

## 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022 – Morning Service

### Ways of Honouring Jesus

Rev Alan Combes

#### Call to Worship - Psalm 126:2–3

May our mouth be filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; Let it be said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things, the Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoice."

#### StF 295 – Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord

*Ch) Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord,  
Alleluia, alleluia, give praise to his name.*

1) Jesus is Lord of all the earth;  
He is the King of creation:

2) Spread the good news o'er all the earth:  
Jesus has died and has risen:

3) We have been crucified with Christ;  
Now we shall live for ever:

4) God has proclaimed the just reward:  
New life for all! Alleluia!

5) Come, let us praise the living God,  
Joyfully sing to our Saviour:

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#### Prayer

Gracious Lord, we come with joy to worship you. As we travel through our worship today, help us to see your glory. Lead us to our weakness and forgive our sins, that our praise and joy may be pure. Receive our praise and adoration, that you may be blessed by our worship. Speak to us through your Word, that we may hear your guidance for our lives.

By the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to draw near to you. Break into our cold hearts with your love and grace that we might be renewed and inspired today. Help us when our minds wander, keep our thoughts steadfast and help us to grow together in knowledge faith and love of you. So we may worship you in spirit and in truth; in the name of Christ we pray, **Amen.**

#### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

#### Reflection – how do we honour someone?

I want you to imagine for a minute that somebody special was going to come to your house. It could be a favourite family member, a celebrity or even your church minister! I wonder how you would honour them and their visit? I wonder what you would do?

What does the word honour mean? I imagine people might answer with phrases that include words like respect, holding somebody up high and treating them in a special way...

Many years ago now I was asked to conduct a memorial at the house of a Ghanaian family who were unable to travel home for the funeral of a beloved family member. So on the day of the funeral in Ghana we sat in a small flat in North London rammed with 50 people who had all come to pay their respects. I was nervous because it was the first Ghanaian ceremony I had done and I'm glad to say it went well.

Afterwards food was served to people in the room and I noticed that twice fresh plates travelled round the room and just as they came to me they were whisked away and I was left with nothing. And I wondered - have I done or said something wrong? My wonderful colleague – the Reverend Papa – laughed gently and whispered in my ear... ‘they hold you in a position of honour and there is an old village tradition that we do not ask our leaders to eat in public, they will probably give us some food as we leave - and they won't drink any alcohol until we leave either so we can't stay too long...’ and that's exactly what they did!!

I'm reminded of the verse in Colossians 3:17 ‘Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of Jesus giving thanks to the father through him.’

### **Prayers of Confession**

O Lord God, you led your people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. So guide us. Enable us to follow our Saviour, that we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come;

Almighty God: you know that in this world we are under great pressure. At times, we cannot stand. We yield to temptation and fall into sin. We are sorry and ask your forgiveness through Jesus your son. May the God of love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins, and assure us of his eternal love. Lord equip us with humble hearts and by your Spirit make our faith strong, so we may dig in against temptation and, by your power, overcome; through Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

And Lord as we confess , we humbly pray for your blessing on the church in this place.

Here may the faithful find salvation, and the careless be awakened.

Here may the doubting find faith, and the anxious be encouraged.

Here may the tempted find help, and the sorrowful find comfort.

Here may the weary find rest, and the strong be renewed.

Here may the aged find consolation and the young be inspired; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen**

### **StF 356 – Jesus shall take the highest honour**

Jesus shall take the highest honour,	For all honour and blessing and power,
Jesus shall take the highest praise.	Belongs to You,
Let all earth join heaven in exalting	Belongs to You,
The Name which is above all other names.	All honour and blessing and power,
Lets bow the knee in humble adoration,	Belongs to You,
For at His name every knee must bow,	Belongs to You,
Let every tongue confess	Lord Jesus Christ,
He is Christ, God's only Son,	Son of the living God.
Sovereign Lord we give You glory now.	

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### **Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21**

Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild animals will honour me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

## **Reading: John 12:1-8**

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about half a litre of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.' He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. 'Leave her alone,' Jesus replied. 'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.'

## **Sermon – Ways to honour Jesus<sup>1</sup>**

It had not been long since Jesus had raised Lazarus of Bethany from the dead, an act which had created quite a stir among the locals and the religious leaders. Jesus was nearing the end of His public ministry - chapter 11 says that the Passover was rapidly approaching.

Everybody needs a place to rest, to relax and enjoy the fellowship of friends. This is especially true for those in ministry. For Jesus, on this occasion, it was the home of Simon the Leper. Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus of Bethany were there, along with the Disciples. Bethany is located two miles east of Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. So Jesus was on His way to the cross. He knew that in just a few short days He would face the agony of Gethsemane and the shame and suffering of Calvary. Here in a quiet moment – before the beginning of the end – we see different ways in which Jesus is honoured.

### **Honour Jesus in your home**

Take a moment to re-read verse 1&2. Notice how welcome Jesus is in the home of Simon the leper. It was a place where His friends were, a place where He felt welcome, a place where He could rest. No doubt Jesus at times grew weary and moments of peace like this were precious to him. Here was a home in which Jesus was the honoured guest.

Imagine Jesus coming to your home - I think I would need a few hours notice! Would Jesus be comfortable watching what I watch on TV? The words that are used, the attitudes that are displayed? The books or magazines we read. Would Jesus be concerned about how we treat each other behind closed doors? Honouring Jesus in our home means that His presence is always taken into account.

### **Honour Jesus from your heart**

In verses 2&3 we find three different people mentioned; Martha, Lazarus and Mary. It is interesting to note that each of these followers of Jesus had a different passion, a different disposition of heart in how they chose to honour Jesus. For Martha honouring Jesus meant to serve – just as recounted in Luke 10:38-42. Once again we find this picture of Martha, cooking, serving, giving the best of her heart to God through the gift of hospitality. Martha has been called the worried housekeeper. Since Jesus was the guest of honour in her home she wanted everything to be just perfect and she wanted to get everyone on board to make sure it was right – if any of us stood around while Martha was in the room we would soon get a job!

THEN we see Lazarus - the passage simply says that *Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him*. It would be easy to read something negative into the text and call Lazarus lazy, but that would be a mistake. Lazarus simply wanted to enjoy His presence. To share fellowship with Him, talk with Him, ask Him questions and listen to Him speak. He wanted to enjoy every minute he had with the Master. There is nothing wrong with simply enjoying being in the presence of God. There are times and places where we should just be still and know that He is God.

Finally we see Mary - the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Instead of serving Jesus food, instead of enjoying a conversation with Him, Mary, moved with love for the Saviour, took a pound of spikenard, which was made from a plant which grows in India and she anointed His feet and wiped his feet with her hair. One of my commentaries says: a woman's hair was her glory, so she was laying her glory at His feet. She was giving up her pride, without regard for what others thought and she was worshiping Him, honouring Him, in all humility. Mary's extravagant gift foreshadows Christ on the cross – love given without regard to the cost! In doing all this she gave her best to Jesus. We know the ointment was very valuable and she had been keeping it for the day that Jesus would be buried. She poured out, with total abandon, the most valuable possession she had. That's how much she loved Jesus.

And so I ask myself and I ask you: How much do I love and honour Jesus in my life? Many claim to love him – but when asked to give of themselves their time, money and talents they step back. It is impossible for us to honour God and maintain a sense of self-importance at the same time. Like John the Baptist said, 'He must increase and I must decrease.'

And whilst these three were honouring Jesus – there were others in the room who just didn't get it. They just didn't understand what they were doing. Judas Iscariot, the one who would betray Jesus, accused Mary of wasting her precious ointment. When we feel led to worship God there will always be some who won't understand. There will always be those around who will say you are wasting your life, wasting your time, wasting your money. Don't let them or their doubt stop you from worshipping God.

Scripture says that the odour of the ointment filled the house. Mary's act of worship had an impact on all those around her. That's what true worship does. When we are in love with Jesus that love fills the room. So let us together make a commitment of faith – let us make Jesus the guest of honour in our home and let us honour Jesus in our hearts and lives. Let us together honour Jesus In service, fellowship and worship – following the example of Martha, Lazarus and Mary. May God's Holy Spirit enable us to build the habit of speaking openly to others of how we honour Jesus – such that the perfume of our love for God in Christ may spread to those we meet. Amen

### **StF 59 – Lord the light of your love**

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| 1) Lord, the light of Your love is shining<br>In the midst of the darkness, shining;<br>Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us,<br>Set us free by the truth You now bring us,<br>Shine on me, shine on me.   | 2) Lord, I come to Your awesome presence,<br>From the shadows into Your radiance;<br>By the blood I may enter Your brightness,<br>Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.<br>Shine on me, shine on me. |
| Ch) <i>Shine, Jesus, shine,<br/>Fill this land with the Father's glory;<br/>Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.<br/>Flow, river, flow,<br/>Flood the nations with grace and mercy;<br/>Send forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light.</i> | 3) As we gaze on Your kingly brightness<br>So our faces display Your likeness,<br>Ever changing from glory to glory,<br>Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story.<br>Shine on me, shine on me.          |

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### **Prayers of Intercession<sup>2</sup>**

Blessed are you, Lord our God, for you love us with an everlasting love and sent your Son to be our Saviour. He came and died that we might live. Now he is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Lord God, we give you thanks that in Christ Jesus you have redeemed the world. He died that we might live. He reigns with you and seeks us to be part of his kingdom.

We pray for all who are seeking to serve you in their daily lives. We remember especially any who are being persecuted for their faith. Lord, give us the courage to speak for you and to witness to your love. We ask your blessing upon all leaders of people, all governments and rulers. We long for the time when the kingdoms of earth will become the kingdom of Christ our Lord. We ask you to guide and strengthen all who work for peace and justice. Inspire all who seek to enrich your world through art, music or through their daily lives.

L: Lord, your kingdom come    **R: in us as in heaven.**

Lord Jesus, come as our King and rule in our lives. May we seek to serve you in our homes and in our daily work. May we strive for your kingdom in all our dealings. We ask your blessing upon all who are dear to us; through their love may we learn to love you more.

L: Lord, your kingdom come    **R: in us as in heaven.**

We remember all who have lost faith in you or in their neighbours. We pray for all who walk in darkness, for the discouraged and the despairing. May they come to know your love and saving power. We ask your blessing upon all who are suffering and all who are distressed at this time. We pray especially for friends who are ill.

L: Lord, your kingdom come    **R: in us as in heaven.**

We give thanks for the victory of our Lord over hatred, darkness and death, and that he has opened the kingdom to all who turn to him. We pray for your blessing upon our loved ones departed from us. May they rejoice in the fullness and glory of your kingdom. Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

### **StF 341 – All for Jesus**

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| 1) All for Jesus-all for Jesus,<br>This our song shall ever be:<br>For we have no hope, nor Saviour,<br>If we have not hope in thee.                       | 3) All for Jesus - thou hast loved us;<br>All for Jesus-thou hast died;<br>All for Jesus-thou art with us;<br>All for Jesus crucified.      |
| 2) All for Jesus - thou wilt give us<br>Strength to serve thee, hour by hour;<br>None can move us from thy presence,<br>While we trust thy love and power. | 4) All for Jesus - all for Jesus -<br>This the church's song must be;<br>Till, at last, we all are gathered<br>One in love and one in thee. |

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### **Blessing**

Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant, and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation: give us the courage to follow you and to proclaim you as Lord and King, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

<sup>1</sup> Based on original notes by Calvin Wittmann

<sup>2</sup> By David Adam