

## Worship at Home 14 February 2021

A short act of worship for use in people's homes, provided by Mary Armstrong.

### Call to worship

The Lord, the mighty one, summons his faithful people to approach.  
Come, let us tune into his radiance,  
allowing his light of glory to shine upon and within us,  
as we offer our worship and praise. Amen.

Almighty God, we ask you to show us  
something more of who you are and how awesome your presence is.  
Overcome our fear of the unknown,  
and lead us into a new experience of you.  
May our worship today be as on a mountain-top,  
a transforming encounter that empowers our discipleship. Amen.

### Hymn: Singing the Faith 59 <sup>1</sup> [Click here to join in](#)

Lord, the light of your love is shining,  
in the midst of the darkness, shining:  
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us;  
set us free by the truth you now bring us -  
shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,  
fill this land with the Father's glory;  
blaze, Spirit, blaze,  
set our hearts on fire.  
Flow, river, flow,  
flood the nations with grace and mercy;  
send forth your word,  
Lord, and let there be light!*

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,  
from the shadows into your radiance;  
by your blood I may enter your brightness:  
search me, try me, consume all my darkness -  
shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,*

As we gaze on your kingly brightness  
so our faces display your likeness,  
ever changing from glory to glory:  
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story -  
shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine,*

### Prayers of confession, assurance of forgiveness and praise.

Lord, whereas it is part of our faith walk to seek  
and to be open to life-changing moments,  
forgive us when we just plod through life  
and get despondent with the mundane. We are sorry. **Lord, forgive us.**

On the other hand, we can at times get fixated on the spiritual mountain-tops  
and so miss out on what is happening below in the everyday.  
When things are going well for us, we can get wrapped up in the moment,  
and be forgetful of others. We are sorry. **Lord, forgive us.**

There are many voices tuned into today's world  
telling us how to live and what is best.  
But you, Lord, are our authority in life.  
Forgive us when we fail to test things against your word.  
We are sorry, **Lord, forgive us.**

Jesus' divine nature was confirmed on the mountain – he is God's beloved Son.  
He went on to suffer;  
he died and rose again for us, conquering sin and death.  
Now he sits at God's right hand, glorified in heaven  
– and thanks to him, we are completely forgiven. **Amen.**

Glorious God, exalted yet intimate,  
we give thanks for special friends with whom  
we can share our joys and sorrows;  
for special people, who have spoken special words to us.  
Thank you, Jesus, for your love,  
that makes us all special,  
inspiring and encouraging us  
to be your disciples in the world today. Amen.

**Gospel reading: Mark 9: 2-9** <sup>2</sup> [Click here to listen](#) from 0:15 to 1:24

<sup>2</sup> After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. <sup>3</sup> His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters - one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

<sup>6</sup> (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" <sup>8</sup> Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus. <sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

**Hymn: Singing the Faith 55** <sup>3</sup> [Click here to listen](#)

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| 1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,<br>in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,<br>most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of<br>Days,<br>almighty, victorious, thy great name we<br>praise.            | 3 To all life thou givest, to both great and<br>small;<br>in all life thou livest, the true life of all;<br>we blossom and flourish as leaves on the<br>tree,<br>and wither and perish; but naught changeth<br>thee. |
| 2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,<br>nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might<br>thy justice like mountains high soaring above<br>thy clouds which are fountains of goodness<br>and love. | 4 Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,<br>thine angels adore thee, all veiling their<br>sight;<br>all praise we would render: O help us to see<br>'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.              |

5 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,  
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

### **Reflection on the readings**

During our reflection today I would like us to keep in mind the work of *All We Can*, formerly known as the Methodist Relief and Development Fund. This year *All We Can* is inviting us to consider where change begins. Their work is essentially concerned with bringing about practical change in people's everyday lives. In Jesus' response to his transfiguration, we see his invitation to another kind of change, something new, something exciting, something pioneering.

In the last 12 months, the whole planet has had to deal with change, as our normal way of life has been disrupted by Coronavirus and its impacts. In some parts of the world, as the disease is isolated and kept at bay, something like normality is beginning to return – but for many of us, the process of lockdowns, restrictions, travel bans, and the economic effects of long-term closures and furloughs are still bringing change.

How have you coped? How are you doing? Are you sharing that with someone? Are you praying about it, and talking about it with others you trust and who love you? In this most isolating of times, it remains so important that we find ways to carry on connecting, talking, communicating. When change comes, we need to pull together. Of course, change is not always a bad thing. There is much about our world that needs to change. Perhaps many of the impacts of the pandemic are not ones we would have wished for (though maybe there are a few that are) – but certainly our world needs change.

We know there is poverty. We know there is injustice. We know there is racism (as has been brought to light during this pandemic). We know that some people have so much, whilst others starve. We know about the refugee camps, the farms destroyed by climate change, the wars, the corrupt governments. We know all that. But are we going to try and change it?

Change begins with you. Change begins with me. Change begins with an invitation to do something about the injustice and pain in our world. God's story of transformation begins with you and me.

Today, on Transfiguration Sunday, we give thanks for a remarkable moment in Jesus' ministry – told for us today by Mark's Gospel. The setting of this story is on a high mountain. This tells Mark's hearers straight away that something remarkable is about to happen. God meets Elijah (1 Kings 19.8) and Moses (Exodus 19.3) on the mountain top. And the revelation could not have come at a more appropriate time. Jesus has just turned the disciples' thinking upside down. Peter finds words to articulate who Jesus is: 'You are the Messiah' (8.29), Jesus accepts this, but then tells them of his forthcoming suffering and death. He fiercely rebukes Peter's incredulity (8.33), but the disciples must have found it impossible to grasp this unimaginable future. Suddenly, there is tragedy ahead, but the glory of Jesus' true being is also revealed to them.

This story is told from the perspective of the disciples. They see Jesus changed in ways they can only describe by saying that his clothes became brilliantly white. They see two of the greatest figures from the history of Israel speaking to Jesus as equals. And they are terrified!

Peter stammers out words that reveal his yearning for this moment to go on for ever. He must have regretted the words as soon as they left his mouth – yet what words could be adequate to this experience? Peter’s stumbling words are eclipsed by the voice of God. Cloud comes down on the mountain – Jewish tradition linked cloud and the glory of God (Exodus 40.34) – and from the cloud, God speaks. God’s words at Jesus’ baptism (1.11) were spoken to Jesus, but these are addressed to the disciples. God’s voice gives the disciples the words to make sense of what they have seen – this has happened because Jesus really is the Son of God – and they are reassured that they should listen to him. Finally, as they return to ‘real life’ at the foot of the mountain, Jesus tells them to share this with no one, picking up on Mark’s theme of secrecy until the full revelation of Jesus’ identity in the crucifixion.

When Jesus went up onto the mountain, he had a moment of encounter. Even Jesus, the Son of God, part of the Godhead, uses these moments of encounter to inspire and fulfil his human ministry.

As we learn from and continue to adapt to the changes forced on our world by this global pandemic, from rapidly developing technology, and the impact of the climate crisis on our way of life – there is much that is changing around us. We all respond to change differently but here, in today’s Gospel reading, we see how Jesus responds to it. We see Jesus’ invitation into change. As he undergoes this external, outwardly ‘transfiguration’, he is our model for how to embrace change and apply it to his ministry. He leaves the mountain encouraged and inspired.

Another lesson for us all, is not only Jesus’ encounter with God in some pure, divine, non-human way. He also meets with two elders of the faith – Elijah and Moses. Obviously, we ourselves will not have the chance to talk to wise leaders who have been dead for thousands of years. Nevertheless, we can still learn from our elders, those who have gone before and left us books, and those older, longstanding church members with their decades of wisdom. All we have to do is ask and learn from them, read the books and so on. In order to be changed we need to hear the stories of how God is changing and has changed the lives of others – to take inspiration from them and, most importantly, to hear the invitation.

### **Prayers of intercession**

The heavens and the earth witness to the transforming power of God.

We bring into God’s presence those places and situations that we long to see changed, transformed for the glory of God.

We pray for countries torn apart by war or affected by climate change,  
for refugees looking for safety,  
for those imprisoned for their faith,  
and for those who will go hungry today...

We pray for all medical staff and carers coping with the second wave of Covid 19,  
for all those suffering from coronavirus, and their families,  
for the many bereaved families across the country and the world...

We pray for your touch on their lives.

We thank God for the skill and dedication of the scientists, who bring us hope for the future with the roll-out of the vaccines.

We pray for the poor in our community,  
for those who are unemployed or unable to work,  
for those families having to juggle home schooling and work,  
and for the dedicated teachers supporting them.

We pray for those who have asked for our prayers...  
for those who are unwell or in need at this time,  
for our families and friends...

And finally, we pray for ourselves, for our own journey of discipleship,  
for courage, steadfast faith, and wisdom, in all we do or say.  
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Let us say **The Lord's Prayer** together

**Hymn: Singing the Faith 15** <sup>4</sup> [Click here to join in](#)

The splendour of the King, clothed in majesty; let all the earth rejoice, let all the earth rejoice He wraps himself in light and darkness tries to hide, and trembles at his voice, and trembles at his voice.	And age to age he stands, and time is in his hands; beginning and the end, beginning and the end. The Godhead, Three in One, Father, Spirit, Son, the Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb.
<i>How great is our God, sing with me, how great is our God, and all will see how great, how great is our God.</i>	<i>How great is our God, sing with me, how great is our God, and all will see how great, how great is our God.</i>

Name above all names, worthy of all praise;  
my heart will sing: how great is our God.  
Name above all names, worthy of all praise;  
my heart will sing: how great is our God.  
*How great is our God, sing with me,  
how great is our God, and all will see  
how great, how great is our God.*

**Blessing**

We go into a new week, with the spirit of God in our hearts,  
hoping to be transformed, transfigured, and changed by the love of God,  
and to be catalysts of change for a world in need. Amen.

**Acknowledgements**

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<sup>2</sup> Bible Verses from New International Version® Anglicized, NIV® Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 by Biblical, Inc.® CCLI Licence number 54165.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908)

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