



Western Fells Methodist Circuit

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Service

by

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⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all^[a] sin. (1 John 1:5-7, NIV)

Prayer

Lord our God, we come to you today, walking in your light. Banish all darkness from us and let us be conscious of your Holy Spirit here amongst us. Regardless of the distance help us to know we are in fellowship with one another and with you. Amen.

Hymn StF 483

Music [here](#)

We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching in the light of God,
we are marching in the light of God.
We are marching, oh,
we are marching in the light of God,
we are marching, oh,
we are marching in the light of God.

We are living in the love of God,
we are living in the love of God.
We are living in the love of God,
we are living in the love of God.
We are living, oh,
we are living in the love of God,
we are living, oh,
we are living in the love of God.

We are moving in the power of God,
we are moving in the power of God.
We are moving in the power of God,
we are moving in the power of God.
We are moving, oh,
we are moving in the power of God,
we are moving, oh,
we are moving in the power of God.

South African traditional
v. 1 Anders Nyberg (b. 1955)
vv. 2, 3 Andrew Maries (b. 1949)
Words: From Freedom is Comingv. 1 (c)
1987, WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G2
3DH Scotland. <www.wrg.co.uk>

John 20: 19-31

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe^[b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Prayer

Holy God, Creator and Redeemer we worship and adore you. We bow down in adoration of you, unworthy to come into your presence and yet able to do so because of Jesus Christ our Lord who intercedes for us. We come before you acknowledging our sins, confessing that which we have done wrong which is not pleasing to you and ask that in Jesus name you forgive us and help us to live our lives pleasing to you.

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.

Psalm 133

A song of ascents. Of David.

- ¹ How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!
- ² It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.
- ³ It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the Lord bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.

Acts 4:32-35

The Believers Share Their Possessions

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

Thoughts

Did you see the Boat Race this year? Oxford and Cambridge have held this varsity rowing competition for almost 200 years usually on the Thames but this year, as with so much in the world, many things were different. The training was different, not much of it was held together as a crew and the location was different, this year the race was held on a very straight stretch of water on the Great Ouse. If you watched I wonder if you, like me, were mesmerised by the oneness of the rhythm of the oars as they struck the water? Despite training alone, these individuals came together and became one. These men and women recognised that they each had a role to play.

In all of today's readings we read of how important it is for us to be united, together, as one. That does not mean that we need to lose our individuality, we have each been given different gifts from God that we must bring together to stand as one strong people of God. Psalm 133 tells us 'How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity', Acts 4:32 'all the believers were one in heart and mind'. Standing together we can embrace our differences for we each bring something that will bring a wholeness to the Church of God if we allow God to use it and those words of Galatians 3:28 'all one in Christ Jesus' can ring through our minds as we step forward, singing the words of the chorus 'Bind us Together, Lord'.

To gain this unity that God desires, we need more than mere good intention, we require intervention from God. The believers in Acts 'shared everything they had', not in a manner of communism, for they still had individual wealth and possessions but they had a willingness and desire to see God's Kingdom grow and therefore (Acts 4:33-34) 'God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them'. Do we hand what we have to God and ask him to use it as he wants to? That possession might be practical, emotional, financial, spiritual. When we make a commitment to God we need to hand our whole being over to God that he can work powerfully in us.

In Psalm 133 we can feel a sense of joy and relief of God's people living together in unity. Verse 2 likens it to the oil that would have been poured onto Aaron as he and his sons were anointed as priests. This anointing continued through the generations and then Jesus, the great high priest anointed the disciples (John 20:21-23). We too are anointed when we become disciples of Christ and we must share our faith to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19). While this is a great honour it may also sound very onerous but God doesn't leave us on our own. Verse 3 refers to the dew of Hermon; the dew of Hermon is a mist that renews and refreshes the land as it cascades down the hillside bringing life in abundance; this is God's blessing on us.

Let us therefore work together in harmony, united to bring the Word of God to all peoples, far and near. Let us give what we have so that God's grace can work powerfully in us and let us accept the blessings that God will pour out on us, including life with him for evermore.

Prayers – Bring these and other items laid upon your heart to God. Have a look at the news and bring to the Lord the troubles that others, our neighbours, are facing.

Thank you God for the many blessings we receive from you each and every day, things we take for granted but without which we wouldn't have life. Thank you for sending Jesus, to live on earth, teaching and bringing people into a close relationship with you that they could pass on your love to others. Thank you that Jesus, faultless and pure, without sin, died to reconcile us to you. Thank you for the disciples, those who have walked with Jesus in times ancient and modern that have brought us into a relationship with you. Help us to be disciples of you that we may too go out and make disciples of all nations bringing others into a closer walk with you.

Use what we offer to you to further your kingdom and meet the needs of all who follow you. Let us come together as one body of people, your holy church, putting aside our differences because in you we are one, may we, your people be pleasing to you. Let us walk in your light that we may have fellowship with one another, bringing glory and honour to you.

Amen.

StF 686

Jesus, Lord, we look to thee,
let us in thy name agree;
show thyself the Prince of Peace;
bid our jarring conflicts cease.

By thy reconciling love,
every stumbling-block remove;
each to each unite, endear;
come, and spread thy banner here.

Make us of one heart and mind,
courteous, merciful, and kind,
lowly, meek in thought and word,
altogether like our Lord.

Let us for each other care,
each the other's burden bear,
to thy Church the pattern give,
show how true believers live.

Free from anger and from pride,
let us thus in God abide;
all the depth of love express,
all the height of holiness.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

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.