

starters for Sunday

Holy Week – Tuesday

The Time

31 March 2015

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to thank Rev Laurence Whitley, Minister of Glasgow Cathedral, for his thoughts on Tuesday in Holy Week.

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Quick Guide...

Helping people prepare for reading the Bible in worship can make a real difference. Overcoming nerves, reading in ways suitable to the text, speaking clearly etc.

You may wish to email these three links to the people reading Scripture on Sunday to support them in their involvement in worship: [Managing your nerves](#); [Creative readings](#); [Worship at the Lectern](#)

Opening Prayer

“FOR GOD’S WORD SAYS: ‘AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I HAVE LISTENED TO YOU AND HELPED YOU ON THE DAY OF SALVATION. BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTABLE TIME.’”

And so, Lord Christ, the moment draws closer. The time when escape and safety no longer are choices to be taken. One by one, from this time on, the doors will close.

Yet still you stay.

Not for you the reasoned excuse, the easy road to the margins, where stand spectators such as we. We have not courage to depart from there into the heat – already we are preparing to turn away heedless, to miss the moment once more.

And yet, how many times we could have seized that moment! What good could have been shown in our actions, what light could have been shed in our deciding: “this is the time - when right shall prevail and evil swept away!” But always we retreated into the shadows and your kingly journey passed us by once more.

Yet still you continue to put us in charge of the house, and this is the one hope that keeps us going. Even though we are the servants who have forgotten how to serve, the helpers whose assistance has yet to begin, the slaves whose obedience has never been proffered, you bear with us, holding and keeping and protecting us. Even in these, your darkest days, you still have time for us. We can only say our stumbling thanks and dare to believe we still can change. Amen.



Reading for this day in Holy Week is [John 12: 20-36](#)

Notes on the text

This is a decisive moment in John's gospel narrative. The incident John describes enables Jesus to understand that his public ministry has come to an end. It is triggered by the fact that the gentile world, represented by the Greeks at the feast, has now been drawn towards him. Accordingly, Jesus says: "the hour has come." But he also knows that his responding to the challenge will bring the direst consequences.

In the words of Jesus which follow, we witness what is in effect John's equivalent of the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus, faced with the ordeal to come, has to work to steady himself. Note that he begins to do so with words from his bible: "now is my soul troubled" which is clearly a reference to Psalm 6: 3. Then follows the great and poignant moment when he asks himself: "What is it to be – save me, Father, from this hour?" He then gives as his response, not yes or no, but simply, "glorify your name." It is something that triggers a resounding affirmation and at the same time a key lesson for us. Whenever we are afraid, or confronted by an impossible situation and we don't know what is the right thing to do, we are to pray the same three words. Similarly, if we don't know how to cope with a crushing burden, we should pray "glorify your name in this situation." Again, if we are being persecuted by someone, the prayer is, "glorify your name in this person's life." The important thing is to shift the initiative to Him. Then, having done so, even more important is not to take it back again. After all, if we still have the worry and the burden, then the Father must not have them.

An Aberdeen woman who was helping in a youth club was once violently pushed over by someone to whom she refused admission. She tried to carry on in the following weeks, but remained deeply upset by the incident. One winter night, she could not go on, but left the club and went down to the seashore. She prayed, "I can no longer do your work while like this. I can't carry the burden of it any longer – you'll have to." Suddenly, instead of the cold North Sea wind against her face she felt a warm, caressing breeze brushing her cheek. It was extraordinary, yet it seemed that the Father was breathing upon her, as if to say, "I am very close and I will take this." And so it felt to her and she was able to go back and glorify His name in the work He had called her to do.



The central message of this day is that for most, if not all of us, the time will come in our lives when we are challenged with the same question: “The hour has come: what is it to be - walk away or walk on with God?” Once Jesus had prayed, “glorify your name” he knew what to do. And so then will we.

Second prayer

Waiting is always hard. But when we know it is evil that is about to strike, how crushing the time. Yet this was your burden, Lord Christ. Only the strength of your love for us held you there – we who least deserve it still. Not for us the thought of how to live and die for others, but for you: the resolve made, the face set, the senses braced for the dark night to come. For you, there is now a walk to be walked.

Can we take it with you?

Is our answer no? How can that be, when our world is near to drowning in its sorrows: the anger, the maiming, the jealousy, the grievances that never get forgotten, the wretchedness that never gets our notice, the loneliness, the indignity that never gets to be heard.

We wonder who will respond - who will go in your name and bring the oil of healing? And then we remember: if we do not, then no one will. So, we give ourselves to you now. We know we are but unworthy followers, but this we ask: in our lesser journeys and paltry struggles, remember us when you come into your kingdom. For, as long as we know we are not forgotten and will one day be with you forever, we know we can face what lies ahead, unknown and menacing though it may be.

[silence]

But wait! Listen, Lord...

- the sound you now hear is of our fears slipping to the ground. They are going, and with them our desire to run. And now we see clearly: on that road we never thought we'd take, there you stand, beckoning.
- Wait for us, Lord.
- We are coming.
- This time...
- We are coming.



Musical Suggestions

CH4 371	Lay down your head, Lord Jesus Christ
CH4 374	From Heaven you came (The Servant King)
CH4 248	For my sake and the gospel's, go
CH4 502	Take my life and let it be
CH4 553	Just as I am



Additional Resources

Resourcing Mission



[Resourcing Mission](#) is host to Starters for Sunday and other key mission resources for download and purchase. Online booking is available for [Mission & Discipleship events](#). Please check back regularly, as new items are being added all the time. If there is something you'd like to see on this new site, please [contact us](#) via the website.

Prayer Resources

These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might look for in prayers. [Revealing Love](#) is available now from [St Andrew Press](#).



Music Resources

The hymns mentioned in this material are ideas of specific hymns you might choose for this week's themes. However, for some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music pages [Different Voices](#).

Preaching Resources



These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might preach this Sunday. [Preachers Perspectives](#) is a resource where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and delivering sermons regularly.

Scots Worship Resources

[The Kirk's Ear](#) - Scots in the Kirk series for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and other times of the year

[Wurship Ouk bi Ouk](#) - Metrical psalms, hymns, prayers and words for worship

[Scots Sacraments](#) may give you helpful material if you are celebrating Communion or have a Baptism.

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to express its thanks to the Rev Laurence Whitley for providing us with this Sunday's material.

Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.

