



Sunday 31st January 2021

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

Lord God, We come before You in this moment in praise and wonder at all You have done.

You are the all-powerful, omnipotent God, creator of the heavens, and the earth – all we see around is the work of Your hands. Great is our God, and greatly to be praised!

We thank You that You did not create and then forget. - You are present with us in every moment of every day. Your word says that You delight in all that You have made, and it is Your delight to meet with Your people.

We come before You in this moment in humility, in the knowledge that we have not always lived as Your people.

In the knowledge of the times that we have let You down through what we've done, and said, and thought.

Lord, forgive us.

Silence

We thank You Lord, that through the work of Your Son over 2000 years ago on the cross, we can come to You today and hear those wonderful words – “Your sins are forgiven”.

We praise You Lord for the victory that is ours in Christ. Victory over sin and death.

Help us to stand firm in the knowledge that we are more than conquerors through our faith in Him. To stand firm against temptation, and to give You the praise, honour and glory that You deserve.

We ask this through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn: Love Divine

- 1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.
- 2 Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

- 3 Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

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Edition, number 503

Today's Readings:

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28

A time of reflection

Knowledge puffs up, love builds up...how true those words are!

Like many on the island, we are currently juggling the demands of work and home-schooling. We have always had a great respect for teachers, all the more so now.

Think back to your school days, who was the favourite teacher you had?

The best teachers are those who don't just impart knowledge - sometimes in ways that are condescending or make you feel small and ignorant - but those who encourage the student to discover for themselves, seeking that “A-Ha!” moment.

I wonder if that is how Jesus taught?

We are told he taught “not as the scribes” but as one with authority.

I suspect also, that He taught out of love - longing for his hearers to have their own “A-Ha!” moment, as they realise the deep all-embracing love of God their Father is such that it reaches even them.

Saul the Pharisee-of-Pharisees, persecutor of the church, was full of knowledge. He knew the law, he knew the scriptures, he knew what he believed to be right - and this conviction led him to be zealous in all things. These days he would probably be called a fundamentalist, with all the negative stereotype that word brings to mind.

Since his encounter with the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus, Saul (now Paul) still teaches, he still shares his knowledge - but in everything he is driven by love for God, and love for people. Longing that they too may not just know about God's love found in Christ, but know and experience God's love for themselves.

Hence, his concern over eating food sacrificed to idols is not a relapse into Pharisaical adherence to the Law, but is grown out of love for the weaker believer that they may not stumble in their discipleship.

Knowledge puffs up, love builds up.

In all we do, let's seek to be a people who are filled with the love of God, building up those around us, His church, and our society as a whole.

Hymn: Let Earth and Heaven Combine

- 1 Let earth and heaven combine,
angels and all agree,
to praise in songs divine
the incarnate Deity,
our God contracted to a span,
incomprehensibly made man.
- 2 He laid his glory by,
he wrapped him in our clay;
unmarked by human eye,
the latent Godhead lay;
infant of days he here became,
and bore the mild Immanuel's name.
- 3 Unsearchable the love
that has the Saviour brought;

the grace is far above
both earth's and angels' thought:
suffice for us that God, we know,
our God, is manifest below.

- 4 He deigns in flesh to appear,
widest extremes to join;
to bring our vileness near,
and make us all divine:
and we the life of God shall know,
for God is manifest below.
- 5 Made perfect first in love,
and sanctified by grace,
we shall from earth remove,
and see his glorious face:
his love shall then be fully showed,
and we shall all be lost in God.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words
Edition, number 208

Prayers of Intercession

"That whosoever believes in Him, shall not perish but shall have everlasting life."

Lord, we believe, help us in our unbelief.

Help us Lord, to remain faithful to You, even when times are hard, help us to know with full assurance that You are God, that You are in control, and that You are faithful to all of your promises.

So, loving God, hear us as we pray for our world and for an end to all that frustrates your purpose. We pray for those in countries racked by conflict, famine, disease, and poverty; for those who face persecution for what they believe or who they are; for those who are victims of crime, violence, and war.

Your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

We pray for the unemployed and homeless, the sick and suffering, the lonely and unloved, the disabled and disadvantaged

Your kingdom come, your will be done **on earth as it is in heaven.**

We pray for those who work to build a more just and loving world, all who strive to bring hope and healing to those in need. We ask your blessing upon aid agencies, charities and churches, doctors, nurses, politicians, all who in many different ways seek to be guided by Your Spirit working to build up those around them, and society as a whole.

Your kingdom come, your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

We ask these prayers in the name of Christ, and for His glory's sake. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

May the love of God fill you;
the grace of God thrill you;
the peace of God guard you;
the blessing of God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
be with you.
Now and forever. Amen.

