

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK

# Welcome to Morning Praise

5<sup>th</sup> July 2020

*Click on the underlined links to take you to safe content on the internet.  
If you are able light a candle as you start the service and if others are in the house  
encourage them to reading some of the service with you.*

## *Introduction*

This is the day that the Lord has made.  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

We have come together in the name of Christ  
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,  
to hear and receive God's holy word,  
to pray for the needs of the world,  
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,  
that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

## *Prayer of Penitence*

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So, let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

## *Together we pray:*

**Lord God, we have sinned against you.  
we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore to us the joy of your salvation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies  
Cleanse us from our sins  
And restore us in His image  
To the praise and glory of His name  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

Hymn: [Give thanks with a grateful heart.](#)

The Word of God – [click here](#)

Reading: Romans 7:15-25 read by Susan Milnes

Gospel: Matthew 11: 16-18,26-30 read By Margaret Ellis

*Reflection - Rev Stephen Hannam*

This morning I am looking at Matthew 11:28 to 30

I rather like this version:-

*“Are you having a real struggle? Come to me!  
Are you carrying a big load on your back? Come to me!  
I’ll give you a rest! Pick up my yoke and put it on; take lessons from me,  
I’ll be gentle with you! The last thing in my heart is to give you a hard time.  
You’ll see – rest you need, and rest you shall have.  
My yoke is easy to wear, my load is easy to bear.”*

To me this reading is for all of us who have ever felt overwhelmed! I wonder do you fit into this category? The Pharisees had talked about the people being called to carry the yoke of the Torah that meant living by the heavy weight of the Jewish law. It’s not surprising all those commandments weighed them down.

They were burdened by sin. You could say they were constantly living with the consequences of sin and according to the Pharisees there was no way of lifting that burden. So the people were constantly living in the darkness of their sin – or so the Pharisees claimed. No wonder they felt downtrodden.

But here is the difference; Jesus was talking about a very different yoke. This yoke was about him and because of that it was based on love and on mercy.

Jesus says:- “My yoke is easy!” But how can that be because we know there are other sayings of Jesus that don’t make it sound quite so easy:- Remember the eye of the needle and what about leaving behind family and friends? None of these seem easy!

I think, Jesus is talking about something else here.

- Perhaps he is talking about his gentleness and warmth.
- Perhaps he is talking about the rest and joy to be found in knowing him.
- Perhaps he is telling us that his role is not like a policeman. Waiting for us to do something wrong.
- Perhaps he is telling us that he is here to welcome us home.
- Perhaps he is offering salvation to those who turn to him.

If that is the case, we can say his yoke is easy because it is achievable whereas the Pharisees yoke was always going to be impossible to achieve. Jesus promises us that if we follow Him, he will never burden us with more than we can bear.

He promises us that he will work with us because we can't do his work without him. With Jesus there is work to be done but we can rest assured that we are in safe hands and we will be guided onto the right path. It seems to me the first step to finding the peace and reassurance that Jesus promises is to lay down our burdens in his presence. Jesus says:-

*“Are you having a real struggle? Come to me!  
Are you carrying a big load on your back? Come to me!  
I'll give you a rest!  
Pick up my yoke and put it on; take lessons from me, I'll be gentle with you! The last thing in my heart is to give you a hard time.  
You'll see – rest you need, and rest you shall have.  
My yoke is easy to wear, my load is easy to bear.”*

If we were in church I would ask you to write down your worries - your burdens. We would then hand them over to God in prayer and then privately drop them into a flame. Symbolically we would be handing them over to God and we would be leaving them with God. I know that's not easy but by burning them we wouldn't be able to pick them up again.

My mum had a great way of handling things she couldn't cope with. She would, in her mind, put anything that worried her into a box and then leave it on a shelf. She was able to forget anything that she didn't like. (I guess there must have been a long line of boxes – perhaps one labelled Stephen!)

I don't recommend this to you but there is something in handing over our worries to God and leaving them with him and then resisting the temptation to take them back. (Easier said than done!)

I would then have asked you to pick up a candle in exchange for your burnt burden as a sign of your prayers. When we come to Jesus we lay down our burdens so that our hands are free to carry the light of Jesus into the world. And that is what we would have done!

Gentle Lord take our burdens from us so that we may walk in your footsteps with a light heart. Amen.

Close your eyes and listen to the following meditational chant:

[\*Come, be with me, all you who carry heavy burdens. I will give you rest.\*](#)

Revd. Stephen

**Hymn: Lord of the Dance**

*The Creed*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again.  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.        Amen.**

*Prayers of intercession prepared by Shirley Stow [Click Here](#)*

*A Prayer for Church Growth*

**God of Mission  
Who along brings growth to your church,  
Send your Holy Spirit to give  
Vision to our planning  
Wisdom to our actions  
And power to our witness.  
Help our church to grow in numbers,  
In spiritual commitment to you,  
And in service to our local community,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray  
**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.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

*The Collect for today*

Almighty God,  
send down upon your Church  
the riches of your Spirit,  
and kindle in all who minister the gospel  
your countless gifts of grace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Hymn: [Forth in thy name O Lord, I go](#)**

*Final Prayer*

O gracious and holy Father,  
give us wisdom to perceive you,  
diligence to seek you,  
patience to wait for you,  
eyes to behold you,  
a heart to meditate upon you,  
and a life to proclaim you,  
through the power of the spirit  
of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*Blessing*

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds  
in the knowledge and love of God and his son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*Our service ends with the Grace,*  
**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the Love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**