well as blessings, and shepherd us all our lives until we are safe and finally home.

How deep is your love and how boundless your mercy, that no matter how grave our problems, how terrible our mistakes, how shameful our secrets, and how often we stumble and fall, we can pray to You for forgiveness, we can find in You our salvation.

We confess that sometimes we are lazy: we lie back and let things slide, we neglect what we should care for. We confess that sometimes we are in bad shape: we give in to harmful temptations we lash out and hurt our loved ones because we are not alright. We confess that sometimes we are weak; we opt for what is meaningless and lazy, we become a little crooked because it is easy.

We confess that sometimes we are self-righteous: we call others insensitive or uncaring, we deny that we are guilty of exactly the same faults. And we confess that sometimes we forget You: we wander around in the darkness; we do not seek and move towards You.

Forgive us dear Father, for our sins and our shortcomings. May your peace and loving presence occupy our hearts now and always.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## The Lord's Prayer.

## Reading: - John 1:29-42.

## Reflection.

John 1:29: "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'

That verse is so familiar that it doesn't shock us, but it should. That was a radical thing for John to say about a young Galilean carpenter to a group of Jewish people who for centuries had offered their sacrificial lambs at the temple! "This man is the One whom God has sent to be what all the thousands of lambs over hundreds of years have symbolized! And He is not only the Lamb that God sent for Israel, but also for the whole world!"

Christ was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21). He died so that sinners who trust in Him will not incur God's judgment.

John also uses the present tense when he says, "takes away", which signifies the ongoing sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice and the fact that it is available at all times for every sinner who will trust and believe in Him.

"Sin" is singular, heaping together all the trillions of sins in human history into one gigantic pile. It also means that Jesus not only took away the guilt of our many individual sins (1 Pet. 2:24), but also the guilt of the inborn sin that we inherited from Adam (Rom. 5:18). "Of the world" means that Christ paid the penalty for all who believe, both Jew and Gentile.

There is one more word in John's proclamation: "Behold." It's a command to look to Jesus. John doesn't say, "Look at me! I'm a great prophet!" He doesn't say, "Look at your good works; they will save you." He doesn't say, "Look at your religious rituals; they will put you in good stead on judgment day." He doesn't say, "Look at your religious heritage or your church attendance." He says, "Look to the Lamb of God!" Jesus saves sinners who look in faith to Him.

I have always loved the power of personal testimony and would argue that often it speaks more loudly than any well-written sermon because it always comes from the heart and that is what Christ calls us to, not our knowledge or our actions, but our very centre. We can know all the scripture in the world, but unless we feel ourselves saved, we have learnt nothing. I do not apologise for the following long quote from Charles H Spurgeon (1834 – 1892) because, just like Wesley's heartwarming conversion, it speaks to our hearts. Charles Spurgeon couldn't get to where he wanted to be due to the weather and so as a teenager, he found himself in a Primitive Methodist Chapel instead.

*"It was a small gospel meeting – little more than a dozen people were present. A snowstorm raged outside. The scheduled speaker was unable to make it to the meeting.*

*At last, a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the*



pulpit to preach ... He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was, 'Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth' (Isaiah 45:22). He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was, I thought, a glimpse of hope for me in that text. The preacher began thus: 'My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says 'Look'. Now lookin' don't take a deal of pains. It ain't liftin' your foot or your finger; it is just 'Look'. Well, a man needn't go to college to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn't be worth a thousand a year to be able to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look. But then the text says, 'Look unto Me'. 'Ay,' said he, in broad Essex, 'many of ye are lookin' to yourselves, but it is no use lookin' there. You'll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some look to God the Father. No, look to Him by-and-by. Jesus Christ says, Look unto Me. Some of ye say, "We must wait for the Spirit's working." You have no business with that just now. Look to Christ. The text says, 'Look unto Me.'

Then the good man followed up his text in this way: 'Look unto Me, I am sweatin' great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hangin' on the cross. Look unto Me; I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend to heaven. Look unto Me; I am sittin' at the Father's right hand. O poor sinner, look unto Me! Look unto Me!'

When he had gone to about that length, and managed to spin out ten minutes or so, he was at the end of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I daresay, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, 'Young man, you look very miserable.' Well, I did; but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made on my personal

appearance from the pulpit before. However, it was a good blow struck. He continued: 'And you will always be miserable — miserable in life and miserable in death — if you do not obey my text. But if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved.' Then, lifting up his hands, he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist could do, 'Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothin' to do but to look and live.'

*I saw at once the way of salvation ... Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, the people only looked and were healed, so it was with me. I had been waiting to do 50 things. But when I heard that word 'Look', what a charming word it seemed to me! Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away. There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant and sung, with the most enthusiastic of them, of the Precious Blood of Christ and the simple faith which looks alone to Him.*

The stunning truth he learned that day was that it is obtained by a **Look** – a helpless sinner turns to Christ and relies on Him for salvation. So, today, "there is *Life in a Look* at the crucified One; there is life at this moment for you." In the words of that unknown tradesman in a Methodist Chapel speaking from a pulpit he wasn't due to speak from, I cannot think of a more beautiful sentence as we continue to journey this year:- **"Look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothing to do but to look and live."**

### **MP 807: Behold the Lamb of God**

**Behold The Lord Upon His Throne  
His Face Is Shining Like The Sun  
With Eyes Blazing Fire And Feet Glowing Bronze  
His Voice Like Mighty Waters Roar**

**Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty  
Holy, Holy, We Stand in awe of You.**

**The First, The Last, The Living One  
Laid Down His Life For All The World  
Behold He Now Lives For Evermore  
And Holds The Keys Of Death And Hell**

**Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty  
Holy, Holy, We bow before Your Throne**

**So Let Our Praises Ever Ring  
To Jesus Christ Our Glorious King  
All Heaven And Earth Resound As We Cry  
"Worthy Is The Son Of God"  
Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty  
Holy, Holy! We fall down at Your feet.**

Gerald Coates & Noel Richards  
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### **Prayers For Our World**

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! When we see the work of your hands – the earth, the heavens, the moon, the stars, the beauty of your creation, we praise and worship you alone, almighty God. We thank you for all your creation and for your people throughout the world in all their differing cultures and environments.

We pray for all humankind and especially for those suffering poverty, persecution, slavery, oppression, injustice and the effects of conflict. We ask you to give compassion, wisdom and courage to your children throughout the world that they and we may defend those who suffer and work to bring relief wherever we can.

### **Father God, hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own local community. We confess our own failings and lack of compassion and love. We thank you that you forgive our failings and we ask you to graciously give us a spirit of love and forgiveness that sees only the good in each other, that bears no grudges and forgives all grievances. May we learn to forgive even as you have forgiven us that we may live together in unity.

### **Father God, hear our prayer. Amen**

### **Blessing.**

May the love of the Father, the tenderness of the Son, and the presence of the Spirit, gladden our hearts and bring peace to our soul, this day and all days, **Amen**.

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