
Hymn by Horatius Bonar (T Vox dilecti)

- 1) I heard the voice of Jesus say: Come unto me and rest;
Lay down thou weary one, lay down your head upon my breast!
I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting place, and He has made me glad.
- 2) I heard the voice of Jesus say: Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live!
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in Him.
- 3) I heard the voice of Jesus say: I am this dark world's light;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise, and all thy day be bright!
I looked to Jesus, and I found in Him, my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk till travelling days are done.

Prayer:

Dear Father, we are glad to be met together again, in Jesus' name, to worship you, and to be encouraged in the truth. We thank you for making that truth available to us, and for the fact that He bore our judgment, enabling us to be forgiven, and our consciences cleansed, and our spirits revived and lifted by your Spirit, who leads us into all the truth. Bless us in our time of worship, and let that knowledge and that truth carry us this day. For we ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Reading:

- Philippians 2:1-11

Intercessions:

Dear Father,

Thank you first of all for the wonderful rains you sent us in late Autumn and early winter, that has set up the year for our horticulturists, despite the normal pattern of Autumn and prediction of a much drier winter this year. We acknowledge that you act always for our good, and you over-shadow our best human predictions.

*We pray for the mental health of our youth, hearing that in our wealthy country a rising percentage of them need intervention for anxiety, and that the commonest cause of death from 15-24 years is suicide. So our young people are unhappy despite needing no good thing materially! We desire that they would know what King David knew when he wrote: "Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits – Who forgives all your iniquity, and heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, Who satisfies you with good as long as you live, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Dear Father, let your servants of your church voice this clearly in the public places, the churches, and where our youth will hear it! And renew them!

*We pray today for those who lead us, in state and commonwealth, some of them who know the Christian truth, who make decisions on our behalf! Grant them wisdom and discernment as they make important decisions regarding our welfare.

We pray that they will choose wisely, and honour our heritage!

*We pray again for the people of Ukraine as they resist the attacks of their neighbour Russia. We know they are conscious that they are fighting for their country's survival, and for their very lives! Thank you for the way the world has risen up to assist them; for the goodwill that has had made many countries keen to help them, and for the combined assistance of so many other countries and cultures to enable them to persist and not to yield! We pray that your Will will be done in this country, and that they will look constantly to you for your strength.

*We pray for those we know who are ill from whatever afflicts them.

Apart from serious illnesses, there are many who suffer depression, loneliness, and who have lost their understanding of your grace and goodness. Revive them by your Spirit of truth. Let us all know you never abandon your own, and wait only to bless and encourage them.

Now continue to lead us in our worship and as we hear your truth, as we abide constantly in your care as do all those in your Kingdom.

And we ask these our prayers in the prevailing name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

Hymn: *by Katie Wilkinson (T St Leonard's)*

- 1) May the mind of Christ my Saviour live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling all I do and say.
- 2) May the word of Christ dwell richly in my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph only through His power.
- 3) May the peace of God my Father rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort sick and sorrowing.
- 4) May the love of Jesus fill me as the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self-abasing, this is victory.
- 5) May I run the race before me strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus as I onward go

Sermon:

Paul's injunction to the Christians in Philippi: "Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus ... have the same mind as Christ had... think of others first and esteem others better than yourself".

No philosopher of men, even one who believed in the divine, would ever accept the idea of the divine becoming human in order to serve humanity, let alone die, and particularly let alone die FOR that humanity!

And no man would ever have worked it out...or even dreamed of it. In fact we didn't!

We saw a man, we start with him, the man Jesus of Nazareth:

- a simple man, poor, well regarded by his other villagers
- he lived simply, taught simply but powerfully
- friend of publicans and sinners
- the common people heard him gladly. They said "No man ever taught like this man"

... Who said "I am the good shepherd....I know my own and my own know me! For this reason My Father loves me, because I lay down my life for the sheep... No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord."

... Who steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem; who went to the Cross, fully knowing what lay before him.

He had several times told his disciples what would happen to him at Jerusalem!

But they didn't appear to hear him...it was as if they could not hear!

He was transfigured on that mountain – was that a "flash-back" to his former glory....or a presentiment – a glimpse of his *coming* glory, as he discussed with Moses and Elijah the *exodus* that he was to *accomplish* at Jerusalem! (Luke 9:31)

... Who rode into Jerusalem on that special day – a King of his kingdom – consciously fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9, on his foal of a donkey. And they shouted that day – as he said, the stones would have cried out if they did not! But as his entry then proclaimed, he was on about a mission of peace for the world, which many marchers on Palm Sunday around the world do not fully understand. He is the Prince of peace – there is *only* true peace on his terms!

He approached the place of his "last battle" saying – what shall I say, "father save me from this hour? NO. For this purpose I came to this hour...Father glorify your name". His Father agreed "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." Jesus said "Now is the judgement of this world – now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I, when I am lifted up.., will draw all men to myself!"

For those shouting that day did not know the things that make for peace!

As if that needed to be shown, soon they would be shouting just as loudly for his death!

Humanity did not understand what happened on that horrific Cross.

Some cried “He saved others, himself he cannot save” ... (of course not, he was too busy saving them). His disciples said “God forbid – this will never happen to you!”

The High Priest had said “It is expedient that one man die for the people” understanding nothing of which he spoke. (But God took the words and made them a great prophecy.)

This is the one who was for a little while made lower than the angels....”so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one”

And so he did – he more than tasted it – he drank it to the dregs!

He tasted not only the first death, but the second, that which gives death its sting! He tasted the *judgment* that was to come, the final accounting for sin, that which keeps all men in bondage to fear of death.

For he bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. He “became” sin for us. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

So we see these things, only dimly understanding, for the witnesses on the day understood very little. Till the Apostles burst on the scene, filled with the promised Holy Spirit, who brought to their understanding all the things that had been really accomplished on that day.

So that Paul could say “ ...have this mind in you which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he had the prerogatives of deity, did not count equality with God a thing to be hung on to, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. “He laid his glory by, he wrapped him in our clay...” So the word became flesh!

And having become man, he humbled himself limiting himself deliberately, restricting himself to a man’s dimension including in mind and body, and by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying the death of a common criminal. Therefore God has now lifted him high, and honoured him above anyone or any thing, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, whether in heaven or earth, or under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

He will forever be a man... he died as man for men There is therefore now glorified humanity standing at the right hand of God.

So he esteemed us better than himself – this is his mind, which we are to emulate! Only love (*agape* love) could do that, or would!

He said once “A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this – that a man will lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I have commanded you.

How can we love like that? Only through the miracle when we are justified through faith, rejoicing in our hope of sharing the glory of God...in our eternal hope, in which God’s love has been poured into our hearts by the holy Spirit which has been given to us. We know we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren. The Apostles knew it, and we can know it too! Amen.

Hymn: *by EL Budry (T Maccabaeus)*

- 1) Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded graveclothes where Thy body lay
*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won.*
- 2) Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb,
lovingly He greets us scatters fear and gloom,
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord is living, death hath lost its sting
- 3) No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of Life,
life is nought without Thee, aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors in Thy deathless love,
bring us safe through Jordan to Thy home above.

Benediction:

The Lord bless you and keep you:
The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.
Amen.

[This service was prepared by Neil McIntosh \(M.B.B.S. F.R.A.C.S.\) for HopeNet SA](#)