



Sunday August 21st, 2022

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

The light of Christ illuminates our way
The light of Christ ever present on our way.
The light of Christ is our way

Acknowledging



*Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress*

We meet on stolen land, never ceded and taken without any treaty. The land, the trees, the water, the rocks and the mountains are the ancestral homes of the spirits of those before. May we actively listen and act to enshrine reconciliation and future of hope and healing with our First Nations siblings. We remember and acknowledge all elders past, present and those yet to emerge. We pay respect to any present in our midst this day and every day.

Call to worship

Eternal One, we take refuge in you,
We praise you for all time.
Eternal One, you have rescued me from my pain,
We praise you for all time.
Eternal One, our hope and our trust is in you,
We praise you for all time.

Singing - Here in this place

Together in Song 474

Prayer



Ageless God
The shadows of the night have faded,
The morning sun warms the skin,
The nocturnal creatures embrace the day to rest
Whilst other life awakens refreshed with the day.

We meet in small or large groups
To encounter you this day,
To share our burdens and our griefs
And our joys and hopes.

May we be forever enriched and changed
And when we leave this place
We embrace your presence
Within and around us,
Sacred One, Holy Three, Amen.

Mothering God, we stand before you, stuck in our own fear,
And like Jeremiah we think we have nothing to say,
We have turned from the hearing the promise
You know us in ways we do not know ourselves,
We become aware of the times we have not seen
Your face in the faces of people we meet
Eternal One, have mercy on us.

Do not be afraid, God says,
God has put the words we need to speak into our mouths.
In this assurance, we trust our sins are forgiven.
Amen.

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

Listening

Read: Jeremiah 1:4-10 &
Luke 13:10-17

For these words of faith and for Jesus the Word:
Thanks be to God.



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Reflecting - Rev. Arnie Wierenga

I wonder how you feel when you listen to this miracle of healing from the gospel of Luke? It probably helps little if we hear this story and are rendered powerless. Nobody I know is capable of such a deed. Even the disciples struggled to offer the kind of healing that Jesus brings to the world. If we think we cannot do as Jesus has done, and therefore do nothing, how are we to be involved in the good news of Jesus Christ?

We hear the story of Jeremiah being called by God. I can relate to it because of his protest. I'm only a boy, I'm not up to the task, let me be, I'd rather do nothing than attempt the impossible ... And yet if Jeremiah was closed to the challenge of God, and God had just let him be, where is the good news in that?

To feel inadequate before God is a very healthy thing, providing we don't stay paralysed with fear or hidden in the shadows. It is vastly different to those who think they are God's gift to the world and lack awareness of what they do and how they do it. Jeremiah is humble. He knows he needs God. He needs guidance, wisdom, courage and God's voice to speak for him.

In the Luke passage, we see the problem with overconfidence about 'knowing' what God thinks or wants. Jesus has offended the leader of the synagogue by breaking one of the complex religious rules created by those in charge. The leader feels it's his responsibility to keep God's order in the place. By offering healing on the Sabbath, Jesus has committed the crime of not resting from his labour on the seventh day. Whose spirit is served with this attitude?

The rules have become heavy and burdensome. Holy lawmakers create them because as human beings we crave certainty. If I am not to labour on the day of rest, what does that actually mean? Rules offer comfort – you are allowed to give your ox a drink (it's a bit ridiculous otherwise, so we'll pretend this isn't work); you can walk a limited

number of steps (but make sure you count them and don't exceed the limit); you can't offer to help someone though, because that is clearly working!

If Jesus is harsh on the leader of the synagogue, it follows that all who crave the certainty of rules are part of the problem. The passage reminds us the crowd rejoices at the life Jesus brings. He acts beyond the burden of the lawmakers, beyond the code expected. This is consistent with something that happens a few chapters earlier. A lawyer asks about what must be done to inherit eternal life. Jesus asks him to recite the law. 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' (Luke 10:25-27).

Jesus sees the need of this woman bent double for eighteen years, he has compassion, and he heals her. Human laws (even those created within the religious system) matter nothing. What matters is what is important to God. 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.'

When Jeremiah is called, it is with this in mind. When Jesus guides the lawyer, the same applies. When we feel paralysed through inadequacy or overconfident in our God given mandate, the same applies. I cannot do exactly as Jesus does, and I cannot offer the kind of healing this woman experiences, but I can love God and be moved to care for neighbours like her as part of my call to follow Jesus.

When we feel we cannot speak or offer healing, the reminder to love God with our whole being and allow that love to enliven every part of who we are is how the good news of Jesus Christ brings healing to our world.



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Singing - I, the Lord of sea and sky

Together in Song 658

Offering

Our God is a consuming fire who has promised that all created things will remain.
In our reverence and awe we offer these our gifts to be blessed for the unshakeable kingdom.
Our God is a consuming fire and to whom we give our all.

Notices

Aug 22 is the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief.

Aug 23 is the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.

Aug 26, 2001: Tampa Affair and Rescuing of 433 Refugees.

Responding:

Prayers for World & Community

(As a sung or spoken refrain at the start and the end of the prayers, TiS741)

**O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer
When I call, answer me.
O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer
Come and listen to me.**

We pray for the whole creation:
May all things work together for good,
Until, by your design all may inherit the earth.
We pray for the Church,
Begun and maintained by the Holy Spirit,
And through the people,
May your will be always an act of outward mission.

We remember the countries who are in conflict: Ukraine, Russia, Yemen, Sudan, Israel, Palestine, PNG, the list is too long.

May we all work with our own neighbour
To create and promote goodwill.

We pray for:
Those who are poor
Those who are hungry
Those who do not have adequate or any housing
Those who are unwell in mind or in body
Those who are dying.

We pray for people everywhere,
May they come into their own as children of God
And inherit the kingdom of God.

**O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer
When I call, answer me.
O God hear our prayer, O God hear our prayer
Come and listen to me.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Singing - Guide me, O my Great Redeemer

Together in Song 569



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Sending & Blessing

Go as people of peace,
Stewards and healers of creation,
Consolers of the afflicted,
And midwives of justice.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

And now,
May the blessing of the
Holy Trinity of love be upon you:
The fire of the Spirit Holy to ignite you,
The love of God to encircle you,
And the wisdom of Christ to enliven you,
This day and evermore. Amen.

Other hymn suggestions

TiS 638 O Christ the healer we have come
TiS 679 God of Jeremiah grieving
TiS 692 Sometimes a healing word is comfort
TiS 674 Inspired by love and anger
TiS 417 Loving Spirit, Loving Spirit
TiS 749 Send me Jesus / Thuma mina

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