



Sunday 14th March 2021
The Fourth Sunday in Lent

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.

Welcome

Call to Worship

Jesus was lifted up on the cross
so that all could come to him.

Let us choose to seek God in this place today,
keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus
and choosing to follow him. **Amen.**

Hymn (StF 345): And can it be

Sing/ Read /pray / the words below

1 And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

2 'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
let angel minds enquire no more.

3 He left his Father's throne above --
so free, so infinite his grace --
emptied himself of all but love,
and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
for, O my God, it found out me!

4 Long my imprisoned spirit lay
fast bound in sin and nature's night;
thine eye diffused a quickening ray --
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,
my chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

5 No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!
Alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach the eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayer of Adoration

Eternal God, we praise you,
for you are the source of light and life.

Your word made the whole of creation,
in all its beauty and splendour,
bringing order out of chaos,
light out of darkness.
We praise you that the evidence of your creative
activity is all around us still.

We praise you, Father,
for your supreme revelation of yourself

in our Lord Jesus Christ,
and for the clear vision of your love
that we see in him.

Inspire us now with the life and light he came to
bring, that our praises may be worthy of him and
resound to his honour and glory;
for his sake. **Amen.**

Readings: Numbers 21:4-9 & John 3:14-21

A time of reflection

Nicodemus was a Jewish leader who was a Pharisee.
His night-time encounter with Jesus actually gives us a
pointer to understanding God's eternal purposes, and
also one of the most treasured verses in the Bible:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and
only Son...*

I think that it's a valuable thing to have a succinct
distillation of the Christian faith in such few words. If
there's one verse in the Bible that generations of
young Christians have been taught to memorize it is
John 3:16. Jesus said that God gave his one and only
Son. And the most characteristic way in which that is
expressed is when God's Son is lifted up on the cross.
Now, that is a cue for us to rewind back to the time of
Moses and the curious account of a bronze serpent.
Jesus also said to Nicodemus:

*'Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so
the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who
believes may have eternal life in him.'*

The story of the bronze serpent recorded in our
reading from Numbers 21 would certainly be familiar
to Nicodemus. It was a story of sin, because the nation
rebelled against God. So, God sent fiery serpents that
bit the people so that many died. But it is also a story
of grace, for Moses interceded for the people and God
provided a remedy. He told Moses to make a brass
serpent and lift it on a pole for all to see. Those who
looked at the serpent after being bitten would be

healed. So, it was also a story of faith and healing. When the people looked by faith, they were both saved and healed.

Well, have you ever noticed that the serpent or snake has become associated today with healing? It is depicted on the World Health Organization emblem and other medical symbols too. The roots of this symbolism may come from Greek mythology – but I think it also has some resonance with the story of Moses and the bronze serpent. And much as the serpent was lifted up on the pole, so the Son of God would be lifted up on the cross. Jesus was lifted up on a cross to bring salvation and healing to the world.

You only need to turn on the television or hear the news to realize that the world today is in desperate need of healing in many ways. The world needs to be saved from patterns of self-destruction, exploitation and violence. And, as Christians we hold on to the hope given in Christ. God gave his only Son, to bring healing and salvation - and also to open the way to abundant life.

And the thing about eternal life is that it isn't consigned to life after death. It begins here and now. We embark upon eternal life, life in all its fullness, when we have a relationship with Jesus Christ – and we lift him up in our lives. We know it is true when we've entered into a relationship with God - and we're growing in his family likeness. We have faith and believe when we look up to the cross of Christ and behold his glory. And we can experience wholeness and healing, salvation and new life, when we put our trust in him – and hold onto the promise that:

'God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'

Rev Bryan Yardy

Hymn (StF 338): There is a redeemer *Sing/ Read /pray / the words below*

- 1 There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.

*Thank You, O my Father,
for giving us Your Son,
and leaving Your Spirit
till the work on earth is done.*

- 2 Jesus my Redeemer,
name above all names,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
O for sinners slain.
- 3 When I stand in glory
I will see His face,
and there I'll serve my King forever
in that holy place.

*vv. 1-2 Melody Green (b. 1946)
v.3 Keith Green (1953-1982)*

Prayers of Intercession

Let's pray...

Let us pray to the Lord.

For people whose lives have been turned upside down as a result of conflict at home, in the community, between neighbours and nations...

For people whose lives could have been very different had they grown up knowing love and compassion, knowing boundaries and respect...

For people who have been traumatised by sudden change, who have lost those close to them through illness or accident, and for those affected by natural or avoidable disaster...

For people who find it hard to make changes in their own lives, through fear of stepping out into the

unknown, or fear of going within and confronting the past...

For people who seek the courage to make a difference in the world, those who challenge structures and systems to work for the greater good, those working alongside people in need...

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.**

Blessing

To God who is always forgiving,
always loving,
always offering a new beginning,
be honour and glory,
praise and thanksgiving,
this day and forever. **Amen.**

