

## Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit

### Sunday Worship Sheet – Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Our Worship for this week was written by Jean Owen who is one of our Local Preachers and is a member at St. John's, Bangor. You may wish to have your Bible to hand.

#### Testing the Water

##### Call to worship

On this day, come and see what the Lord has planned for you.  
Climb the mountain, ford the river, face the storm, or hide away,  
where can you hear God the best?  
Be still and know He will speak your name, and you will be blessed.

**Hymn: StF.250.** *Jesus calls us o'er the tumult...* <https://youtu.be/BdGkZB3k4WU>

Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult  
of our life's wild restless sea,  
day by day his voice is sounding,  
saying: 'Christian, follow me.'

As of old apostles heard it  
by the Galilean lake,  
turned from home and toil and kindred,  
leaving all for his dear sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship  
of the vain world's golden store,  
from each idol that would keep us,  
saying: 'Christian, love me more.'

In our joys and in our sorrows,  
days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures:  
'Christian, love me more than these.'

Jesus calls us! By your mercies,  
Saviour, may we hear your call,  
give our hearts to your obedience,  
serve and love you best of all.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818–1895)

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##### Prayer of Adoration

The world around us is so beautiful,  
while the sounds of silence now,  
while we are away from the humdrum noises of life, traffic, planes, even people,  
we are more than ever aware of the gifts of creation you have given us.  
The bird song is louder, even the insects are audible in the stillness.  
We thank You for all You have given us,  
help us to continue to care for it as life becomes busy again.  
We praise and thank You for the gift of life.

##### Prayer of Confession

Lord God,  
I'm sorry for the times I take my eyes off You,  
and seek to do things in my own strength.  
I'm sorry for the times I doubt that

You can keep me on the straight and narrow.  
I'm sorry for the times I ask You for signs.  
Lord, I pray that You will forgive  
my doubts and hesitations,  
show me Your loving presence,  
especially when I most need it,  
and teach me to trust You at all times. **Amen.**

*(taken from Roots Worship)*

### **Assurance of Forgiveness**

We know that as we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **Amen.**

Thank you for Your word of life and truth which guides us the way we should go.  
As we say the prayer which Jesus taught His first disciples.

**The Lord's Prayer.** Our Father...

**Hymn: StF.248.** *I heard the voice of Jesus say...*

<https://youtu.be/XUVcPF8-VuE>

I heard the voice of Jesus say:  
'Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, O weary one, lay down  
your head upon my breast.'  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
weary and worn and sad,  
I found in him a resting-place,  
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:  
'I am this dark world's Light;  
look unto me, your morn shall rise,  
and all your day be bright.'  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk,  
till travelling days are done.

I heard the voice of Jesus say:  
'Behold, I freely give  
the living water; thirsty one,  
stoop down and drink and live.'  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

Horatius N. Bonar (1808–1889)

Reproduced from Singing the Faith  
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**Today's Old Testament Reading:**     1 Kings 19:9-18

**Today's Reading from the Epistles:**     Romans 10: 5-15

**Hymn.StF.645.** *Will your anchor hold in the storms of life...*

<https://youtu.be/PTfypuXwrMA>

*The words are reproduced overleaf*

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
when the clouds unfold their wings of  
strife?  
When the strong tides lift, and the cables  
strain,  
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;  
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's  
love!*

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
when the breakers roar and the reef is  
near?  
While the surges rave, and the wild winds  
blow,  
shall the angry waves then your barque  
o'erflow?

Will your anchor hold in the floods of  
death,  
when the waters cold chill your latest  
breath?  
On the rising tide you can never fail,  
while your anchor holds within the veil:

Will your eyes behold through the morning  
light  
the city of gold and the harbour bright?  
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,  
when life's storms are past for evermore?

Priscilla Jane Owens (1829–1907)

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### Today's Gospel Reading:

 Matthew 14:22-33

### Sermon

These are two mountain prayers! You may be thinking, no, that's Jesus on the lake in Matthew, but where had He been before that? There was an amazing miracle feeding the crowds who had spent a long time listening to Jesus, bringing their sicknesses and problems, He was probably physically and spiritually exhausted, and needed the serenity and peace of the mountain top to re-charge His batteries. To spend time with His Father, quality time, conversation one to one. Then, ready for the next work on the agenda, He had to catch up with His disciples. We read what happened, but more of that in a minute.

The other mountain prayer was also after an amazing miracle when Elijah faced off the prophets of Baal in a contest between their god and His. He had to prove once and for all, that Baal was just a dead god, and Yahweh was the creator of the universe, and had the power to do anything. The test proved that Elijah followed the true God, worshipped the true God, and this led to a seeming disaster for him! He had to run for his life, and ended up at the top of mount Horeb in the desert. He also needed to find his place, to hear God's voice, but how?

Are we in a similar situation? Is God calling you and me today again? Are we listening for His voice in the midst of all the stress of disaster, news of disease, not quite wars of the world, but a battle nevertheless. A battle to keep looking to the only one who can save us, Jesus our Saviour.

After all, when Peter got out of the boat, impetuously, he was fine, until he looked down. He looked away. No doubt realising that he was actually walking on the top of the sea! He should have kept focussing on the goal, on Jesus. That goal, is the perfect conclusion, the future hope who is the only way to get through the difficulties of life in our world at this moment.

A bit like Peter, we must talk to Jesus. Ask what is He doing. What is His plan and purpose? Do we have the strength of faith to get out of our boat, to leave the comfort of the familiar, and explore the unknown?

Elijah did too, though of course, that was with God, Yahweh, not Jesus! Elijah had done an amazing thing, as I said, a demonstration of the power of the one true God. This involved a sacrifice on the mountain top, in total trust and obedience, calling of God to burn the sacrifice, to consume it totally, even soaking the whole thing with water to prove the power of the living God. He mocked the prophets of Baal, he knew their false god wouldn't move a finger, because he was lifeless. They were shamed, publicly, which made an enemy of the queen Jezebel who was a Baal worshipper. She vowed to kill him.

We know it was at this point that he lost his nerve and ran for his life. Depressed, disheartened, he wanted to die, but God had other plans. He was miraculously fed and watered, and travelled on through the barren desert to the mountains, where he told God exactly how he felt. Isolated! The only true worshipper left, no one else faithful.

But, he was wrong, and as we read, he was recommissioned in a beautiful way. God demonstrated just how he could come and talk, not in a noisy way, not in earthquake or fire, but He was in the stillness, in the quiet hush, a quiet whisper of a voice.

I wonder if that is why we can't hear God speaking to us today? We need to come in stillness, come in silence, and know His voice, know the plan and purpose of your life and mine, right here, right now.

Everything has changed. Look and see.

Many more people today are asking questions, where is God in all this? How can we connect with the God we are serving. OK – what next? You and I have got to stop and listen though, we have got to keep our eyes on Jesus, our ears open for that quiet whisper.

We have to be patient for the future to be revealed. The on-line services are an open door to invite people in... maybe not the physical door, but the door to salvation, to freedom, to share Jesus love.

Our new Vice-President took the opportunity in her inaugural address, to make what we used to call an altar call. An invitation to anyone who was watching, who wanted to know more about this Jesus, to respond, to contact her, or speak to someone who they knew was a Christian.

Come and see.

Be still and know.

‘If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved, .....for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”’ (Romans 10:9 & 13)

*As a prelude to our intercessions, can I invite you to either sing or read:*

**StF.723.** *Who can sound the depths of sorrow in the Father heart of God...*

<https://youtu.be/nG8CBot9vFA>

Who can sound the depths of sorrow  
in the Father heart of God,  
for the children we’ve rejected,  
for the lives so deeply scarred?  
And each light that we’ve extinguished  
has brought darkness to our land:  
upon our nation, upon our nation,  
have mercy, Lord.

We have scorned the truth you gave us,  
we have bowed to other lords.  
We have sacrificed the children  
on the altars of our gods.  
O let truth again shine on us,  
let your holy fear descend:  
upon our nation, upon our nation,  
have mercy, Lord.

Who can stand before your anger?  
Who can face your piercing eyes?  
For you love the weak and helpless,  
and you hear the victims’ cries.  
Yes, you are a God of justice,  
and your judgement surely comes:  
upon our nation, upon our nation,  
have mercy, Lord.

Who will stand against the violence?  
Who will comfort those who mourn?  
In an age of cruel rejection,  
who will build for love a home?  
Come and shake us into action,  
come and melt our hearts of stone:  
upon your people, upon your people,  
have mercy, Lord.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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We focus on the desires of our hearts for new life, for health, for peace in the nations.  
For the truth of the Word of God to bring peace and reconciliation within our nation now.  
Come Lord Jesus and show us how to live holy lives,  
to shine Your light everywhere we are, whether on-line, on social media, out walking, out shopping or talking to our neighbours,  
help us to be so filled with Your Spirit,  
that all may see the truth of the love You told us to share.

*(read again the hymn, pausing when there are things you need to personally bring before God for healing and redemption)*

We pray all these prayers in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

© Jean Owen

**Hymn: StF.89.** *Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord.*

<https://youtu.be/nuudVoMyZyE> the hymn co-writer Brenton Brown (with lyrics)

<https://youtu.be/gbpjb4YzoyA> the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,  
we will wait upon the Lord,  
we will wait upon the Lord.  
Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord,  
we will wait upon the Lord,  
we will wait upon the Lord.

Our God, you reign forever.  
Our hope, our strong deliverer.

*You are the everlasting God,  
the everlasting God.  
You do not faint, you won't grow weary.  
You're the defender of the weak,  
you comfort those in need;  
you lift us up on wings like eagles.*

Brenton Brown and Ken Riley

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## **Blessing**

May the Lord bless you and keep you,  
may the Lord lift up His face to you and give you His peace,  
wherever you are, however you share, be a blessing to all.  
Eyes focussed on the one true Way. **Amen.**



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