



Churches Uniting in Central Sutton, Lent Study Groups 2020

Meeting Together, Tuesday Evening 31st March

Introduction . (Olwen, Trinity) *This is the final session in the Lent Course “Life Attitudes” during which we have been discussing the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:5-10. This week we focus on the final two sayings. Before you begin you might like to choose a prayer focus such as a candle, a Cross, some flowers or something that has significance for you.*

At times, for example for the hymns, there will be suggestions for audio and video clips which you might be able to access on your computer/laptop/ipad/iphone. They are not essential; this reflection is designed to be read in silence or aloud and any recordings are optional.

Opening Prayer

As we meet in our own homes, perhaps alone, let’s join together in spirit as we say again our Course Prayer

**Almighty God, thank you that you meet us where we are
and beckon us into your kingdom.**

**As we journey together, may we encounter Christ Jesus,
be empowered to live like him, and understand more fully what it means to be blest. Amen**

Hymn: Father, hear the prayer we offer Click [here](#) to watch and listen

1. Father, hear the prayer we offer:
Not for ease that prayer shall be
But for strength, that we may ever
Live our lives courageously.
2. Not for ever in green pastures
Do we ask our way to be;
But the steep and rugged pathway
May we tread rejoicingly.
3. Not forever by still waters
Would we idly rest and stay;
But would smite the living fountains
From the rocks along our way.
4. Be our strength in hours of weakness,
In our wanderings be our guide;
Through endeavour, failure, danger,
Saviour, be thou at our side.

This photograph of the Mount of the Beatitudes, beside the Sea of Galilee, was taken by Revd Frances Arnold when she was in Israel.

You might like to listen to a sung version of the Beatitudes by “Sweet Honey in the Rock”

Click [here](#) to watch and listen



Reading: Matthew 5:3-10

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

A comment from Carolyn (Sutton Baptist Church) *Something that struck me was, perhaps in these current times this reading should be retitled BE Attitudes, ie be comforted, be meek, be hungry for God's word, be pure in heart, be a peacemaker. This also then made me think about how applicable the Fruits of the Spirit are at this time and how similar they are - they both contain love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self control, again all, in my view BE Attitudes*

This week we are concentrating on the final two Beatitudes. Be still for a moment and reflect on these points:

Being a peacemaker means.....



Imagine that you are in a group sharing your ideas. How can we individually bring this sort of peace to our world?

Reading: Matthew 21:10-16 Jesus cleanses the Temple

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a den of robbers." The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became angry and said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself?'"

Something to think about: How can we reconcile Jesus' actions here with his assertion "blessed are the peacemakers"? How does it square with the Sunday School image of "gentle Jesus meek and mild"?

Frances comments on this passage in her Reflection!

A Reflection by Revd Frances Arnold, Priest-in-Charge, St Nicholas Church

I am very conscious in the present situation of being both a citizen, in the same boat as everyone else, and a Christian, and so called to live in a particular way.

We are confronted both on a global scale, and close to home, with the problem of suffering. My instinct, like yours is to reach out to those in need. But this time, it is not possible in the usual way. We have to keep a physical distance both to help others and to help ourselves. So we have to find ways of bringing God's peace that respect that limitation.

Some of that will come through our engagement with our neighbours – whether they live in the same street or are people with whom we interact in other ways, whether we are serving or being served. Mainly we have the opportunity to bring God's peace to a troubled world through our prayer and worship. Here, too, we aren't able to do this in our usual way. We aren't able to gather together in our regular places of worship, with all the support and energy that that brings. However, we can ensure that we are worshipping on Sundays in our own homes by saying the service ourselves or by joining in a live stream or a service shown on TV. And we can bring into our daily prayer, our concerns about the pandemic and our hopes for the future.

None of this means that we should turn a blind eye to things that are wrong, whether in ourselves or in the world. The pandemic raises questions about the way we treat each other and about the way in which we treat the world's resources.

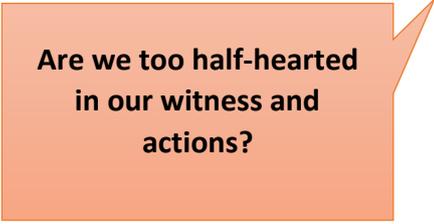
In the Bible the peace of God is not just the absence of war; and peacemaking is not the same as peacekeeping. Peace (in Hebrew, *Shalom*) is a very rich concept. It means a state of universal harmony, creativity and prosperity, of health and salvation; and it finds its fulfilment in that Kingdom for which we pray every time we say the Lord's Prayer. The present crisis gives the world a chance to question the way we live now, to come to our senses and to re-build personal, national and international life in a healthier way.

Jesus' action in cleansing the Temple (Mt 21.10-16) may not look like peacemaking, but he is showing us the way by engaging with issues of social justice and religious corruption (the rich making money out of the poor and the Temple authorities turning a blind eye). By challenging these extortionate and irreverent practices he is bringing God's peace and showing the working of righteousness in a fallen world. It is good to be reminded of that as we move towards Holy Week, for the message of the Cross, although a scandal in the eyes of the world, is indeed the power and wisdom of God.

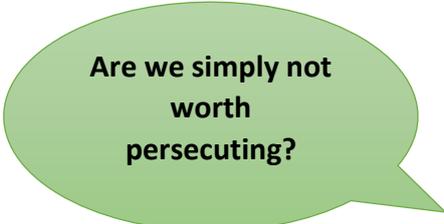
Hymn: Make me a channel of your peace Click [here](#) to watch and listen

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| <p>1. Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love,
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.</p> <p><i>O Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love with all my soul.</i></p> | <p>2. Make me a channel of your peace
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, only light;
And where there's sadness ever joy. (<i>Refrain</i>)</p> <p>3. Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving unto all that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.</p> |
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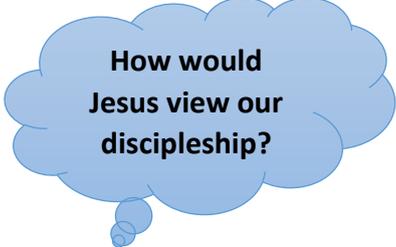
A comment from Sylvia (Trinity) *To me one of the most challenging Beatitudes is "**Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake..**" Jesus warned his followers that the road ahead could lead to persecution for going against the norms of society, but by and large we as Christians in the West tend to avoid standing up for our faith and speaking out against actions and attitudes we believe to be morally wrong for fear of being ridiculed or accused of discrimination against anyone. We admire people like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who sacrificed his life to oppose the Nazi regime in Germany and those of other faiths in other parts of the world who refuse to renounce their religious beliefs, but how prepared are **we** to make our allegiance known and to protest against the wrongs of our day? I find the following questions particularly challenging:*



**Are we too half-hearted
in our witness and
actions?**



**Are we simply not
worth
persecuting?**



**How would
Jesus view our
discipleship?**

Is there anything you would be willing to give your life for? Or make real sacrifices for?

A Time of Silence - for your own personal reflection and prayers at this time, when so many are putting themselves at risk for the sake of others.

Mary Meldrum (St Nicholas) has contributed this prayer from the St Helier Hospital Chaplaincy

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ, who travelled through towns and villages "curing every disease and illness". At His command, the sick were made well.

Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through our good medical care.

Heal us from our fear and help nations to work together and neighbours to help one another.

Heal us from our pride, as we are all vulnerable to a disease that knows no borders.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn: Lord, for the years

Click [here](#) to watch and listen

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the Word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care:
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, of our world where men disown and doubt you,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain,
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without you;
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign

Lord, of ourselves, in living power remake us,
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,
past put behind us, for the future take us;
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone

Deborah (Trinity) recently read our Closing Prayer on the St Martin's in the Fields' website

God of searching and knowing, your people Israel faced famine and wilderness and your church has known persecution and hardship.

Be close to all your children in this time of bewilderment and fear,

Make this time of cessation and isolation one in which your Spirit reveals new ways to be together,
fresh discoveries in worship, different gestures of care, and innovative forms of compassion.

Encourage the vulnerable, comfort the impoverished, inspire the anxious and give wisdom to those who govern.

Lift up our hearts that we may see the abundance of what is still beautiful and true, not be captivated by what is lost and absent, and find new gifts in ourselves and one another.

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, who knew what it meant to be alone. Amen

May God be with you till we meet again