



Western Fells Methodist Circuit

28th February 2021

Service

by

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**Using resources from 'Worship in the Wilderness'
By Engage Worship**

A Simple Journey

... the rich simplicity of being yourself before God. (1 Timothy 6:6, MSG)

Prayer

We come to you, faithful Father,
slowing down, taking a deeper breath.
Thank you that we do not need to earn our way into your presence,
but that we can come simply, through Jesus,
by your Holy Spirit.
We pause.
We acknowledge your presence.
We trust you to feed us by your Word. Amen

Hymn StF 437

Music [here](#)

When the music fades,
all is stripped away
and I simply come;
longing just to bring
something that's of worth,
that will bless your heart.
I'll bring you more than a song,
for a song in itself
is not what you have required.
You search much deeper within
through the way things appear,
you're looking into my heart.

*I'm coming back to the heart of worship,
and it's all about you,
all about you, Jesus.
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it,
when it's all about you,
all about you, Jesus.*

King of endless worth,
no-one could express
how much you deserve.
Though I'm weak and poor,
all I have is yours,
every single breath.
I'll bring you more than a song,
for a song in itself
is not what you have required.
You search much deeper within
through the way things appear,
you're looking into my heart.

*I'm coming back to the heart of worship,
and it's all about you,
all about you, Jesus.
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it,
when it's all about you,
all about you, Jesus.*

Matt Redman (b. 1974)

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Prayer

The focus today and this week is on coming to God very simply,
just as we are. Instead of using words feel God's presence
enter prayer in silence, if it helps just repeat a name of God
repeatedly.

Psalm 63: 1-8

A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.

¹ You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.

- ² I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
- ³ Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
- ⁴ I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
- ⁵ I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
- ⁶ On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches of the night.
- ⁷ Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow of your wings.
- ⁸ I cling to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Luke 4: 1-13

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tempted^[a] by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'^[b]"

⁵ The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. ⁷ If you worship me, it will all be yours."

⁸ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'^[c]"

⁹ The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you
to guard you carefully;

¹¹ they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'^[d]"

¹² Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’^[e]”

¹³ When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Prayer

Silent prayer

Thoughts

With the announcements this week of the path out of lockdown some people seem very excited about what they will be able to do once more. I've heard of the big sporting events people hope to once more attend, live concerts and festivals where people hope to be part of the audience. For some the longing to be part of a large event is almost overwhelming. For others this is their worst nightmare, large crowds, hustle and bustle all signal something to be avoided. Perhaps I'm alone in feeling that sometimes these large events are some of the strangest places to be, so often even though there are many people there doesn't seem to be any connection made between them.

Jesus was often surrounded by large crowds, often he was the main attraction, people flocked to hear him. There were those who followed him all over and amongst these were the 12 who were almost constant companions. Yet Jesus felt the need to seek time in solitude. Solitude is very different to loneliness. Solitude is denoted by a positive state of mind, and this results in inner peace and a pleasant tranquillity. Jesus sought solitude so He could spend time alone in communion with God. We too need to enter into solitude, spending time alone with God so that we can listen to him. In Luke 4:4 Jesus reminds us of the need to be recharged spiritually 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'

Spending time alone with God gives us the opportunity to change and to become more like him, seeing the world through his eyes and letting the world see Christ in us.

So have you made any plans for the coming weeks and months. Any trips on the horizon? How much 'stuff' will you take with you?

I'm prone to carrying a large handbag – I can usually fit a hammer and screwdriver in there alongside my Bible, notebooks and electronics! Necessary? Definitely not! We are all prone to carrying too much baggage, mentally and physically, but Jesus didn't need the extras. He rebuked Satan for tempting him with worldly goods. When Jesus called his disciples they simply left what they were doing and followed him. When he sent out the 72 he told them not to take anything. We, like them, need to put our faith in God and he will provide for us. It's not that he calls all of us to have no possessions or live as simply as he did. For some it might be that way but for many of us it's about putting God first. When we focus on God everything else will seem less important. Take yourself into that solitude, turn off all the unnecessary extras and listen. God speaks to us but too often we allow the material trappings of life to drown him out.

Of course the other thing Jesus did during those 40 days and nights was that he fasted. For 40 days and 40 nights he went without food. We think we've done well if we go without chocolate for 6 days of the week during Lent, no food for over one month. The practise of fasting is not as wide spread as it once was but if you've ever tried it you will know it is difficult. Sometimes when we've simply 'given up' a foodstuff we see it as a sacrifice, a hardship, something we can be boastful of. If that is what we do then we are missing the point. The purpose of a fast is that we give something up in order to focus on God, listening to him, seeking his way for our lives (perhaps more appropriately now, when food prep is shorter, that we give up electronic devices or a pastime that we focus on). Satan tempted Jesus by challenging who he was. 'if you are the Son of God...' perhaps we need to challenge ourselves, to whom do we belong.

Let us try to live a simple life this week, spending time listening, in the silence, for God's word to us.

Prayer

Silent Prayer

Let us say the prayer Jesus taught us:

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.

StF 236

Forty days and forty nights
you were fasting in the wild;
forty days and forty nights
tempted and yet undefiled.

Burning heat throughout the day,
bitter cold when light had fled;
prowling beasts around
your way,
stones your pillow, earth
your bed.

Shall not we your trials share,
learn your discipline of will;
and with you by fast and prayer
wrestle with the powers of hell?

Music [here](#)

So if Satan, pressing hard,
soul and body would destroy:
Christ who conquered, be
our guard;
give to us the victor's joy.

Watching, praying, struggling
thus,
victory shall be ours too;
angels minister to us,
as they ministered to you.

Saviour, may we hear your
voice;
keep us constant at your side;
and with you we shall rejoice
at the eternal Eastertide.

Prayer

God, as we go from this time of worship
Make us a people who are
Content in all circumstances:
In crowds or alone,
With much or with little
Well-fed or hungry.
May your presence, your provision
And your bread of life be enough for us.
In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Blessing

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, forevermore. Amen.