Worshipping at Home

Sunday 22nd November 2026

Call to worship

Let us come and wait for our Saviour. Let us come and wait for his transforming power. Let us come and experience his abiding love. Let us come and worship him. **Amen**.

Hymn: Praise, my soul, the King of heaven (StF 83)

Prayers

Good shepherd, we come before you as we are, each one of us a unique individual. We ask you to mould us into your image, and help us to be 'good sheep', your sheep. We ask this of you, our Lord and shepherd.

Let us come in joyful worship before the Lord our God. Sing and shout his praises as we enter to feed in his rich pasture. You are our Father of glory, maker of heaven and earth and the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord is a great king, the rock of our salvation and our shepherd, rescuer of the lost. By the power of your Spirit, you grant us wisdom and insight. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, our adoration knows no bounds.

Lord, forgive us for the times when we've neglected your Word and our relationship with you. You lovingly reach out to meet the needs of the lost, the hungry, the sick; when hard times strike, we can selfishly hold on to what we have, putting our own needs first. Forgive us for turning a blind eye when we've seen someone we could have helped. Forgive us when our own personal worries cause us to become self-focused. Forgive us when we've shrugged off helping hands reaching out to us; give us grace to recognise you at work in others. Lord God, hear our prayer.

Sprung from the dark depths by the mighty power of God, Jesus sits at God's right hand, having conquered death. Because of his victory and the power of his love, we who believe in him are also victorious. We are cleansed. We are free. We are forgiven. Praise be to our king, our saviour and our God. Amen.

Readings: Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24 and Matthew 25:31–46

Hymn: Amazing grace – how sweet the sound (StF 440)

Reflection

Today's passage will be familiar to many readers and needs little comment. It is often referred to as a parable, but it is more a direct description of what is to come. A parable usually conveys its message by an analogy or a story (eg the kingdom of heaven is like...).

In the figure of the Son of Man who sits in judgement in verse 31 (in verse 34 "the king") we are to see Jesus in his glory at the end of all things, calling all nations (not just his followers) to account. 'Right' and 'left' are, as in many cultures, associated with good and bad, clean and unclean respectively.

Western readers used to seeing woolly white sheep on a hillside may not appreciate that in other parts of the world sheep and goats may be similar in colour and are often pastured together. It can take an experienced eye to tell them apart.

Note that neither group is aware of the implications of what they did or did not do. The point of the passage is precisely that Jesus is represented incognito in those who are in need. It is the response to a need that counts, not the thought that we are doing it for Jesus.

To Ponder

- Who are the needy to whom we should especially respond today?
- Are there types of need not covered by the summary in verses 35 to 36? If so, what might they be?
- How do you understand Jesus' words about judgement in verse 46?

Prayer

Delightful Creator, you who know the sheep from the goats, help us to see Jesus in all people. Show us who needs our love, our help and our compassion. Put your words in our mouths, your compassion in our hearts, and show us how to be your hands and feet in the world. Amen.

Hymn: When I needed a neighbour, were you there? (StF 256)

Prayers

Thank you, Lord God, for holding all things in your loving care. You judge what is right and wrong; but we need not despair. You are mighty; with you all things are possible. You gently bring us back when we stray. You put your loving arms around us when we hurt. You strengthen us when we are weak. Thank you for your love in our lives, that helps us know you better; for the security that knowing you gives us. Thank you for your abundant blessings; you give more than we need so that we can faithfully pass them on. Thank you, Lord God, for meeting all our needs, for strengthening us, for loving us. May we lovingly pass on to others all we learn and receive, for your provision never ceases. We give our thanks and praise.

Christ our King, you meet us in the hungry, the stranger, the sick and the forgotten. We pray for people living through war and violence, especially in Ukraine and Sudan; for those without enough food, those driven from their homes, and those facing winter without warmth or safety. We pray for those nearer to us who are struggling: those who are lonely, unwell, grieving, anxious about money, or unsure where to turn. Open our eyes to see where help is needed. Give courage and wisdom to those who work for peace, justice and compassion. And teach us to recognise you in one another, and to respond with love. Amen.

We share together the Lord's Prayer: Our Father…

Hymn: Beauty for brokenness (StF 693)

Prayer of sending

Loving God, help us to be 'doing' people and not always 'thinking about it'; help us to be 'sharing' people and not hoarders or hiders; help us to be people who know we are blessed in abundance by you and, through the power of the Spirit, are eager to pass those blessings on. We ask in the name of Jesus. Amen

Service compiled by Kerry Halliday
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