



Sunday 20th September 2020

Dear friends,

If you have the Internet, you will find a video to accompany this sheet on YouTube from Sunday morning – search for Isle of Man Methodist Church and you will find it on our YouTube channel.

Our prayers are with you all,

Isle of Man Methodist Staff Team

Opening Prayer

I come this day to worship You,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Open my heart, to receive Your love,
my soul to receive Your Spirit
and my mind to know to Your truth.
For Your glory.
Amen.

Hymn: Only by grace can we enter

Sing/ Read /pray / the words below

Only by grace can we enter,
only by grace can we stand;
not by our human endeavour,
but by the blood of the Lamb.

Into your presence you call us,
you call us to come.
Into your presence you draw us,
and now by your grace we come,
now by your grace we come.

Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand?
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.
Lord, if you mark our transgressions,
who would stand?
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed
by the blood of the Lamb.

Only by grace can we enter ...

Gerrit Gustafson
CCLI 2421471

Let us pray together

Gracious God, I praise you for who you are.

For you are the Lord, the giver and sustainer of
life whose nature is love. I thank you that even
when I rebel against you, your unquenchable
love seeks me out.

I thank you that in Jesus, you made the first
move and have rescued me. I pray that as your
Word ministers to me, I might so open my heart
to your grace that it might fill me, transform me
and overflow into all my relationships and
dealings with the world.

Amen.

Today's Readings:

Jonah 3:10-4:11
Matthew 20:1-16

Find a Bible and read the above passages. If
you do not have a Bible at home, ask your local
minister who will gladly source one for you.

A time of reflection

All Christians talk about grace but as Methodists
we talk about grace a lot!

This unearned, love of God in Jesus Christ freely
offered to all people is both the foundation and
heart of our worship, the sacraments and our
new life in Christ. It is this grace that is expressed
in God's saving action toward us and nothing of
our faith can ever be outside a response to God's
grace.

In turning to Matthew 20 we reach Jesus' parable
of the Labourers in the Vineyard.

This story is told to Jesus' disciples who have as
Peter says "...left everything and followed
[Jesus]" (Mt 11:27). It is to these that Jesus tells
his story of workers who queue for their wage
after a whole day toiling in the scorching sun.

We can imagine their eyes popping when the
latecomers receive a full day's wage for but one
hour's work. If they have stumbled upon such
generosity, what then will be *their* reward?
Imagine then the knot in their stomachs as they
receive nothing but the exact same coin as their
colleagues who had hardly broken sweat!

This then is Jesus' answer to his faithful
follower's enquiry about their reward. Confronted
by the reality of God's grace all legalistic religion,
all bargaining with God finds its end.

Similarly in our reading from the book of Jonah,
we find Jonah angry at God because of the
unmerited grace being shown to the people of
Ninevah.

Biblical scholars tell us that, although the stories are set in different times, the books of Jonah and Job were probably written down within a few years of each other – they share many similar patterns of language and usage of the same words (in much the same way as the language of Shakespeare is similar to the language of Christopher Marlowe)

At the end of Job we find a man angry at God because of undeserved hardship experience by a righteous person. At the end of Jonah we find a man angry at God because of undeserved grace being shown to an unrighteous people. Holding the two book together, we find God's reply to each is essentially "what is it to you how I treat others?...I am sovereign..."

As the landowner in Jesus' parable says: "Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?"

In our lives let us be content that God will act as He chooses, rejoice that He says to us "my grace is sufficient for you", and pray that others will also come to know the generous richness of His unmerited, undeserved, Love.

Hymn: What shall I do my God to love?

Sing/ Read /pray / the words below:

What shall I do my God to love,
my loving God to praise?
The length, and breadth, and height to prove,
and depth of sovereign grace?

Your sovereign grace to all extends,
immense and unconfined;
from age to age it never ends;
enfolds all humankind.

Throughout the world its breadth is known,
wide as infinity;
so wide it never passed by one,
or it had passed by me.

My trespass was grown up to heaven;
but, far above the skies,
in Christ abundantly forgiven,
I see your mercies rise.

The depth of all-redeeming love
what angel tongue can tell?
O may I to the utmost prove
the gift unspeakable!

Come quickly, gracious Lord, and take
possession of your own;
my longing heart vouchsafe to make
your everlasting throne.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayers of Intercession

Hold a silence between each statement below,
and as each person or situation comes to mind
lift them to the Lord.

God of love,

We pray that the world might know your grace. We
pray for wisdom for the leaders of the world that
powerful nations might respond with that self-giving
generosity that you bring to the world.

We pray for our brothers and sisters in the UK
slowly returning to collective worship as some
places of worship reopen - and for those who feel
excluded from that worship.

We ask your blessing on those close to us that you
would give us the opportunity to reflect that grace
first shown to us.

We ask these prayers in the only way that we can;
in the power of your Holy Spirit and in the name of
our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory,
For ever and ever. Amen.*

A prayer of blessing

The love of the Father enfold us,
the wisdom of the Son enlighten us,
the gifts of the Spirit enflame us;
and the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and all we love now and always.

Amen.



Some original materials by Andrew Emison,
adapted by Steve Ingrouille