



'Worship at home' March 3rd 2024



This is the third week of **Lent**, a time of preparation for Easter. You might like to keep a **prayer space**, with a **candle** and **cross**, set up throughout the duration of Lent for your own prayer and reflection, as you choose to follow the way of Christ.

Opening

We are called to worship, to declare the glory of God.

We come, as Christ's disciples.

We are called to hear God's Word and grow in wisdom and grace.

We learn, as Christ's disciples.

We are called to unsettle our complacencies and overturn the tables of selfishness.

We respond, as Christ's disciples.

We are called, in the foolishness of the cross, to fullness of life.

We are redeemed, as Christ's disciples. Amen!

John 2:13-22

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To

those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They replied, "It has 1

taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead,

his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

New International Version

This Scripture tells of Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem. The temple was abuzz with pilgrims and merchants and moneychangers, anticipating the celebration of the Jewish Passover. We hear of Jesus disrupting their stalls and driving them out. Rather than a place of prayer and holiness and the presence of God, the temple had become cluttered with greed and exploitation.

**Are there things which fill or clutter your life
and distract you from knowing the presence of God?**

Where might Jesus want to overturn the tables in your life?

Prayer of Confession

Jesus, cleanser of temples and souls, at this mid-point in the Lenten journey, look deep within our hearts and our lives, and clear away all that holds us back.

May our minds, spirits and bodies be a Temple that is open to Your presence:
and may our words and our actions be transparent to Your love and truth.

In a moment of silence, we sit before You,
and name those things for which we seek Your cleansing and healing,
so that we may be more faithful disciples.

Words of assurance

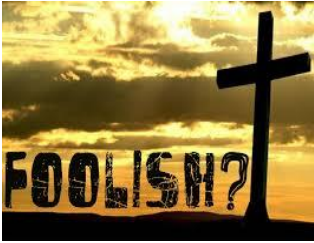
Friends of Jesus, we are made clean by the words he has spoken to us.

There is room in our lives and in our community for the Holy One to dwell. Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

~ adapted from Ann Siddall, *Stillpoint Spirituality Centre* <https://stillpointsa.org.au/>



By the time John's gospel was written, Jesus had been raised from the dead. No longer was the glory of God confined to the temple and experienced through a complex system of sacrifices and rituals: Jesus himself had revealed the glory and holiness of God. For those first disciples, this was confronting and disruptive: following Jesus changes our whole view of the way things are. The events of Easter are difficult to understand and do not make



sense: that a peasant Jewish man might die because of the sins of the world, then after three days rise to reveal the fullness of God's glory, and become the means by which we find reconciliation with God and with all creation. These events seem foolish and difficult to comprehend.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate." Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was

pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. New International Version

Our world so often promotes success, power and wealth. By contrast, the message of Jesus is one of humility, love, sacrifice and forgiveness. We lose our lives in order to save them, and embrace the way of suffering to follow Christ. This seems 3

foolishness to those who have not experienced the grace of God at work. Paul's words to the church in Corinth recentre us, and remind us of the values by which we are called to live. They are not discounting the importance of knowledge, but calling us to a deeper wisdom, which does not treat knowledge as a weapon or means to power, but brings a reordering of priorities and an understanding that goes far beyond the ways of the world.

**Are there aspects of your faith which
do not seem to make sense for you?**

How might you explain your faith to another?



Faith may seem foolish when we try to explain or prove it. Perhaps faith is not to something to be debated and reasoned but rather to be witnessed and proclaimed.

Closing

Teach us the courage, O God,
to turn from what seems so natural, so safe:
the way of grasping power, and befriending the powerful,
in the hope of protection and security.

Teach us the humility, O God,
to turn from what is so enticing, so persuasive:
the way of accumulating things, and trusting in wealth,
in the hope of comfort and life

Lead us, O God, in another way,
the way of true security, true wealth,
the way of Christ, the servant,
the way of weakness and simplicity.

Lead us, O God, in another way,
the way of caring for the neglected,
feeding the hungry,
housing the homeless,
protecting the threatened,
and challenging the powerful,
the foolish way of the Gospel,
that brings salvation to all. **Amen.**

– John van der Laar