

Worship at Home

18th October 2026

Prepared by the Revd. Anna Flindell

South Molton & Ringsash Circuit

Formatted by the Devon Moor to Shore team



Opening Prayer

Unchanging God: refresher, healer and restorer; give us wisdom and discernment today. We come to seek you and to hear you; to be still and present with you; to be transformed by you.

Father of light, Father of truth and wisdom, we worship you and adore you. Turn us inside out as we bow at your throne today. Let our light shine through you in the darkness, most merciful and gracious God.

Unblemished God, forgive us when we adhere to laws that are not of you, when we criticise others because their ways are not our ways. When we have not supported one another in love or protected those that are vulnerable. When we have corrupted your laws and gone our own way, or when we have not nurtured those in our families and communities and let them go astray. Cleanse our hearts and make us pure. Help us to live as one community, bound together in love and grace. Help us to live alongside each other and be there for one another.

Thank you, O God, that we are a forgiven people, cleansed and restored by you, made pure in your image. Today we are free because of the cross.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

STF 362: Meekness and majesty

**Meekness and Majesty, Manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity dwells in humanity,**

Kneels in humility and washes our feet.

O what a mystery, meekness and majesty.

Bow down and worship

For this is your God, this is your God.

**Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience to death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life, conquering through
sacrifice, and as they crucify prays: 'Father forgive'**

O what a mystery....

**Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,
Love indestructible in frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne.**

O what a mystery....

Graham Kendrick (b 1950)

© 1986 Kingsway's Thankyou Music

Bible Reading: Luke 14 v 1-14

Message

Today we find ourselves amid lessons concerning delight in doing God's will, humility, excuses, and grace. Delighting in the commands of God means being aware of and acting on God's call and will with humility and grace. Spurgeon says: *'Hypocrites enjoy doctrines but not Commandments'*. Delight comes by reading, heeding, and observing the commands of God, the joy is multiplied when the commands are obeyed.

As human beings, we are so good at making excuses

instead of taking responsibility for our actions. Here are just some examples from car insurance claims: -

- I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the embankment.
- To avoid hitting the bumper of the car in front I struck a pedestrian.
- "Going to work at 7:00 this morning I drove out of my driveway straight into a bus. The bus was 5 minutes early."
- I didn't think the speed limit applied after midnight.

Equally we can make excuses to others and God as to why we cannot do what God calls us to do. "I'm not qualified", "I don't have time" and "It won't make

any difference" are all excuses we can make to avoid doing God's will.

We wouldn't be the first to make those same excuses as we see them throughout the scriptures. In our reading from Luke's gospel, Jesus sees a child of God in need and so he acts and heals him. It doesn't matter that it is the Sabbath. There is no room for indifference or excuses in God's Kingdom.

Often God calls us to actions that make us feel uncomfortable. However, when we stop trying to do God's will in our own strength and instead rely on his, we find we do have the strength, guidance, and heart to do what he calls us to.

The next thing Jesus notices is pride. I remember some years ago attending a summer ball at Yeovilton when my father was Commodore there. When it came to sitting down to eat, everyone followed a seating plan and I found myself sitting at the end of a table where I knew nobody.

Having introduced ourselves to one another, the first course arrived which was soup. Once everyone had been served, we sat politely waiting for the most senior person at the table to begin. I was feeling particularly hungry and kept looking to a Naval Commander at the other end of the table, getting quite frustrated that he had not lifted his soup spoon.

The remainder of the table guests looked equally impatient as their soup was getting cold. Finally the lady sat next to me whispered in my ear "I believe they are waiting for you to start Ma'am". Embarrassed and a little confused I lifted my spoon and sure enough eating commenced. I had been given the honour at the table (which was a gift and a blessing) although I certainly didn't feel I deserved it.

As Jesus was observing the other guests at the house of the prominent Pharisee, he noticed how they were all scrambling to sit at the head of the table. These were considered the seats of honour. Jesus gives them some advice. He says, *"When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the seat of honour. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has also been invited? The host will come and say, 'Give this person your seat.'*

Then you will be embarrassed, and you will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table!"

Jesus continues, “Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, ‘Friend, we have a better place for you!’ Then you will be honoured in front of all the other guests. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Next, Jesus teaches on humility. He says to his host “Where did you get your guest list from? I see your friends, those you have a close attachment to. I see your brothers, those who agree with you on religious aspects. I see your relatives, those you would not want to offend. I see your rich neighbours, those who have influence. And they will reward you with their hospitality of including you on their invitation list, which will then obligate you to invite them to your next banquet.

How about next time you invite the outcast. Bring in the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Bring in those who in no way could ever repay you. You won’t be on their invitation list. But you will be on God’s.”

When you do something for someone, and you know they can never repay you, it is truly a blessing.

This passage from Luke’s gospel offers us a reminder that the feast was never prepared for us. It was prepared for God’s chosen people. But because they rejected Jesus, we are feasting by his grace on the spiritual food of God. He invites us to his table. Therefore, we must be careful that we do not make our own excuses for not partaking of all that our Father in heaven offers.

Furthermore, as his servants, we are sent to invite others around us to come to the feast that has been prepared for them. Look in the streets and alleys of where you work, play, and live.

Look for those who are spiritually poor, crippled, blind, and lame. Check for those hiding behind past hurts and current worries. Tell them about the feast of grace that is available each and every day for them.

Just like us, they don’t need to dress up or pay the doorman for a place at the table. They can come as they are and when they do, not only will they be blessed by God’s grace, but so will we.

STF 707: Make me a channel of your peace.

Make me a channel of your peace.

**Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there’s doubt, true faith in you:**

***O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.***

Make me a channel of your peace.

**Where there’s despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there’s sadness, ever joy:**

O Master grant that...

Make me a channel of your peace.

**It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving unto all that we receive,
and in dying that we’re born to eternal life.**

Sebastian Temple (1928-1997)

from the Prayer of St Francis ©1967,

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Prayers of Intercession

Friends in Christ, God, invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers as dear to us as our own needs. Loving our neighbours as ourselves, we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions on behalf of the church and the world.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Father in heaven, we pray for people of every race and belief, and in every kind of need: make your ways known on earth, your saving power among nations. We pray especially for peace between Russia and Ukraine.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Father God, take control of our mouths and forgive us for careless, thoughtless, and angry words used against our family, friends and neighbours. Let our words always bless you and others and may our actions speak of love for you and your Son, Jesus Christ. Help us to see everyone as uniquely made in your image and worthy of our love and respect. Show your love through our lives in some small way today.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Gracious God, we pray for all who suffer, whether their suffering is physical or spiritual. And we ask you to support all who give their strength, their skill and their stamina in a ministry of healing.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Merciful God, we pray for those who have gone before us to that place where flesh and spirit part. May they rest in your love and peace, surrounded by the heavenly host and reunited with loved ones.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer

Mighty God, grant that the words we have heard during our time of worship may be grafted onto our hearts through your grace, that they may produce in us the fruits of a good life, in praise and honour of your Holy Name.

Merciful father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

STF 186: Tell out, my soul.

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name!
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name -- the Lord, the Mighty One.**

**Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might!
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**

**Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word!
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children’s children and for evermore!**

Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926)

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We share the Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of
God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with
us all, evermore, Amen.**

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