

Worship At Home

14th March 2021

Everyone enjoys a good moan now and again. Take a moment to write a list of the things you have to grumble about just now. Once you have your list scrunch of your bit of paper into a ball. Hold onto this during worship and at the end through it into your recycling bin.

Adapted from Psalm 107:1-3,17-22

Leader: Give thanks to God, for God is good;

All: God's love endures forever.

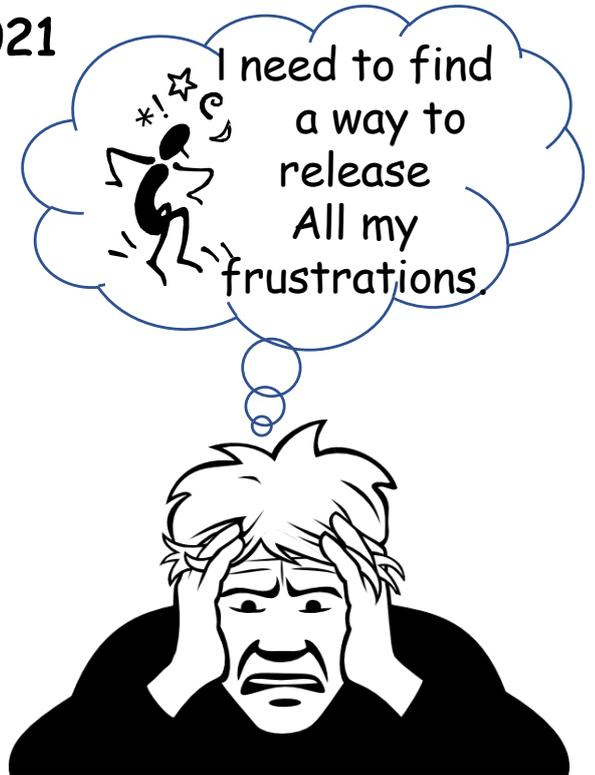
Leader: Let all who know God tell of their story

All: from east and west, from north and south, we will tell our story.

Leader: When we cried to God in our trouble, God saved us from our distress;

All: God sent out the Word and healed us.

Leader: Let us give thanks for God's unfailing love, and tell of God's works with songs of joy in worship.



Loving God,

shine your light into our world and our lives, help us to know you and share your love with everyone we know. Even though we can all get angry, and mumble and grumble about what is going on in our homes, our schools, or our communities; help us to see the good in the people around us, help us to understand the problems that other people face, and help us to be more forgiving and more helpful to those in need of your care.

Even though we can all be frustrated, and wish things could change quicker than they do, or want things that we don't have but that others do, help us to understand the good things about our lives, even though it can sometimes be hard.

Help us to find the good in the world before we find the bad, and help us to be more forgiving and more helpful to those in need of your care.

Amen.

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 558 Lord, I lift your name on high

Lord I lift Your name on high. Lord I love to sing Your praises I'm so glad Your in my life. I'm so glad You came to save us You came from heaven to earth, to show the way From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky Lord I lift Your name on high	CCLI 620398
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Prayer Of Adoration And Confession

Creator God, we come together as witnesses to your glory, as bearers of your good news, as hopeful children, as loving friends, as a community seeking your wisdom.

In a world of frustration and pain we look to your guiding hand for support and strength, for succour and healing. Direct us and lead us as we walk through this life attempting to live in the way to which you have called us.

Forgiving God, redeemer and companion, we gather together, hopefully and sorrowfully, comfortable and uncomfortable, carefree and troubled, to confess our love, to confess our adoration, to confess our failings, to confess that we try, to confess that we are

greedy to confess that we are generous, to confess that we are selfish, and to confess that we are caring.

Through we live in a world where anger and hurt are commonplace, where neighbour is set against neighbour and the future is uncertain we look to your guiding hand, for reassurance and understanding, for hope and for joy, as we walk through this life, attempting to live in the way to which you have called us.

Amen.

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

Reflection

A tough love, this. Wilderness wandering, weary wondering: 'are we nearly there yet?' But they do not know where 'there' is. What they do know is: blasting heat by day, surprising cold by night; sand and stone, occasional bones bleached clean; scavengers hovering, picking off the ones who fall behind.

No signs of life here, only dust and death. Is this their promised freedom?

And some grow nostalgic, rewrite the past as a glorious feast of life.

Slowly a creeping mutiny begins in the arid landscape of their hearts, and moves outwards; insinuates itself throughout the camp, undermines the voice, the vision, that led them from

(Spill the Beans, issue 38) slavery. Hope seeps away like sweat in the sun and they are undone by toxic murmuring.

New life slithers among them, with a sting.

Stunned from their misremembered past, they cry out to heaven, call upon the One who brought them to this place, this strange new freedom.

They are not a petulant people, but traumatised and afraid: there will be wobbles on the way to the promised land. Until then... a tough love, this, that removes one poison through another.

Let us pray

(Spill the Beans, issue 38) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son: our world, our angry world, our fearful world, our unequal world, our hurtful world, our poor world, our rich world, our joyless world, our joyful world.

For 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world: our world, our world of sorrow, our world of pain, our world of crying, our world of laughing, our world of war, our world of peace, our world of greed, our world of charity.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. **Amen.**

Matthew 23.37-38 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

A mother's sacrifice

Jesus describes himself by using the striking image of a mother hen with her chicks. A mother's deepest instinct is to protect her children - an echo of God's amazing love that goes to the very depths to rescue and protect us. These heartfelt words of Jesus immediately precede the events of Holy Week, when we witness the ultimate expression of the lengths to which this sacrificial love will go. As we to look forward to the events of Easter this story may help to prepare us and link Easter to the sacrifice that mothers make for their young.

A story -The farmyard was a peaceful place - safe and warm for the animals that lived there. The pig in his sty, the young calves in the big shed, the lambs in the pen, the ducks on the pond and the hens - the hens were everywhere, clucking and pecking at the grain and food

scraps all around the yard.

The hens truly were everywhere - except for one mother hen, who was busy with her newly hatched brood of chicks. Little, fluffy, yellow bundles of new life looked after by a proud mum. It was a typical, peaceful farmyard scene - a safe place to live - at least it was, until one night three weeks before Easter.

All the animals had settled to sleep, when a strange new smell was caught on the wind - an unfamiliar, unpleasant smell, a dangerous smell. The mother hen awoke. She smelt it too. It was the smell of burning. Somehow, somewhere in the darkness of the night a fire had begun. It was spreading fast, licked into a fury by the wind. Stubble began to burn, the hay in the hayloft caught light and the dry wood of the pens was soon ablaze.

Panic set in among the animals. The lambs were bleating, the cattle lowing in distress, the pigs snorting with fear, the ducks were flapping and squawking, the hens scurrying about in confusion. The mother hen sensed the danger and drew her chicks closer to her for safety. Surely the farmer would be alerted by now? He would come and rescue them from the corner of the barn that had become their temporary home. The mother hen sat tight and waited - too frightened to leave, too protective of her young to move.

The farmer did come but not to the barn. Bringing water and beaters, he and his friends did their best to douse the roaring flames and rescue the bigger animals. It was hard work. Exhausted they had to be content with containing the disaster and waiting for dawn to see the damage. They rescued all they could.

What about the mother hen? When the farmer began the morning search of the ashes in the barn, he spied something unusual - a sad lump of charred feathers in one corner. The poor hen, overcome by the fumes and the heat, had died. But - didn't the feathers move? Yes! Something was alive. He brushed back the mess and out stumbled six little chicks, safe and sound, protected from disaster by a mother's love. She had died so that they could be saved. She had given her life so that they would go on living.

It was only three weeks to Easter and this one event, more than anything else, helped the farmer to understand for the first time what Easter was really all about.

Lord God, Your mother-like love for us is so special that we are scarcely able to believe it, let alone receive it. We give thanks today for our mothers and their care for us, and we also give thanks for those who have been like mothers to us, offering us nurture and care throughout our lives. We celebrate the fact that the roots and pattern for this love are found in you. All love comes from you, so we pray that you will inspire and strengthen us to become mother-like in our concern for others. Help us to pass on the best advice to our children and to others, and may we draw strength and inspiration from your Easter sacrifice, to become those who lay down their lives for others. We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 399 My song is love unknown

My song is love unknown, My Saviour's love to me;
Love to the loveless shown, that they might lovely be. CCLI 620398
O who am I, That for my sake, My Lord should take frail flesh, and die?

He came from His blest throne salvation to bestow;
But men made strange, & none the longed-for Christ would know:
But oh, my Friend, my Friend indeed, Who at my need, His life did spend.

Sometimes they strew His way, And His sweet praises sing;
Resounding all the day Hosannas to their King:
Then "Crucify!" Is all their breath, And for His death they thirst and cry.

PTO

<https://youtu.be/e6zyI5CbglA>

Here might I stay and sing, No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King, Never was grief like Thine.
This is my Friend, In whose sweet praise I all my days, Could gladly spend.

CCLI 620398

Loving God,

just as Moses prayed for your people, we come together in prayer; look upon us with care and compassion, shine your light on us that we might live. Out of the darkness of fear your people seek support and reassurance, as the world continues to struggle with war, poverty, disease, and hate, we pray for all those who are fearful; for all those wondering what tomorrow may bring.

Help them to have hope, embolden them and guide them, and grant us the strength to be constant companions to all those in need of your love. In a time of confusion and strife, when our communities and society are struggling to find a new purpose, a new way of caring for and loving one another, we pray for all those who are frustrated, those who desire a different, more peaceful world, more compassionate communities, and a more equal society.

We pray for all those who are angry, for those who see and know injustice, but have little power to create change. We pray for all those who have been left behind in communities and a society of great wealth and education for some and poverty and exclusion for others.

Help them to have satisfaction and justice in your eternal love and understanding, and grant us the strength to be constant companions to all those in need of your love.

As our world changes, and your church continues to search for its place at the heart of our communities, we pray for those seeking wisdom, seeking a way forward, to carry out your mission, and spread your word and carry your love to the whole world.

Help them to find new paths, and reinvigorate what they have long known, and grant us the strength to be constant companions to all those in need of your love. **Amen.**

Listen or sing or read the words of this hymn - CH4 559 There is a Redeemer CCLI 620398

There is a redeemer, Jesus, God's own Son, Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One
Jesus my redeemer, Name above all names. Precious Lamb of God, Messiah
Oh, for sinners slain

*Thank you, oh my father, for giving us Your Son and leaving Your Spirit
'Til the work on Earth is done*

When I stand in Glory I will see His face and there I'll serve my King forever
in that Holy Place

*Thank you, oh my father for giving us Your Son and leaving Your Spirit
'Til the work on Earth is done*

There is a redeemer, Jesus, God's own Son, Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One
Thank you, oh my father for giving us Your Son and leaving Your Spirit

'Til the work on Earth is done

Go about your living in peace, with our eyes and our hearts focussed on the love of God.
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all evermore. **Amen.**

*Thank you to those who have taken the time to contact me. Take care out there this week.
May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and each day.*

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If you choose to email me, please can you tell me who you are and where you live. Thank you. 4