

# Worship at Home

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Today we shall be following the theme of  
**'What pleases God'.**

*"Praise my soul the King of Heaven, to His feet thy tribute bring. Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who like thee His praise should sing? Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise thee everlasting King."*

- ✧ *Praise Him for snowdrops and the first signs of spring...*
- ✧ *Praise Him for our families and friends...*
- ✧ *Praise Him for our first cup of tea, or coffee in the morning...*
- ✧ *Praise Him for His constant love...*
- ✧ *Praise Him for .....*
- ✧ **Praise God for three things, or more, that are personal to you.**

## STF 228: Hail to the Lord's Anointed

(based on Psalm 72)

**Hail to the Lord's Anointed, great David's greater Son! Hail, in the time appointed, his reign on earth begun! He comes to break oppression, to set the captive free, to take away transgression, and rule in equity.**

**He comes, with succour speedy, to those who suffer wrong; to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong; to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light, whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in his sight.**

**He will come down like showers upon the fruitful earth; love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in his path to birth; before him, on the mountains, shall peace the herald go; and righteousness, in fountains, from hill to valley flow.**

**Kings shall fall down before him, and gold and incense bring; all nations shall adore him, his praise all people sing; to him shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend, his kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.**

**O'er every foe victorious, he on his throne shall rest; from age to age more glorious, all blessing and all blest. The tide of time shall never his covenant remove; his name shall stand for ever, his changeless name of Love.**

James Montgomery (1771-1854)

## We pray together

We come to you our merciful Father, confessing our own sins and mindful of the sins of our world.

We ask forgiveness for ourselves, and for those who offend your holy laws of love, and peace, and mercy.

Enable us to repent and turn away from what is wrong so we can embrace what is good and holy. Forgive us when we cannot see our own faults yet see those of other people with glaring clarity.

We are sorry and ask for your forgiveness through our Saviour. For it is in Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

## We say the Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

## Reading: Matthew 5: 1-12

### The Beatitudes

*When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then He began to speak and taught them, saying:*

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.*

*Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

## Reflection on The Beatitudes

Jesus makes a fairly straightforward list for us in our reading, telling us what we need to do to please God. And we hear that not only will God be pleased if we are like this, but we will also be blessed. It sounds as though God's delight will rub off onto us, and when God smiles with pleasure, his smile radiates blessings upon the source of His joy.

Isn't that a fantastic point to consider! Something that you or I might do, giving God pleasure and resulting in us being blessed. Fantastic! So, where's the catch? Well, of course there isn't one. Jesus is not a tricky Saviour to obey, but He is clear. These blessings come when we are Christlike and have the same attitudes that He has.

Although Jesus most definitely put a new spin and interpretation upon much of the Jewish law and customs observed in His day, He was often restating what the prophets before him had said. In Micah 6:8 we hear some of the most well-known words from the Old Testament, *"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."*

It's quite interesting to match up the various Beatitudes with this prophecy - and each one nestles beautifully within its words. We just have to unpick them a little and understand what it was that Jesus was saying to His disciples and says to us now.

Humility, kindness, sorrow, meekness, personal sacrifice, courage, mercy: Godly qualities that are not very popular in our go-getter society. In fact, they never have been. Kindness might masquerade in popular media when applied to worthy or good causes, but Jesus' teachings included all people and things that need our care.

Our care, as demonstrated by Jesus on the cross, should include everybody and everything. *"He died to save us all"*, as the hymn says. Justice is something else the Old Testament Prophets were very keen on, something which also seems to be in short supply in our world. Isaiah 1:17 says this, *"learn to do good, seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow."* There are many such verses concerning the right treatment of our fellow men and women. Putting it simply, if someone matters to God, then they should matter to us, and all mankind matters to God.

We may read or hear about someone and find ourselves critical of their behaviour or things they say. We are never asked to condone evil, but we are asked to show mercy and compassion to all. Our prayers may well begin with us opening our hearts to God in anger or distress at what someone has said or done but should end in our praying for them.

I believe the best way of thinking about challenging situations and people is to remember, before we make any judgements or form opinions about them, that all mankind is made in the image of God, and that God loves them - as He loves you and me.

And even those far away, by their own decision, from following Jesus, receive daily blessings from God. Jesus tells us that we should, *"love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us"* because our Father, *"makes His sun, rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."* Matthew 5:44-45

There's so much to say about each individual quality and blessing listed in The Beatitudes but today let's

think of them as a whole. As a description, not only of Jesus as they most certainly are, but as something for us all to aspire to in fuller and greater ways.

**Amen**



### **For our intercessions, we use STF 251**

Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets; no one is His neighbour, all alone He eats. Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too: make me, friend or stranger, fit to worship you.

Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets, where injustice spirals and real hope retreats. Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too: in the Kingdom's causes let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets, curing those who suffer, touching those He greets. Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too: let my care be active, healing, just like you

Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets, where each sign of hatred he, with love, defeats. Listen, Lord Jesus, I should triumph too: where good conquers evil let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets, 'Who will join my journey? I will guide their feet.' Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few: walk one step before me; I will follow you.

John Bell (b.1949) & Graham Maule (b.1958-2019)

### **STF 409: Let us build a house**

**Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,**

**A place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.**

**Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;**

**here the love of Christ shall end divisions:**

*All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.*

**Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,**

**where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.**

**Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;**

**here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:**

*All are welcome...*

**Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat:**

**a banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet.**

**Here the love of God through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;**

**as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:**

*All are welcome...*

**Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone**

**to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.**

**Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;**

**let us bring an end to fear and danger:**

*All are welcome...*

**Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard**

**and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as word within the Word.**

**Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,**

**let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:**

*All are welcome...*

Marty Haugen (b. 1950)

### **Blessing**

Live in peace and serve The Lord with joy.

Receive and freely share His grace.

May you see God in everything around you and may His presence fill each moment of your days with joy. **Amen**