



'Worship at home' October 23rd 2022



We come to worship, knowing that simultaneously we stand in need of God's forgiveness, and live in the fullness of God's grace.

Light a candle to remind you of the assurance of Christ's light, love and life.

Opening based on Psalm 65

Come and worship,
everyone on earth,
everywhere the sun shines,
let us praise God!

For listening when we call,
answering our prayers,
forgiving our mistakes,
and providing what we need:
let us praise God!

Come and worship,
everyone on earth,
everywhere the sun shines,
let us praise God!

The whole earth
is filled with awe
at your wonders;
where morning dawns,
where evening fades,
you call forth
songs of joy.

-Psalm 65:8



~ adapted from Christine Longhurst

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/06/intergenerational-call-to-worship-ps-65.html>

Do you prefer...

- **red or blue?**
- **savoury or sweet?**
- **the book or the movie?**

Sometimes in life our choices are clear; at other times, they are not. We may prefer red at some times, blue at others. Sometimes we enjoy the book more than the movie.

Are you...

- **a talker or a listener?**
- **confident or shy?**
- **easy-going or anxious?**

Again, there may be times when we are one or the other, or all of them at the same time! Sometimes it is not helpful to have to choose between two extremes, when there might be many points of preference between the two. Sometimes our choices are not “either/or”, but “both/and”.

Jesus told a story about two men praying in the temple. The story was told to illustrate how easy it is to become self-satisfied when we compare ourselves with others. However, it also reminds us that comparing ourselves with others can fill us with self-doubt or insecurity. Sometimes we feel “both/and”, all at the same time!



<https://kimberlinglutheran.com>

Luke 18:9-14

He told his next story to some who were complacently pleased with themselves over their moral performance and looked down their noses at the common people: "Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax man. The Pharisee posed and prayed like this: 'Oh, God, I thank you that I am not like other people - robbers, crooks, adulterers, or, heaven forbid, like this tax man. I fast twice a week and tithe on all my income.'

"Meanwhile the tax man, slumped in the shadows, his face in his hands, not daring to look up, said, 'God, give mercy. Forgive me, a sinner.'" Jesus commented, "This tax man, not the other, went home made right with God. If you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face, but if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself."

The Message Bible

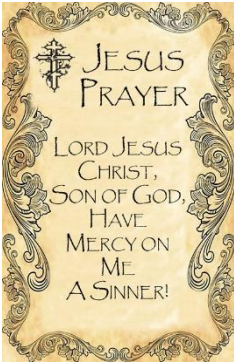
In what ways do you identify with...

- the Pharisee?
- the tax-man?

**How might we hear this story if it began with
“our two selves went to the temple to pray”?**

Two men
express in prayer
their life and world and hope;
one quite smug,
the other made right with God.
We hear these two pray,
yet looking deeply inward,
see in each ourselves.

- Jeff Shrowder 2016



The Jesus prayer is an ancient prayer based on the words of the tax-man. It is thought to have originated with the desert fathers around the 5th Century. Over the years it has been prayed by Christians in many different contexts, and is often prayed repeatedly or as a form of meditation.

***"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me, a sinner."***

Spend a few minutes, or as long as you like, praying this prayer. You might find it helpful to breathe in slowly as you say the first line and breathe out for the second. As you pray, open yourself to God's forgiveness and love.

The American writer, Anne Lamott, wrote in her spiritual memoir that there are only two types of prayers: "Help, help" and "Thank you, thank you." Each of these two men in the temple prayed one of these prayers. At one extreme is a man beyond reproach, self-righteous and proud: "thank you, thank you." At the other is a man so humble that he feels unworthy: "Help me, help me God."

At times, we might identify with both of these men. Sometimes we get so caught up in our own selves and focus on what we are doing well, we can become a little too self-satisfied. At other times, we might feel unworthy and ill-equipped. It is at both of these times that we might remember that we are each justified by God's grace. When we allow ourselves to be open to God's Spirit at work in us, as source and sustainer of our lives, God enables and empowers us.

Prayer

So many voices trumpet their greatness,
so many images boast of their beauty,
flaunt their power, squander their wealth;
and all too many of them do so in your name, Jesus.



And here we are in a world which is daily broken
by the foolish arrogance of men and women just like us;
And so we pray for the healing of humility
to flood every corner of our world:
wherever there is exploitation
and God-imaged people are dehumanised;
wherever there is neglect
and the needs of the poorest are ignored;
wherever there is disdain,
and the sacred value of creatures and earth are denied;
wherever there is violence,
and the gifts of difference and dignity are rejected.

Wherever people are tempted to think of themselves
as better than others,
more worthy, more deserving, more important to you,
may your humility break in and challenge us,
reminding us of our brokenness and need,
and teaching us to serve and to love everyone
with the grace and humility you show toward us.
Amen.

~ John van de Laar <http://sacredise.com/>

Closing

Pour out upon us, O God,
your spirit of patience and humility
that we might receive
what you have to give us.
Fill us, O God,
with your love, your compassion,
your grace, that we may see ourselves and
those around us as your beloved children.
Amen.

HUMILITY
IS NOT THINKING
LESS OF YOURSELF,
IT'S THINKING OF
YOURSELF LESS.

C.S. LEWIS