

Sunday 14th June 2020

This short act of worship has been prepared for you to use whilst we are unable to use Methodist Church premises. If you are well enough why not spend a few moments with God, knowing that other people are sharing this act of worship with you.

Opening Prayer

Praise the Lord, all you nations!
Extol him, all you peoples!
For great is his steadfast love towards us,
and the faithfulness of the Lord endures
forever.
Praise the Lord!
(Ps 117 NRSV)

Hymn: Singing the Faith 88 Praise to the Lord

You can hear the tune at
<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/hymns/praise-to-the-lord-the-almighty-the-king-of-creation-stf-88/>

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,
the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him,
for he is thy health and salvation!
All ye who hear,
brothers and sisters, draw near,
praise him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord,
who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
surely his goodness and mercy here daily
attend thee:
ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
who with his love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord,
who doth nourish thy life and restore thee,
fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever
before thee,
then to thy need he like a mother doth speed,
spreading the wings of grace o'er thee.

Praise to the Lord,
who, when darkness of sin is abounding,
who, when the godless do triumph,
all virtue confounding,
sheddeth his light,
chaseth the horrors of night,
saints with his mercy surrounding.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore
him!
All that hath life and breath,
come now with praises before him!
Let the amen
sound from his people again:
gladly for aye we adore him.

Joachim Neander (1650–1680)
translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878) and Rupert
E. Davies (1909–1994)

Let us pray together

O God our Father,
we come to thank you
for all the bright things of life.
Help us to see them,
to count them and to remember them,
that our lives may flow in ceaseless praise;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.
AMEN

J.H. Jowett (1846-1923 altd)

Holy God,
we who have sinned come to you.
Pure God,
we who have sullied your image in us come to
you to make confession.
We are sorry:
Sorry that we have
turned away from your goodness,
sorry that we have cut you down to size
as if we could manage you,
sorry that we have done wrong things,
sorry that we have withheld our help
when you needed it.
Because you love us, Lord
assure us of your forgiveness.
Because you are powerful, Lord,
restore us.
Because you have come to us in Jesus,
call us again to follow him
and give us your gracious Spirit
that we may respond, today and every day.

AMEN

Today's Reading from the Old Testament Ruth 1:22-2:23

22 So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

2 Now Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's side, a prominent rich man, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. ²And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, 'Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain, behind someone in whose sight I may find favour.' She said to her, 'Go, my daughter.' ³So she went. She came and gleaned in the field behind the reapers. As it happened, she came to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. ⁴Just then Boaz came from Bethlehem. He said to the reapers, 'The LORD be with you.' They answered, 'The LORD bless you.' ⁵Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, 'To whom does this young woman belong?' ⁶The servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, 'She is the Moabite who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.' ⁷She said, "Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the reapers." So she came, and she has been on her

feet from early this morning until now, without resting even for a moment.'

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, 'Now listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. ⁹Keep your eyes on the field that is being reaped, and follow behind them. I have ordered the young men not to bother you. If you get thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.' ¹⁰Then she fell prostrate, with her face to the ground, and said to him, 'Why have I found favour in your sight, that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?' ¹¹But Boaz answered her, 'All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. ¹²May the LORD reward you for your deeds, and may you have a full reward from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge!' ¹³Then she said, 'May I continue to find favour in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, even though I am not one of your servants.'

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, 'Come here, and eat some of this bread, and dip your morsel in the sour wine.' So she sat beside the reapers, and he heaped up for her some parched grain. She ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. ¹⁵When she got up to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, 'Let her glean even among the standing sheaves, and do not reproach her. ¹⁶You must also pull out some handfuls for her from the bundles, and leave them for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.'

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. ¹⁸She picked it up and came into the town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gleaned. Then she took out and gave her what was left over after she herself had been satisfied. ¹⁹Her mother-in-law said to her, 'Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you.' So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, 'The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.' ²⁰Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'Blessed be he by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!' Naomi also said to her, 'The man is a relative of ours, one of our nearest kin.' ²¹Then

Ruth the Moabite said, 'He even said to me, "Stay close by my servants, until they have finished all my harvest."' ' 22 Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, 'It is better, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, otherwise you might be bothered in another field.' 23 So she stayed close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests; and she lived with her mother-in-law.

Today's Gospel Reading:

Matthew 9:35-38

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; 38 therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Time to Reflect

As Bible month continues we re-join the story of Ruth. There is much that speaks to our contemporary society. I was struck by the status of women assumed in our passage. "To whom does this young woman belong?" (v5) The risk of being molested at work (v9 & 22) As we hear the news we know that some women still suffer such behaviour. The "me too" movement has shown just how prevalent abusive behaviour is.

And we need to recall that Ruth is a foreign woman, a migrant worker. She is also someone who acts with respect and works hard. (v6-7)

There is hope here too.

Notice how Boaz behaves to protect Ruth. (v8,9; 14-16)

How Ruth works to provide for vulnerable and depressed Naomi (who has taken the name "Bitter").(v17-18;Ch1:20)

How the faithfulness of Boaz and Ruth restore Naomi's trust in God (v20).

What might this be calling you to do this week to brighten someone's day?

What compassion might Jesus be showing **to** you or **through** you? (Matt9:36)

"You pray for the hungry, and then you feed them. This is how prayer works" said Pope Francis. How are you called to "pray" this week?

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

We bring to God the world he shares with us; to remember before God people and situations that trouble us.

We pray with people denied human rights.

Especially (given our reading)

we pray with women denied dignity or subjected to abuse.

May your Spirit of justice enable and empower people to stand with those who cry for justice.

We pray for refugees, for those who seek asylum, for those who we depend on who are migrant-workers in our country.

May they find their "Boaz characters" who show welcome, care and concern.

We remember before God those who are hungry. We think today of people forced by the current situation to use food banks.

May all with the chance to provide help be moved to do so.

And we pray to God for those like Naomi, who have lost hope, whose lives have become bitter. May we, as disciples of the good shepherd, find ways to channel your grace and hope.

Take a few moments to bring to God the people and places that are on your mind this morning.....

Then close our time of prayer by saying

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMBDWG9tseU>

or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

May God give us the faithfulness of Ruth,
the practical care of Boaz
and the compassion of our Lord Jesus,
and may we all know the blessing of God,
star-maker, pain-bearer and life-giver,
today and always. AMEN

Original Materials by Phil Challis

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