

HOW MC & KSAT CIRCUIT WORSHIP SERVICE FOR SUNDAY JUNE 20 2021

As mentioned in the letter which I wrote at the end of May, this will be the last of the written services from the Circuit. So it seemed appropriate to use a sermon CHOICES which I preached at Kirkby Stephen on 6th June, and Orton and Ravenstonedale on 13th June; reflecting on the choices we can each make, as individuals, as churches, as a circuit; as we continue to move out of lockdown restrictions, and into the future plans that God has for us. Jackie

Call to worship.

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

CMP 560 Praise my soul <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyRIVbdsi4c>

1. Praise my soul, the king of heaven; to His feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who like thee His praise should sing?
Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise the everlasting King.

2. Praise Him for His grace and favour, to our fathers, in distress;
Praise Him still the same for ever, slow to chide and swift to bless.

Praise Him! praise Him ! Praise Him ! Praise Him!

Glorious in His faithfulness.

3. Fatherlike He tends and spares us; well our feeble frame He knows;
In His hands He gently bears us, rescues us from all our foes.

Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him!

Widely as His mercy flows.

4. Angels, help us to adore Him; ye behold Him face to face;

Sun and moon, bow down before Him; dwellers all in time and space.

Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise with us the God of grace.

Opening prayer Eternal God ,Creator of time and space, beginning and end of all things; You have been with us in all that is past; To you be glory for ever
Loving God ,Saviour of the world ,the Way the Truth and the Life;

You are with us as we worship today; To you be glory for ever

Sustaining God, Spirit of renewal and inspirer of faith;

You are with us in our homes ,you are with us in our church buildings

To you be glory for ever Holy God Father Son and Holy spirit you are with us always To you be glory for ever.

Loving God when we have followed our own desires and failed to proclaim your love- Forgive us

Generous God when we have lived for our own needs and failed to embody your generosity Forgive us

Transforming God when we have loved our own comforts and failed to hear your call Forgive us

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end
God is always ready to forgive us and to offer us the help of his Spirit as we
seek to become more like Jesus. Thanks be to God Amen **Lord's prayer**

CMP 1350 Speak O Lord <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tPp8ov7cks>

1. Speak O Lord as we come to you, to receive the food of your Holy word.

Take your truth, plant it deep in us; shape and fashion us in your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today in our acts of love and our deeds
of faith. Speak O Lord and fulfil in us all your purposes for your glory.

2. Teach us, Lord, full obedience, holy reverence, true humility.

Test our thoughts and our attitudes in the radiance of your purity.
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see, your majestic love and
authority,

Words of power that can never fail; let their truth prevail over unbelief.

3. Speak O Lord and renew our minds; help us grasp the heights of your plans
for us.

Truths unchanged from the dawn of time that will echo down through
eternity.

And by grace we'll stand on your promises, and by faith we'll walk as you
walk with us.

Speak O Lord till your church is built, and the earth is filled with your glory.

Bible readings Deuteronomy 30 vv 11-20

This commandment that I lay on you today is not too difficult for you or
beyond your reach. It is not in the heavens, that you should say, 'Who will go
up to the heavens for us to fetch it and tell it to us, so we can keep it?' Nor is it
beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to fetch it
and tell it to us, so that we can keep it?' It is a thing very near to you, on your
lips and in your heart ready to be kept. Today I offer you the choice of life and
good, or death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God
, conforming to his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and laws,
then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land
which you are about to enter to occupy. But if in your heart you turn away and
do not listen, and you are led astray to worship other Gods and serve them, I
tell you here and now that you will perish and not enjoy long life in the land
which you will enter to occupy after crossing the Jordan. I summon heaven and
earth to witness against you this day: I offer you the choice of life or death,
blessing or curse. Choose life and you and your descendants will live; love the
lord your God, obey him, and hold fast to him; that is life for you and length of
days on the soil which the Lord swore to give to your forefathers, Abraham
Isaac and Jacob.

Mark 4 vv 26-34. Jesus said 'The kingdom of heaven is like this. A man scatters seed on the ground; he goes to bed at night and gets up in the morning, and meanwhile the seed sprouts and grows-how, he does not know. The ground produces a crop by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then full grain in the ear; but as soon as the crop is ripe, he starts reaping, because harvest time has come. He said, How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use to describe it. It is like a mustard seed; when sown in the ground it is smaller than any other seed, but once sown, it springs up and grows taller than any other plant, and forms branches so large that birds can roost in its shade.' With many such parables he used to give them his message, so far as they were able to receive it. He never spoke to them except in parables ;but privately to his disciples he explained everything.

Sermon One of the biggest changes during the life-time of most of us, is the amazing amount of choices that have become part of our daily lives.

Any colour as long as it is black -was Henry Ford's motto in 1922

But nowadays cars come in many different colours and shades.

The supermarkets' shelves have many varieties of food and drink and so we could go on. Think of the choices you may have already made today morning What time to get up.....what to have for breakfast...dinner ...tea.

What to wear.....Making choices is one of the things we learn to do as we grow up- living with the consequences of those choices comes a little later.

Asserting our right to choose ,but then blending that right with the choices of others is all part of learning to live as part of a family ,part of wider society

Choosing- choice- a very important –a vital part of our lives as human beings

Our Old Testament lesson today was about choice Moses has spent many years leading the people of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness.

He knows how easy it is..... for all sorts of reasons....for them to follow their own path rather than trying to follow God's ways In this passage- towards the end of his life- when he is about to hand over the leadership to Joshua;

he reminds the people of all that God has done for them in the past

and challenges them to choose life-follow the way that God leads

Knowing that that is the way which will give them the best life possible.

It's a choice not only for the Israelites but for each one of us ;whether we will

as Jesus described it on one occasion Try to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength and our

neighbour as ourselves. Or whether we will choose to go our own way ,live just for ourselves....do our own thing. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, described

it as a new creation.... Being made new ,when we choose to offer our lives to

God. Choose life Moses said to the Israelites ; Choose life God says to each one of us today.

Choose life the most important decision we will ever make.

Choose life a decision that can be made at any time in our lives.

Choose life a decision that needs to constantly be renewed.

Choose life a decision that our weekly worship-our prayers
our Bible reading helps us to put into practice.

Choose life a decision that's not always easy to make, that's not always easy to
live with ;but which can bring so many unexpected blessings and outcomes.

Making a choice to go with God opens us up to possibilities that are not
always apparent at the beginning. Jesus story about the tiny mustard seed
which we heard earlier from Mark's gospel, reminds us of how sometimes
very small beginnings, can produce amazing results that are way out of
proportion to our expectations. In my own life seeing and then answering an
advert in the Methodist Recorder ;while responding to another advert for pens
for a school fair, led to three years working in the East end of London. Not
something I had ever expected to do, completely different from my previous
experience in rural Norfolk; but an experience which enriched my life so much,
as well as giving me necessary experience which meant I was accepted for
future ministry. Choosing life can bring so many unexpected blessings and
outcomes ; not only for ourselves but for others too. Last month Christian Aid
week, gave us the opportunity to give a small amount of our own money,
to projects which would make a huge difference to the lives of other people;
and that is true of course not only of the work of Christian Aid,but many other
organisations both in Britain and in other countries of our world. Our choosing
life, our gifts of money but also gifts of ourselves in many other ways
can be a very precious gift to others.

So too is the ability to make choices. I was fascinated to read a story of
residents in a care home, who complained to the cook that they were only
ever offered vanilla ice-cream. Could they not have strawberry or chocolate for
a change.-they asked. The following week three flavours were offered –
as it happened only vanilla was chosen, but everyone was happy and felt
better because there was now an option to choose. Choosing life-choosing to
follow God's way. The most important choice we will ever make.

A choice that can bring so many unexpected blessings and outcomes
to ourselves and to others, enabling them to have the freedom to make
choices too.

But..... you don't need me to tell you, that choosing life, choosing to
follow God's way is challenging. Just as on a long car journey we have to make
many decisions which way to go, so to on our journey through life we have to
continue to make choices, seek God's will, seek God's help. The writer of our
last hymn John Bode sums it up so well in lines like

I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side
Or wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide
O speak to reassure me to hasten or control.

Yet in spite of the truth of those words; how often we try to do things on our own. Sometimes we think we don't need any help; sometimes we are reluctant to take the time to reflect, think about, pray about a situation, seek God's help. Yet the more we can learn to depend on God rather than ourselves ;the easier we will find it to choose life. Learn to depend on his strength which never falters His wisdom which has an answer for every situation His power which as Paul wrote so movingly to the Ephesians,- A power within us which is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine His guidance-always dependable-always looking out for us –choosing the best way for us His peace –which again Paul describes as being beyond human understanding His comfort in times of hurt or anxiety. Such wonderful resources, strength, wisdom, power, guidance, peace, comfort ,always available to us only a prayer away.

Choose life Moses challenged the Israelites. Choose life God constantly challenges us Choose life ,accept my offer of a new creation and be part of my kingdom ; a kingdom where the smallest 'seed 'can have amazing results.

Choose life-the life in all its fullness that Jesus offered to us.

Life in 21 century Britain brings with it many choices- the most important- To choose life May we each find much joy, hope, peace as well as challenge as we follow that path Amen.

CMP 1076 Jesus, be the centre

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG-l1kK-BpU&list=RDEG-l1kK-BpU&start_radio=1

Jesus, be the centre, be my source, be my light, Jesus

Jesus, be the centre, be my hope, be my song, Jesus.

Be the fire in my heart, be the wind in these sails; be the reason that I live,
Jesus, Jesus.

Jesus, be my vision, be my path, be my guide, Jesus Be the fire.....

Prayers for others Let us pray to the Father ,through the Son ,in the power of the Spirit Living God your Spirit came as wind and fire upon the apostles, bringing the church to birth and empowering it for mission and service

Pour out your Spirit on all who seek your will; on all meeting at home, on the churches of our circuit and area May we be blessed anew in the work you set before us **Lord giver of life Receive our prayer**

Living God through the breath of your being you brought all creation to birth Pour out your Spirit on all the nations and their leaders.....

May all people be inspired in the ways of justice and peace
That the hungry may be fed, the homeless find welcome

And the oppressed be brought to liberty and the fullness of life

Lord, the giver of life Receive our prayer.

Living God you anointed your son Jesus Christ to bring sight to the blind
hearing to the deaf and healing to the sick and sorrowing;

Pour out your Holy Spirit on all those who suffer,
those who are filled with anxiety and all who need our prayers
May they know your comfort and grace at this time

Lord ,the giver of life Receive our prayer

Living God you have called us to be part of the work of your kingdom
You know the things we find easy the things we find challenging
You know our particular needs at this time as we seek to do your will
Fill us anew with your Spirit, encourage us on our journey and help us through
prayer worship Bible study and Christian fellowship to renew our resources for
the tasks you have given us

Lord the giver of life receive our prayer. Amen

CMP 501 O Jesus I have promised. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svgHDdzP5xY>

- 1.O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
Be thou for ever near me, my Master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide.
- 2.O let me feel Thee near me; the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me, around me and within;
But Jesus draw thou nearer, and shield my soul from sin.
- 3.O let me hear Thee speaking in accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
O speak and make me listen, Thou guardian of my soul.
- 4.O Jesus, Thou hast promised, to all who follow Thee,
That where Thou art in glory there shall Thy servant be;
And Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow my Master and my friend.
- 5.O let me see Thy footmarks, and in them plant mine own;
My hope to follow duly is in Thy strength alone;
O guide me, call me ,draw me, uphold me to the end;
And then in heaven receive me, my Saviour and my friend.

Closing prayer May Christ be always at our side. Give us courage for the
journey, and be our goal and joy. And the blessing of God
The Father ,the Son and the Holy Spirit;be upon us now and for ever Amen

