



Western Fells Methodist Circuit

15 November 2020

**by
David Hasson**

Hymn 608 All praise to our redeeming Lord

Music [here](#)

All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.

E'en now we think and speak the same,
and cordially agree;
concentred all, through Jesu's name,
in perfect harmony.

He bids us build each other up;
and, gathered into one,
to our high calling's glorious hope
we hand in hand go on.

We all partake the joy of one,
the common peace we feel,
a peace to sensual minds unknown,
a joy unspeakable.

The gift which he on one bestows,
we all delight to prove;
the grace through every vessel flows,
in purest streams of love.

And if our fellowship below
in Jesus be so sweet,
what heights of rapture shall we know
when round his throne we meet!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us pray

Lord God, we come into your presence today once again in lockdown. We thank you that you are with us so we can always turn to you for comfort and encouragement. Help us Lord to worship you in the knowledge that we do it as part of your family even though they are not round about us as they usually are. We thank you that we can rest in your love of us because you are a God who loves everyone. Our lives have been turned upside down again but we can be at peace knowing that we are yours and we can trust you whatever the future holds. You have promised us that we will see you face to face and be with you for all eternity and so we live in that certain hope of being with you.
Amen

We say the prayer that Jesus gave us:

**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 for ever. Amen.**

Hymn 620 Thou God of truth and love

Thou God of truth and love,
we seek thy perfect way,
ready thy choice to approve,
thy providence to obey;
enter into thy wise design,
and sweetly lose our will in thine.

Why hast thou cast our lot
in the same age and place,
and why together brought
to see each other's face,
to join with loving sympathy,
and mix our friendly souls in thee?

Music [here](#)

Didst thou not make us one,
that we might one remain,
together travel on,
and share our joy and pain,
till all thy utmost goodness prove,
and rise renewed in perfect love?

Then let us ever bear
the blessed end in view,
and join, with mutual care,
to fight our passage through;
and kindly help each other on,
till all receive the starry crown.

O may thy Spirit seal
our souls unto that day,
with all thy fullness fill,
and then transport away:
away to our eternal rest,
away to our Redeemer's breast.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Reading Matthew 25 : 14-30

¹⁴ “For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵ to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them and made five more talents. ¹⁷ In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸ But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹ After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²² And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴ Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ ²⁶ But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹ For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰ As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Thoughts

Here we have a story of a man going on holiday and leaving his slaves in charge of his property. Before setting off he looked at his slaves and decided to make each responsible for part of his property according to their ability. So he ended up giving one 5 talents, one 2 talents and one 1 talent. As you know the story goes on that the 5 talents were used to produce 5 more and the two produced 2 more while the 1 was hidden and just stayed the same.

First of all let me say that God does not go on holiday, he is available 24/7 and 365 days a year, so in that way the man in the story is different to God. But he is like God because God gives each of his people gifts and skills according to their abilities. Like the man God expects us to use the gifts that we are given but, unlike the man, God is always available to support us in all that we do for him.

Let me tell you about a little experience which might help to illustrate this. In my first appointment there was quite a large and active Churches Together Group which I had to be a part of. Towards the end of my first year it became obvious that the Secretary of the group was going to step down. I had already discovered that the newest minister in town usually got dropped on if there were things to do and no volunteers. There were a few months of worry that this job was going to come to me. My jobs in the past had not equipped me for secretarial work so it was a real worry. When the secretary finally retired a retired Methodist Minister called Bert Clark (who some of you know) had moved into town and was keen on ecumenical work so he took the job. Relief!

A few years later we moved and at the first minister's meeting (4 of us) there was talk of starting a Churches Together group. The Anglican and Catholic clergy had no experience of Churches Together, the new URC minister had been chair of Churches Together previously so he got that job and I got the secretary's job because of my previous experience. When God wants you for something you can't keep running from it. Obviously it was a small group, just starting out, so it was possible to learn and grow with it. Anyway it was for a limited time because Methodist Ministers move on eventually.

That move finally came so I was able to give up the secretary's job. In the middle of September, just after the move, I received a phone call which I remember to this day. It was the Salvation Army Officer who, you've guessed it, was chair of Churches Together in Carlisle. Ringing because he knew I had been secretary of Churches Together in my previous post and would I help a small group of them to draw up a new constitution. It took me to my second meeting to discover that, as well as the need for a new constitution, they had a need for a new secretary and that was the real purpose of the invite.

As I said earlier God has given each of us gifts. Some of them we recognise and some of them we don't but other people do. The gifts are not given for our benefit but for the benefit of the people around us. It is our job to use the gifts that we are given so that they are productive in the work of God.

I know that sometimes it can be frightening to actually take on new things, especially if we are being asked because someone else sees a gift in us. It's not something which we need to worry about because if it is what God wants us to do then he will ways in which we can grow into the job and people who can support and encourage us.

We're in a lockdown I here you say so there are not a lot of opportunities at the moment. Other people say they are very busy. Foodbanks are still operating and need volunteers. We all have telephones and probably know people who could do with a chat over the phone particularly people like front line health workers who work long hours in a stressful environment. Perhaps there is a role for you to help run on line worship, maybe there are those who need transport to visit relatives in hospital. Of course, and most importantly, there is prayer – we can all do that however fit or old we might be.

We can all be good at saying I can't do that as we compare ourselves to those who can. The man with the 1 talent hid his and didn't use it because he was scared he got it wrong. Don't let that kind of fear put you off. Use your gifts in the knowledge that God will support and enable you.

Prayers of intercession

Spend some time in silence thinking about tasks you are faced with and what holds you back.

Ask God to give you the courage to step out in faith and in the knowledge that God goes with you.

Lord we pray for all of our frontline health workers. When we talk to them we hear about the stress they are under, the long hours they are working, the way they have to cope with shortage of staff which is intensified by the need for some to isolate or being hospitalised themselves. May they get the rest and support that they need to enable them to continue to care.

We pray for our government and the leaders of other countries as they seek to control this pandemic. May people realise how serious it is and follow the rules, if not for their own benefit, for the benefit of others.

We pray for America at this time having had their election but the result being disputed. May a result be forthcoming and a few days and may the losers accept defeat with dignity.

In Christ's name we pray.

Amen

Hymn StF 661 Give me the faith which can remove

Music [here](#)

Give me the faith which can remove
and sink the mountain to a plain;
give me the childlike praying love,
which longs to build thy house again;
thy love, let it my heart o'erpower,
and all my simple soul devour.

I would the precious time redeem,
and longer live for this alone:
to spend, and to be spent, for them
who have not yet my Saviour known;
fully on these my mission prove,
and only breathe, to breathe thy love.

My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,
into thy blessed hands receive;
and let me live to preach thy word,
and let me to thy glory live;
my every sacred moment spend
in publishing the sinners' friend.

Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
with boundless charity divine:
so shall I all my strength exert,
and love them with a zeal like thine;
and lead them to thy open side,
the sheep for whom their Shepherd died.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

The Grace