



Sunday October 13th, 2024

The Fig Tree Worship Resource



Call to worship & Lighting the Candle

Pass us not, O gentle Saviour,
hear our humble cry.
We stand before you in our prayers and worship.

Pass us not, O sorrowing one,
for you know our comings in and our goings out.

Pass us not, O one who hears our prayers,
for you see our hearts
and know our longing for you.

Together and in solidarity,
we approach you this day
yearning for you as you yearn for us.

**ALL: We approach the place of grace
with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy
and find grace to help in time of need.
Unite us in your Spirit
and surround us with your love.**

Light the candle - Christ is with us.

Acknowledging



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress

As we gather, we acknowledge the (*please name the people where you are*) Traditional Custodians of these unceded lands and waters. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. As First and Second Peoples walking together, we commit ourselves to be people of the covenant, listening, truth telling and seeking justice for all.

Singing - Lord of all hopefulness, Tis 613

OR: Come thou long expected Jesus, Tis 272

Prayer

Beloved of God, we come united in prayer.
Sometimes God we wonder where you are. We look around and see the sadness and the sorrow. Then we remember our own participation in the systems which contribute to the pain of others. We seek forgiveness, from you and one another. Lord, hear us;

LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER

We wake up each day determined to be different, to take on more of your character and to be our best selves. Then we have our first cuppa and, in frustration, we realise we have already fallen short of our own hopes and expectations. Where are you God?

Lord, hear us;

LORD HEAR OUR PRAYER

The idea of giving all we have to the poor is great, until we think about actually doing it. And then we feel the frustration again. Our intentions are like wax, they melt out of shape without us even noticing.

And then we remember that you called us because you love us, you are close beside us whether we meet our own expectations or not. You softly say our true name, "Beloved", and we can rest in the knowledge that you have been with us since before our birth and you have fed us on your sustaining mercy and grace. Nothing separates us from you.

Holy God we seek healing and wholeness, for ourselves and each other. Restore us and rejuvenate us so we can be the light and love in your world again.

Lord, hear us;

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

AMEN

Passing the peace

May the Peace of God dwell with you:
and also with you.

The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Friends of the Fig Tree, Uniting Church in Australia with blessings and permission to use the content in worship services with acknowledgement.



Sunday October 13th, 2024

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

Listening

Read: Mark 10:17-31

For these words of faith
and for Jesus the Word

Thanks be to God.

Reflecting - Rev Arnie Wierenga

It's easy to be critical.

I don't respond well to the man who seems to be all about himself. "Good teacher" - a smooth line to butter up Jesus; and that's after he's run up and knelt before him. Does he think Jesus will be impressed by this show? Does he think Jesus won't see more deeply and cut right to the heart of the matter?

As they move towards what really counts, Jesus looks at him and before speaking we read that he 'loved him'. In a moment of love, Jesus tells the man exactly what he doesn't want to hear. No fooling Jesus, it seems.

As I sense my disdain for this one feeling righteous about himself, I need to hear that Jesus 'loved him'. We judge too quickly, and I'm caught up in a world of criticism, of cancel-culture, of taking sides and tearing down those who disagree with our point of view. But Jesus loves this man before calling out for his heart to change.

I'm tempted to judge him because that makes me feel I'm not like him. And if that, I can distance myself from his mess. I guess Christians have long been like me. We have made an art form of feeling righteous, perhaps because we have found the way, the truth and the life in Jesus. For many it is comfort that leads to complacency. It is our form of 'keeping all the commandments' to ensure we are on the right side of eternity. If only it were so simple.

Jesus loves the man and cuts to the heart of the matter. Despite keeping law to its letter, he has

honoured the commandments without heart. We might recall Jesus saying, that when you did it to the least of these, you did it to me. And, when you offered a glass of water, when you withheld shelter or a place to sleep, you did it to me. The man has lost compassion for the least, for those who are poor, for those beyond his own vision or self-interest.

We are all tempted to tell stories that avoid the heart of the matter. But where our treasure is, there also is our heart. I want to judge him for his blinding arrogance, but I wonder what Jesus would say to me in similar circumstances. Jesus sees and cuts through with a clarity that is frightening. 'How hard for those with wealth to enter the kingdom of God!'

While Jesus speaks directly about wealth and wealth is a very real stumbling block, it is helpful to consider why this is so. (I tell myself that I'm not avoiding all the things I have and can't bear parting with). Sell your stuff, give it to the poor, and follow me, says Jesus.

Follow me.
Follow me like Peter and the other disciples have.
Follow me like inspirational leaders of faith have.
Follow me like ordinary people have
and continue to do.
Follow me.

Following is a curious thing. Peter, upon hearing the exchange and the impossibility of camels and needles can't help but say, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' This is true, so let's celebrate it. We celebrate because it is for the sake of the good news. And within the good news is the reminder that many who are first will be last, and last will be first.

The man who left Jesus rich in possessions but poor in good news could only put himself first. But to follow Jesus is to love and care for those swept aside by wealth, greed and power. This is what Peter and the twelve were learning as they followed Jesus. This is what we all do as people on the way.



Sunday October 13th, 2024

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

We are called to be good news. Jesus shows us how to do it. All we have to do is follow.

Singing - Christ be my leader, TiS 624

OR: *The Summons (will you come and follow me)*
ATOK 413 - or you can find it online:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiwbBLIRcC4>

Offering

We take this moment and use this prayer to give you thanks for your many blessings. We share with others through our offering of our time and talents and monetary gifts. Use us and our gifts to make our world a fairer and more just place to be.

Notices

Oct 13-19th is Anti Poverty Week

Today is the International Day for Disaster Reduction.

Oct 16th is World Food Day.

Oct 17th is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

Oct 19th is the anniversary of the 2001 SIEV-X sinking and drowning of 353 asylum seekers.

Prayers for World & Community

Hear our prayers for a hurting world, we pray loving God. Like Job, we do not understand why there is pain and suffering. Yet we know that all people are loved by you, beyond our imagining.

And so, we bring before you firstly our friends and family, our loved ones who might be doing it tough. We think of those in our church groups who we know are struggling. We hold them gently and quietly in our hearts in a moment of silence..... When they are on the edge of despair like Job, and can't find your presence, surround them with love and

reassurance that nothing can separate us from you.

We pray for those in other places in our world. We pray for those in places of conflict. We are so very sad that there is so much suffering for the people in these places. It is always the vulnerable who suffer the most, who are the ones most forsaken by society. Transform our world we pray.

Transform our own country too. We pray for love and compassion on those seeking shelter on our shores, for those who are homeless in any form. We pray for our families, for the teenagers and for the children. We pray for our schools and places of education. Give us balance and help us to be the salt and the light as you ask us to be.

We especially pray this day for those whose mental health is shaky. We pray for those affected by addictions of all kinds and other entrapments which hold them captive. We pray for broken and distressed relationships. We pray for flourishing for all. Give us true compassion and a heart to make a difference.

And we pray with our hearts open and sorrowing, for those for whom poverty is their heartache and struggle. We know you have a heart for the poor and so we cry for justice and a true fair go. Help us to make choices that show we are truthful in our prayers. We acknowledge the words in our gospel reading today, help us to regard material things as things to be shared, along with your grace, mercy and compassion. Help us as church, not to hold to ourselves that which is our gift to share.

We give thanks that despite our sorrowing, we know that you have held us all our lives. Hear our prayers for others this day and use us to make a world of difference as we share of your abundant blessings. The prayer Jesus gave us is not just words, and we pray it together from our hearts.



Sunday October 13th, 2024

The Fig Tree Worship Resource

We pray together then as Jesus taught us:

The Lord's Prayer

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 forever. Amen.

Singing - Take my life and let it be - TiS 599

OR: What a friend we have in Jesus TiS 590

Blessing

Dear ones, hold fast then to your confession.
We have approached the throne of grace
with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and
find grace to help in time of need.

You are blessed indeed.
Go now to serve and bless others.
And may mercy, grace and peace
be your companions.

Reflection: Rev Arnie Wierenga
Kookaburra Ministry Team

Liturgy: Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson
Shearwater Ministry Team:
Bass Coast Health



Editor: Rev. Jennie Gordon
revjenniegordon@gmail.com

*The Fig Tree Worship Resource comes to you from the Friends of the Fig Tree, Uniting Church in Australia
with blessings and permission to use the content in worship services with acknowledgement.*