

**'DORSET SOUTH & WEST CIRCUIT WRITTEN SERVICE,
27TH JUNE 2021, BY REVD JEAN QUICK'**

Today is Methodist Conference Sunday. Let us join with the whole connexion as we say, read or sing the traditional conference hymn.

Hymn: (STF 456)

And are we yet alive,
and see each other's face?
Glory and praise to Jesus give
for his redeeming grace!

Preserved by power divine
to full salvation here,
again in Jesu's praise we join,
and in his sight appear.

What troubles have we seen,
what conflicts have we passed,
fightings without, and fears within,
since we assembled last!

But out of all the Lord
has brought us by his love;
and still he does his help afford,
and hides our life above.

Then let us make our boast
of his redeeming power,
which saves us to the uttermost,
till we can sin no more.

Let us take up the cross,
till we the crown obtain;
and gladly reckon all things loss,
so we may Jesus gain.

Praise ye the Lord, alleluia!
Praise ye the Lord, alleluia!
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
praise ye the Lord!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us pray together:

Gracious God, we give you our thanks and praise for your steadfast love, your enduring patience, and the many blessings that we receive from you each and every day.

Forgive us for our ingratitude, our selfish and the way we grumble and stumble through our days unmindful of your loving presence.

We thank you for your endless forgiveness heal and restore our lives that we might reflect your glory to everyone we meet.

Amen

Gospel Reading: Mark 5: 21-43 - A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered round him; and he was by the lake. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, 'My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.' So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, "Who touched me?"' He looked all round to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?' But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a

commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, 'Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha cum', which means, 'Little girl, get up!' And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Time to Reflect.

A few questions sprang to my mind as I read this familiar passage today. Especially with certain lines from the lyrics of the conference hymn in my thoughts, 'and are we yet alive.....what troubles have we seen?' This has certainly been a year when we have seen all sorts of troubles and indeed we marvel that we are yet alive!

So my questions from the passage.....Who was in the crowd pressing in on Jesus?

A scene we would be mortified by in today's world with the troubles we have seen. Where is the social distancing and from which part of the country are these people from? Thank God Covid 19 wasn't present in the time of the reading. However there were many other 'nasties' around. Leprosy easily comes to mind and the kinds of social stigmas and divisive behaviours that have pervaded society even to our present age.

Those who are thought of as unclean, or unworthy, or indeed; who think of themselves as more important than others in every generation.

1. Who was in the crowd and why did they press in? The desperate and needy no matter what their social standing. Jesus said and still says go in faith. Know that peace that can only come when we have been close enough to Jesus to touch the hem of his garment.

2. Did Jesus give Instructions for living well....or restrictions? We do like to question the authorities. We have kicked and squirmed against lockdowns and the government's impositions. I noticed reading this passage how authoritative Jesus was in dealing with Jairus's daughter. Questioning their behaviour and chastising them for their negativity. We see Jesus evicting those who laughed at his questions and just the close family bubble allowed inside. We see it is with no great ceremony that the healing comes. You would think that such a wonderful thing should be shouted from the rooftops but instead Jesus tells them to keep it to themselves and just get on with the routine of everyday life.

There have been more stories than can be told about those who have not made a fuss in this pandemic and have just got on quietly with what ever they could do safely in the care of others. How have you measured up? Have negative feelings and the restrictions put upon you made you react differently? How has Jesus experienced your reactions would you have been 'put outside'?

I guess those put outside in the Bible passage experienced a divine 'time out', such as we give to disruptive children who need to calm down! But soon are welcomed back to the family experience of God's love.

3. A curious part in the passage of the scriptures is that we witness two females being healed in a male dominated society? Men represented the strength of society? Women were not so highly thought of. Still today an Orthodox Jew will thank God in his prayers that he is not born as a woman. There's something symbolic in this passage of scripture about God working through our weaknesses. One of the 'blessings of the pandemic', is that the those in the formerly thought of as, lower vocations have been elevated and we have realised their true worth and societies dependance on their skills and time. Would that we might take out of this pandemic the core experience of how valuable and essential each and every individual is. No matter our perceived strengths or weaknesses. As Michel Quoist would say, only as we join hands together will we make a fine fence to adorn paradise. I conclude with his thought provoking meditation

The wires are holding hands around the holes;
To avoid breaking the ring, they hold tight the neighbouring wrist,
And it's thus that with holes they make a fence.

Lord, there are lots of holes in my life.
There are some in the lives of my neighbours.
But if you wish, we shall hold hands,
We shall hold very tight,
And together we shall make a fine roll of fence to adorn Paradise.

Our next hymn is sung to the the tune of 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind' you will need to repeat the last line if your singing along or you can read it quietly as a reflection.

Eternal source of humankind
be near us in life's stress:
relieve the strain of troubled mind,
dispel our worries, let us find
your comfort and closeness.

When daily pressures take their toll
in endless busyness,
as social systems claim control
and drown the murmurs of our soul,
enfold us in stillness.

Come, Holy Spirit, help us heed
the presence of your dove:
subdue the noise of selfish greed,
of wealth creation and false need
with whispers of your love.

O guide us through life's complex maze
with gentleness and peace:
to soothe the rush of hectic days,
come calming Spirit, clear the haze
and let us find release.

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Metre: 86 886 (6). Suggested tune: Repton ([StF 495](#)) [Note: If sung to this tune, repeat last line of each verse.]

A time of prayer for others

Let us pray for the Methodist Church as conference opens. Let us pray for all who gather, that you will help them in their deliberations and decision making, so that our church can be seen to shine out your Love to all. That we might truly make it a beacon of justice, peace and a true reflection of your love.

Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer.

We give thanks for the outgoing President Revd Richard Teal, and Vice President Carolyn Lawrence and ask for your blessing upon them as they return to their daily lives.

Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer.

We pray for your blessing upon our President and Vice President designates Revd Sonia Hicks and Barbara's Easton, and all those who will be ordained, bless them in their ministries.

Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer.

We give thanks for the words of hope in our Gospel reading today and bring to you.....(name those you know who need healing and help today).. bring them to healing and the help that they need.

Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer.

Thinking about the things I have seen in the news this week, whether about the pandemic or other areas of concern in our world I bring them to mind now and pray for your intervention and direction in our needy world.

Lord in your mercy, hear my prayer. Amen

The Lord's Prayer....Our Father

Hymn (StF 459)

Captain of Israel's host, and Guide
of all who seek the land above
the cloud of your protecting love;
our strength, your grace; our rule, your word;
our end, the glory of the Lord.

By your unerring Spirit led,
we shall not in the desert stray;
we shall not full direction need,
nor miss our providential way;
as far from danger as from fear,
while love, almighty love, is near.
Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let us say the Grace claiming Gods peace for ourselves and for all we pray for today.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all
now and forever more. Amen.

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