

Prayers of concern

Let us remember before God...

Those whose lives have been devastated
by natural disasters of earthquake, flood or famine

Those who live in constant fear of the violence of others
or have been un-naturally bereaved

Those who have become parted from their loved ones
and do not know if they are alive or dead

Those whose lands are laid waste or lives are oppressed
by human greed, ignorance or wickedness

Those who, close at hand
live with concerns about employment, housing, finances, the future

Those across the world and within our communities
who are living with corona virus in their own or others' lives

For international wisdom and cooperation present and future
and understanding and skill for all engaged in research

**Please hear and accept our prayers today,
which we bring to you in the name
of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn [StF 306 / H&P 204](#): 'Now the green blade rises'

Closing words

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish
abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory
in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.
Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21 NRSV

Worship sheet prepared by W. Offler

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Darlington District Sharing Worship at Home Sunday 30th August 2020



Words of thanks

O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.

Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.

Glory in his holy name;

let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

Seek the LORD and his strength;

seek his presence continually.

Remember the wonderful works he has done,

his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered.

O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.

Psalms 105:1-5 NRSV

Hymn STF 9, H&P 6: 'Hail! Holy, holy, holy Lord!'

Prayers of Adoration

Lord our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

We meet together in spirit although separated physically
with the promise of Jesus' presence
and the Holy Spirit's help
to praise and worship you!

Lord our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
We join with sisters and brothers in Jesus
across your world
to praise and worship you!

Lord our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
We join with all your creation
in this and every dimension
to praise and worship you!

Lord our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
We join with all the hosts of heaven
around your throne of glory
to praise and worship you!

Lord our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
We join with all who have gone before us
in the communion of saints
to praise and worship you!

Lord our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
One God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity,
we join together in Jesus' name today
to praise and worship you!

A prayer for our engagement with Scripture

As we read, study and try to understand these words
written long ago and far away:
help us to gain understanding and find wisdom
for our time and place,
we ask, Lord God Holy Spirit. Amen

Reading: [Matthew 16:21-28](#)

Simon Peter might have been the rock for Jesus, but he wobbled at times. After a while, he came to understand and so say out loud who Jesus really was: the Messiah. This came through God's revealing of what otherwise Peter couldn't have grasped *'flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven...'*. The first person to confess that Jesus of Nazareth and the Messiah were one and the same: Simon Peter that was him! *'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah...'* What a high!

What did he do? What we do, all the time: messed it all up! Perhaps Peter's theology couldn't grasp a suffering Messiah, and like many people of his time he expected some kind of powerful political Messiah a military leader or a wonder-worker who would restore Israel's independence, exalt God's name among other nations, give the Romans a good hiding, and replace the corrupt Temple authorities.

Perhaps he just didn't like to think of his friend suffering what, within his understanding, was a death not only very unpleasant, but also showing God's condemnation (*Deut 21:23/Gal 3.13*) and which in itself seemed a denial of any claim to be Messiah. Peter stopped thinking in God's way, reverted to thinking in a human way, and got a terrific telling off *'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me'*.

Jesus knew what was in store for him when they got to Jerusalem. In his humanity he wasn't looking forward to it: remember the agony in the garden (*Luke 22: 39ff*)? Peter's best intentions must have made matters so much worse. You tell your friends something painful, and instead of just listening, they look for solutions. And these are very often instant solutions, easy options. For Jesus, Peter's suggestion *'this must never happen to you!'* would have been the easy option, but it would have completely circumvented God's eternal plan to reconcile all things to himself. Jesus really didn't need to hear this. It must have felt like a re-run of his temptations in the desert, but with the added twist that it was his friend that was doing the tempting. Peter the Rock had become a trip hazard instead of a foundation.

Peter meets us here, doesn't he? We have the same habit of failing to see things in God's ways, and starting to see them in a purely human way, of growing our own theology, of telling God what to do and/or how to do it. And when we do so, as we do so, like Peter we end up temporarily siding with the devil. Three of the Gospels tell this story: not to put Peter down, but to wise up us who hear, who read his story, to guide the stories of our lives individually and communally.

Prayers of confession & reconciliation

Like Simon Peter, we often get it wrong

For the times when we don't listen to what you are saying to us

For the times when we listen but then reinterpret your message

For the times when we try to tell you what to do

For the times when we try to mould you to our way of thinking

Lord Jesus, forgive us our sins and renew us in your good ways of life and health and peace. Amen