

# Worship at Home

Sunday 6th March 2022

Compiled by Vicki Brown

Circuit Lay Assistant

West Devon Methodist Church

*Sharing this act of worship in our homes, may we draw near to our Lord, and receive a blessing today.*

**Opening words:** As we follow in the footsteps of Jesus through this season of Lent, let us come to him who loves with an unconditional sacrificial and everlasting love. The Lord is with us, his Spirit is here, glory to God the Three in One.

**Stf 80: My God, I am thine**

**My God, I am thine;  
What a comfort divine,  
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine!  
In the heavenly Lamb  
Thrice happy I am  
And my heart it doth dance at the sound of his name**

**True pleasures abound  
in the rapturous sound;  
And whoever hath found it hath paradise found.  
My Jesus to know,  
as rejoicing I go  
to my life everlasting, tis heaven below.**

**Yet onward I haste  
To the heavenly feast:  
That, that is the fulness; but this is the taste;  
And this I shall prove,  
Till with joy I remove  
To the heaven of heavens in Jesus' love.**

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

**Let us pray:**

Gracious God, Creator of heaven and earth, we praise and worship you this day.  
Thank you for the example of Jesus, who in obedience to

the Plan of Salvation,  
endured the wilderness, resisted temptation and triumphed over evil that we may be set free.  
All glory be to you, O Lord. Your love took Jesus to the Cross, then defeating death with life,  
Your Love beckons us into life abundant and eternal.  
Alleluia! Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Stf 437 Heart of worship**

**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.**

*Matt Redman b.1974*

**Reading: Luke 4 v 1-13**

**Reflection**

"I don't know who I am anymore!" it's not an uncommon cry for those in a wilderness experience. Familiar landmarks of relationships, job, home shaken or taken away. How do we identify or even recognise ourselves when all is stripped away? The old hymn challenges us, "Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?" A wilderness whether literal or figurative, is a tough environment to survive.

Luke brings us to Jesus in the wilderness after establishing his identity in multiple ways: The heralding of an angel chorus, the witness of Simeon and Anna at the Temple, Jesus' own words as a twelve year old, and the direct voice of God saying "This is my beloved son..." at his baptism. Luke then details Jesus' earthly family tree to show his right to be called "Son of David." No doubt here as to who Jesus is...

In our reading today we find him in the wilderness fasting for forty days. Weakened, tired and desperately hungry. Everything stripped away, nobody there to help him, he faces temptations challenging his identity and mission.

He could use his power to satisfy his own body's cravings for bread. What would be wrong with that? But Jesus doesn't cheat. He experiences the honest reality of human hunger and deprivation. He is then tempted to worldly power and wealth. Think of the good he could do if he was in control of the governments of the world? What could be wrong with that? The cost is too high, he would be putting God below material riches and ambition. He would be worshipping Satan.

The final temptation challenges Jesus to demonstrate his identity by being saved from a fatal fall. It's only a temptation if it has an appeal. Jesus must have been feeling a sense of frustration and annoyance at this stage. The kind of feeling where you get stropky and want to say to your adversary "I'll show you!" with a petulant stamp of the foot. Jesus conquers this temptation, he has nothing to prove, he is secure in his

identity, he knows who he is. Tired and hungry, at the end of his physical strength, Jesus overcomes. He overcomes with humility and a steadfast faith. His use of scripture shows us that as Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians chapter 6 verse 18, "The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God."

As we mark Lent this year with prayer and study groups, fasting in its many and varied forms, or solitary quiet times, may we seek and find a deeper meaning to the question "Who is Jesus?" A natural follow-on question is "Who am I?" Let us prayerfully consider these questions and may we all discover fresh growth in our relationship with God, a blossoming of faith and joy so that our wilderness becomes a fragrant Easter garden.

### Isaiah 35 v 1-2

The desert and the parched land will be glad;  
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.  
Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom;  
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

### Stf 238 Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;  
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,  
For we have no help but thee,  
Yet possessing every blessing  
If our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;  
all our weakness thou dost know,  
thou didst tread this earth before us,  
thou didst feel its keenest woe;  
tempted, taunted, yet undaunted,  
Through the desert thou didst go.

Spirit of our God descending,  
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy,  
Love with every passion blending,  
Pleasure that can never cloy;  
Thus provided, pardoned, guided,

### Nothing can our peace destroy.

*James Edmeston (1791-1867)*

### Let us pray:

Sustaining God, we pray for those in the wilderness today.  
The wilderness of loneliness, depression, doubt and confusion.  
Be their shelter and protection.  
Jesus, Bread of Life,  
Nourish those who hunger for hope, peace and love.  
Healing God, we pray for those who are weary and weak  
Through sickness and frailty, both physical and mental.  
Grant them Living Water that they may be renewed and refreshed.  
Whatever the nature of the wilderness,  
We pray that the presence of your Spirit will be known.  
Guide and empower your children to walk on in faith and hope  
Through this life, to life everlasting. **Amen**

### Stf 479: The King of love my shepherd is

The King of love my shepherd is,  
Whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his  
And he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow  
My ransomed soul he leadeth,  
And where the verdant pastures grow  
With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,  
But yet in love he sought me,  
And on his shoulder gently laid,  
And home rejoicing brought me.

In death's dark vale I feel no ill  
With thee, dear Lord, beside me;  
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,  
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight .

**Thy unction grace bestoweth;  
And O what transport of delight  
From thy pure chalice floweth!**

**And so through all the length of days  
Thy goodness faileth never:  
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
Within thy house forever.**

*Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)*

### Blessing:

May the Love of God  
Be the ocean that you sail on  
And the grace of God  
Bring you calm in stormy days.  
May the Word of God  
Guide you to your destination  
And the breath of God  
Speed you safely on your way. **Amen**

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### Reflections on a Methodist Way of Life: Learning and Caring

*Some questions to ponder on as you take a little time to reflect on today's service.*

What are the temptations you face? How do you resist them? What role does scripture have in shaping your choices?

A wilderness experience is usually a solitary one. How have you received support from others? Have you supported someone as they go through their wilderness experience?

*"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort. Who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."*

*2 Corinthians 1 v 3-4*