

## Circuit Worship – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021

Offered by Rev'd Lesley

**Welcome:** Good Morning and welcome to our Circuit Worship.

**Call to Worship:** Psalm 111 set for today reads at v.4 '*He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds*'. The Psalmist here could easily have been talking of our Lord Jesus Christ because his works did make his name known throughout all the land. Jesus spoke with authority so that even the unclean spirits heeded his words and that's what we will be looking at today, 'The Authority of Christ.'

Let us pray: Open our minds to be open to your Word O God; open our hearts, to receive your Word O Christ; Open our souls be inspired by your Word O Spirit; that we might be renewed and see you anew once more in your Word and in our Worship. AMEN.

Now let us bring our worship to our triune God as we sing our first hymn

### Hymn: StF11 '**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty**

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| 1. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty<br>Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee<br>Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty<br>God in three persons blessed Trinity!                              | 3. Holy, holy, holy, though the darkness hide thee<br>though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see<br>Only Thou art holy there is none beside Thee<br>Perfect in power, in love and purity. |
| 2. Holy, holy, holy, all the saints adore thee,<br>casting down their golden crown around the glassy sea;<br>cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee.<br>who wert, and art, and evermore shall be. | 4. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty<br>All thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea;<br>holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty<br>God in three Persons, blessed Trinity.       |

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

### **Prayers of worship and confession:**

Almighty God, how gracious and majestic is your name in all the earth. All creation never ceases to call out your name in its beauty, in its majesty and in its glory. We give you praise; all our praise our Lord and our Creator for you are an awesome God. Sometimes our finite minds find it hard to comprehend how vast you are. Help us to comprehend Gracious God.

Forgiving God, hear us as we bring all that we are and all we have been. We celebrate when we have shared our lives justly, and confess when we have not; we celebrate when we have given of ourselves to others, and confess when we have not; we celebrate when we have spoken kindly and with love, and confess when we have not; we celebrate that you have heard us confess and now renew us, redeem us, and reawaken us to your loving forgiveness we ask in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Behold, Lord you make all things new. AMEN.

Now let us now join together in the prayer our Lord taught us to say:

**Traditional Form**

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

**Modern Form**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come;  
your will be done;  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us this day 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 for ever.  
Amen.

Our reading from the Old Testament this morning comes from one of the five books purportedly to have been written by Moses who came as the result of a promise from God, to raise up a prophet from his own people.

**Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 - A New Prophet Like Moses**

<sup>15</sup> The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. <sup>16</sup> This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: 'If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.' <sup>17</sup> Then the LORD replied to me: 'They are right in what they have said. <sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. <sup>19</sup> Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. <sup>20</sup> But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.'

**Hymn: StF473 'Moses, I know you're the man'**

1 'Moses, I know you're the man,'  
the Lord said.  
'You're going to work out my  
plan,'  
the Lord said.  
'Lead all the Israelites out of  
slavery,  
and I shall make them a  
wandering race  
called the People of God.'

*So every day,  
we're on our way,  
for we're a travelling,  
wandering race,  
we're the People of God.*

2 'Don't get too set in your ways,'  
the Lord said.  
'Each step is only a phase,'  
the Lord said.

'I'll go before you and I shall be a sign  
to guide my travelling, wandering  
race;  
you're the People of God.'

*So every day,  
we're on our way,  
for we're a travelling,  
wandering race,  
we're the People of God.*

4 'Look at the birds in the air,'  
the Lord said.  
'They fly unhampered by care,'  
the Lord said.

'You will move easier if you're  
travelling light,  
for you're a wandering, vagabond  
race,  
you're the People of God.'  
*So every day,*

3 'No matter what you may do,'  
the Lord said.

'I shall be faithful and true,'  
the Lord said.

'My love will strengthen you as  
you go along,  
for you're my travelling,  
wandering race,  
you're the People of God.'

*So every day,*

5 'Foxes have places to go,'  
the Lord said.

'But I've no home here below,'  
the Lord said.

'So if you want to be with me all  
your days,  
keep up the moving and  
travelling on,  
you're the People of God.'

*So every day,*

Estelle White (b.1925)

In our Gospel reading from Mark this morning, we hear of Jesus expounding the Scriptures but, unlike the scribes, the professional interpreters, he astonishes his congregation by the authority of his teaching.

**Reading: Mark 1:21-28 - The Man with an Unclean Spirit**

<sup>21</sup> They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup> They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup> Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>24</sup> and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' <sup>25</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' <sup>26</sup> And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. <sup>27</sup> They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' <sup>28</sup> At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

**REFLECTION: 'The Authority of Christ'**

In our reading from Deuteronomy this morning, we find Moses delivering an address to the people of Israel. They – the Israelites, had escaped from Egypt, and God had just given to Moses the Ten Commandments. Then, in the middle of this speech, Moses

diverts away from the commandments, and speaks to them concerning the coming Messiah. Verse 15 reads: *“The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people. You shall heed such a prophet”* Moses is speaking about Jesus.

There are two things to note about this description of Christ – Moses said that Jesus would be a prophet *‘like me.’* How would Jesus be like Moses? Remember, Moses was a unique prophet. Of all the prophets, he was the only one to whom God spoke. Scripture says that Moses actually saw the form of, and had face-to-face contact with God – no other prophet had that privilege.

In the same way, Jesus would have face-to-face contact with God. Just like Moses, Jesus could say that he has stood in the presence of God, and has received words from God to share with the people and this is how Jesus would be like Moses.

The other thing to note is that Jesus would be a prophet *“from among your own people.”* Jesus wouldn’t just descend from heaven like an angel, an outsider. He would be born a Jew. In this way, he would be raised up *“from among your own people.”*

Isn’t it interesting that Jesus fulfils this prophecy exactly? In verses 17 and 18 we read: *“Then the Lord replied to me: ‘They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet who shall speak to them everything that I command.’”* This is why Jesus spoke with such authority – his words were God’s words. God gave to Jesus the words he wanted Jesus to speak.

But the people of Israel did not recognize Jesus’ authority. They listened to what he said, but they didn’t like what they heard. After all, Jesus didn’t look like he had much authority – he was just a carpenter from Nazareth and as we heard last week, it was questionable as to whether anything good could come from Nazareth! Yes, he performed miracles, but he didn’t have any support from the leaders of Israel and he seemed too humble to be someone with much authority; so, they rejected him, rejected his words, and eventually crucified him, even mocking the words of God that Jesus spoke to them. No, they did not see his authority.

However, the unclean spirits did! They knew who he was, they realised that he could destroy them – but not the people of Israel, like Pharaoh in Moses’ time, their hearts were hardened to see the truth.

Our world today has exactly the same problem – our world today fails to see the authority of Jesus Christ and his Word. This Bible – it’s just a book, people say. There’s no authority there. Our world today even goes so far as to replace the Bible with their own teachings and remember, Moses, in our reading today, had a warning to give for such false prophets and their prophesies! Moses was under the authority of God and Jesus Christ was that authority.

I was reading a little while ago of someone who was driving recklessly. He was a young man, out to prove his driving prowess and so was driving far too fast down a dual carriageway darting in and out of lanes and not giving any consideration at all to other drivers. To his shock, a car he’d passed way back was suddenly right on his tail and that car had blue police lights flashing. It turned out to be an unmarked Police vehicle which

blended in other cars. The reckless driver was taken to Court, fined and banned for drunk driving. That young man did not recognize the authority of the Police within the Police car because the authority of the Policeman was hidden. So it is with Christ, his authority is hidden, in a humble book called the Bible.

There's an amazing fact of good news concerning Christ and his authority; and that is, he has the authority to forgive us - and he does. Christ forgives us, if we're truly sorry, for every occasion we wander from the path we know we should be treading. He forgives us even for those times we push away his life-giving Spirit who prompts us to do the right thing. He forgives us for those times when we've not recognized his Word as the authoritative Word of God. It's Christ alone who has the authority to forgive us, because God himself gave that authority to Christ.

Jesus Christ sacrificed himself for each and every one of us. He set his face towards Jerusalem knowing that the authorities would want to be rid of him and yet, he listened to the life-giving Spirit of God and followed God's plan in order to take away our guilt and shame. In the name of Jesus Christ, we're given the gift of grace that offers us life to the full, a gift of grace free of charge. This is the message of this book, the Bible; a message filled with comfort, hope and joy; a message that Jesus shares with us today.

When Jesus speaks to us through his Word, there is authority.

That's why we gladly say "Yes" when Moses says to us: "You must listen to him." Today, we honour that Word as the Word of God, the ultimate authority in our lives – that gives us strength and comfort, direction and hope. And for that, we rejoice in Christ our Saviour. Amen.

### **Hymn: SoF298 'Jesus, name above all names'**

Jesus, name above all names,  
beautiful Saviour, Glorious Lord.  
Emmanuel, God is with us,  
Blessed Redeemer, Living Word.

Naida Hearn

### **Prayers of intercession.**

It will be good for us to have an open time of prayer today. I will offer headings for our prayers then please, either in the quiet of your mind or out loud, bring before God those things that are close to your heart.

Let us offer our prayer with all God's people  
through Jesus Christ our Lord who ever lives to pray for us.

We pray for the needs of the world.....

We pray for the Church.....

We pray for all in trouble or distress.....

We pray for ourselves and our friends and family.....

God of compassion and mercy, listen to our prayer.

May what we ask in Jesus Christ your Son be done according to his word, who said, 'Ask, and you shall receive, seek and you will find, knock, and the door will be opened to you.'

To you, merciful God, through your Son, in the lifegiving Spirit, be glory and praise for ever. **Amen.**

**Hymn: StF351 'In Christ alone'**

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| 1 | In Christ alone my hope is found,<br>he is my light, my strength, my<br>song;<br>this Cornerstone, this solid<br>Ground,<br>firm through the fiercest drought<br>and storm.<br>What heights of love, what<br>depths of peace,<br>when fears are stilled, when<br>strivings cease!<br>My Comforter, my All in All,<br>here in the love of Christ I stand. | 3 | There in the ground his body lay,<br>light of the world by darkness<br>slain:<br>then bursting forth in glorious<br>Day<br>up from the grave he rose again!<br>And as he stands in victory,<br>sin's curse has lost its grip on me,<br>for I am his and he is mine —<br>bought with the precious blood<br>of Christ. |
| 2 | In Christ alone! — who took on<br>flesh,<br>fullness of God in helpless babe!<br>This gift of love and<br>righteousness,<br>scorned by the ones he came to<br>save:<br>till on that cross as Jesus died,<br>the wrath of God was satisfied<br>for every sin on him was laid;<br>here in the death of Christ I live.                                      | 4 | No guilt in life, no fear in death,<br>this is the power of Christ in me;<br>from life's first cry to final breath,<br>Jesus commands my destiny.<br>No power of hell, no scheme of<br>man,<br>can ever pluck me from his hand;<br>till he returns or calls me home,<br>here in the power of Christ I'll<br>stand!   |

Keith Getty and Stuart Townend

**BLESSING:** O Lord our God, as with all creation we offer you the life of this new day, give us grace to love and serve you to the praise of our Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The Grace: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Please be assured that Rev'd Lesley and Rev'd Kim are available should you need us during this time.

We can be contacted by calling: 01933 312778 for Rev'd Lesley Dinham and 01933 622137 for Rev'd Kim Shorley.

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