



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

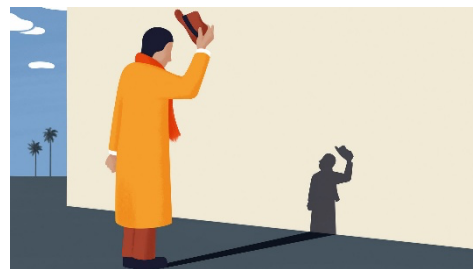
Sunday 26 October 2025: 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Theme for today is "Humility" Prepared by Revd Neil Vels

Opening Words: Psalm 65

Hymn 113 (StF) - O Worship the King

<https://youtu.be/MWe1j0G-aM?si=YO3WDzbmN09u4Yq3>



O worship the King
All glorious above,
O gratefully sing
His power and his love;
Our shield and Defender,
The Ancient of Days,
Pavilioned in splendour
And girded with praise.

O tell of his might
O sing of his grace
Whose robe is the light
Whose canopy space
His chariots of wrath
The deep thunderclouds forms,
And dark is his path
On the wings of the storm

The earth with its store
Of wonders untold
Almighty, thy power
Hath founded of old;
Established it fast
By a changeless decree,
And round it hath cast,
Like a mantle the sea.

Thy bountiful care
What tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
It shines in the light;
It streams from the hills
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distils
In the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust
And feeble as frail
In thee do we trust
Nor find thee to fail;
Thy mercies so tender,
How firm to the end,
Our Maker, Defender,
Redeemer and friend.

O Measureless might!
Ineffable love!
While angels delight
To worship thee above,
Thy humbler creation,
Though feeble their lays,
With true adoration
Shall sing to thy praise.

Opening Prayer

Lord our God, We are reminded as we hear the words of Psalm 65 of the majesty of creation:
a creation that proclaims your power and your presence in this world.

We are reminded as we hear the words of the song we have just heard not only of your might
but also of your grace.

And in all of that your forgiveness of us, as feeble as we are.

As we gather today *may we do so in humility and repentance
ready to encounter you in love, and to turn toward you.*

That we may know your presence with us,
not just today, but always.

*Section marked * from <https://ocarm.org/en/item/79>*

Confession

Lord God in heaven, we confess that we try to measure our faithfulness
by comparing ourselves with others.

Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us as sinners.

Forgive us O God where we fail to see your Spirit's work in others, in those who have lived before us.

Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us as sinners.

Forgive us for choosing comfort and convenience over faithfulness.

Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us as sinners.

*Inspired by Luke 18: 9-14; Posted on the Mennonite Church USA Archives site.
<http://www.mcusaarchives.org/Resources/HeritageSunday/2001MennoniteHeritageSunday.htm>, reposted: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/09/prayer-measuring-faithfulness.html>.*

Hymn 507 (StF) - O for a Heart from Sin Set Free https://youtu.be/0FyAY9fzcnU?si=l1TK_kDSvgBgxBW

O for a heart to praise my God,

A heart from sin set free;

A heart that always feels thy blood

So freely shed for me:

A heart resigned, submissive, weak,

My great Redeemer's throne;

Where only Christ is heard to speak,

Where Jesus reigns alone:

A humble lowly, contrite heart,

Believing true and clean;

Which neither life nor death can part

From him that dwells within:

A heart in every thought renewed,

And full of love divine;

Perfect and right and pure and good:

A copy Lord, of thine.

Thy nature gracious Lord, impart,

Come quickly from above.

Write thy new name upon my heart,

Thy new best name of Love.

Scripture:

Joel 2:23-32

Luke 18:9-14

Hymn 556 (StF) - Just as I am https://youtu.be/G0XjqRZ9W_8?si=vkELv93EL1wWDxvx

Just as I am without one plea

But that thy blood was shed for me

And that thou bidst me come to thee

O Lamb of God, I come, I come

Just as I am, and waiting not

To rid my soul of one dark blot

To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot

O lamb of God I come, I come

I come broken to be mended

I come wounded to be healed

I come desperate to be rescued

I come empty to be filled

I come guilty to be pardoned

by the blood of Christ the Lamb

And I'm welcomed with open arms

Praise God, just as I am

Just as I am, I would be lost

But mercy and grace my freedom bought.

And now to glory in your cross

O lamb of God I come, I come.

I come broken...

Prayer

O God,

the strength of those who humbly confess their sin and place their hope in you, save us from vain displays of righteousness, and give us grace to keep faith with the true humility of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

From https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/prayer/?y=384&season=season_after_pentecost&d=proper_25

Reflection

Jesus tells the parable in Luke 18, the text says, to those who were confident of their own righteousness. Perhaps as Christ-followers today, with this very well-known parable echoing in our heads, and perhaps hearts, we would be reluctant to identify ourselves with the self-righteous. We're far happier to identify with the self-confessed sinner, and point out with glee those who are confident of their own righteousness. We may have political leaders in mind, or others who see themselves as being above the law.

Joel prophesies to a people who have lost everything in the Exile to Babylon and promises an outpouring of the Spirit that will result in the salvation of all people, young and old.

As we look at the broken world around us, I think many of us long for such an outpouring! Perhaps we long for the self-righteous to be condemned by their own words, or perhaps for them to come to a moment of repentance in which they realise their own complicity in regard to the state of the world.

The reality is that most of us have a blind spot when it comes to self-examination. In spite of hearing this parable for so many years, or perhaps because we have become so accustomed to being on the right side of the line, we would be surprised to hear that the parable is about us! Certainly, the Pharisees would have been surprised to hear they were not the righteous ones!

I don't think that Jesus wants - or needs - us to stand before him beating our breasts and begging for mercy, rather the invitation is to honest reflection who we are. Honest confession of our failings, but more than that, genuine commitment to dealing with the root causes of the brokenness in our lives.

The essence of what Jesus is saying is that we have to recognise where we are broken before we can discover healing. Before, as Joel would say, we can experience the fullness of the Spirit. Indeed, it is the humbling experience of Exile that brings about a renewal of the Jewish faith, both in Exile and after they return to Jerusalem some seventy years later.

When we offer ourselves to Jesus just as we are, with no pretence, and trust in God's healing love, then we experience God's Spirit, and the gift of salvation!

Prayers for others and ourselves

Spent a moment thinking of yourself and your brokenness. How does your brokenness affect those around you? Ask God to reveal the places where you need healing, and invite God's Spirit to bring you to wholeness.

Think of others who may need God's healing presence and offer prayers for them. Is God inviting you to come alongside of them to reveal God's loving presence?

Song 487 - You shall go out with Joy <https://youtu.be/SoHcfN9zxr0?si=NXBcZ9cXkMmPwyFH>

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace

And the mountains and the hills will break forth before you

There'll be shouts of joy and all the trees of the field

Will clap, will clap their hands.

And the trees of the fields will clap their hands

The trees of the fields will clap their hands.

And the trees of the fields will clap their hands

And you'll go out with joy.

Closing Blessing

What greater joy can we know that to go home justified because of our humility before God who redeems? Let us leave this place to live as we came in – openly and desiring to praise God and witness to a saving love. Go in humble grace. In Christ's name. Amen.

Derek Weber, March 2025