



#### CALL TO WORSHIP

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, and bless his name.

#### HYMN MP 307 *(Leona Von Brethorst)*

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart;	He has made me glad, He has made me glad,
I will enter His courts with praise.	I will rejoice for He has made me glad.
I will say this is the day that the Lord has made.	He has made me glad, He has made me glad,
I will rejoice for He has made me glad.	I will rejoice for He has made me glad.

#### PRAYER OF PRAISE

Lord, you are God from everlasting to everlasting – alpha and omega, Creator of the mountains and seas, of valleys and trees. With creation, we give you our praise, lifting our voices to you, offering our lives anew- for you alone are worthy, God of all, to receive all our praises, now and evermore. Amen.

READINGS: Amos 5: 6- 7,10-15 and Mark 10:17- 31

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lord, forgive us when we have made treasures out of trinkets. Forgive us when we have clung to possessions as if they define us. Forgive us when we treat luxuries as necessities. Forgive us, God of the poor, when we close our eyes to the needs of others. Rearrange our priorities where they have become skewed. May we treat what we have as a gift, not as our right. Help us to find our treasure in you. Amen.

#### HYMN STF 504 *(Katie Barclay Wilkinson, 1859-1928)*

May the mind of Christ, my Saviour, Live in me from day to day, By His love and pow'r controlling All I do and say.	That I may be calm to comfort Sick and sorrowing.
May the Word of God dwell richly In my heart from hour to hour, So that all may see I triumph Only through His pow'r.	May the love of Jesus fill me As the waters fill the sea; Him exalting, self abasing, This is victory.
May the peace of God my Father Rule my life in everything,	May I run the race before me, Strong and brave to face the foe, Looking only unto Jesus As I onward go.

#### TALK 'Life-Gate'

Like most objects, through the passage of time, gates have changed in their usage and purpose. Farm gates still keep trespassers out and animals in, but on a new housing estate, you will rarely see a gate protecting the front garden. In mediaeval times, cities were walled for protection and had gates at intervals around the wall kept open during daylight hours for transport of goods and livestock, and shut at night to keep citizens safe from harm. The gates often had names which described their use or position. In Biblical times, the gates of a city, were places of commerce and business transactions, where justice was administered and legal agreements made. They were also places where the poor sat, and where prophecies were announced, and news distributed.

At such a gate, the gate of Bethel, Amos is speaking to Israel, warning them, that whilst they might be prosperous, and by all appearances are leading the good life, even to their attendance at worship, their

riches and status are at the expense of the poor. He tells them that what God sees, is that justice has been turned to bitterness, righteousness has been demolished and the poor are being trampled underfoot. The bethel gate was the place where all kinds of disputes were heard and resolved, so Amos sees it as the main arena for re-establishing order, justice and compassion according to God's law. Pious words, he warns, must give way to righteous action. Deeds, not creeds. Which resonates with Jesus' reaction to the rich young man who hurries to catch Jesus before he leaves town. explicitly that the The most telling verse in that account, is verse 21. In the first part of the verse, we are told that, 'Jesus looked at him, and loved him'. Just one look, and Jesus could tell what the stumbling-block was, and yet he didn't rebuke the young man, or discipline him, only told him how and where real treasure could be found. But his earthly treasures were too precious to him to spend them on the poor. The gate of his heart was closed, and he went his own way. The cost of following Jesus was too high a price for him to pay.

Possessions and money have capacity or potential for good or evil, so it is our attitude towards our money that is the problem. Having too little means it's always on your mind, because you need it, having too much is the same, because you don't want to lose it.

The key to the Life-gate is all to do with what you value most. If your relationship with Jesus is more precious to you than any of your possessions, then you have the key to the Life-gate. If your love for God is stronger than your love for the money in your bank account, then the key to the Life-gate is all yours.

You see, the amazing thing is, if you care more for God than anything else, then your concern for what you have will diminish and you will find yourself caring about justice for the poor and the underprivileged almost automatically. Jesus reminds Peter as he reminds us v.29. Never fear, we will have enough and more., if we make God number 1 in our heart.

If you are still not convinced, read the story of the beggar called Lazarus who was ignored by the rich man at whose gate he sat day after day in Luke 16: 19 – 23, or the account of Jesus watching the widow put all that she had into the Temple treasury in Mark 12: 41 – 43 and then decide who can enter the life gate.

Put seeking Jesus before stashing gems, and it could be you. Amen

#### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Giver of life, we pray for our world today where there can be so much greed and so little justice.

We pray for situations we have heard about this week, where wickedness and corruption hold sway, and where those who have little are trampled under the heels of the powerful. We ask for light to spread into the darkest places, where there is illness and disease, persecution and fear, and suffering we know nothing about. May we be your torch bearers, standing up for those in poverty, proclaiming your good news, and living in your way of peace. Amen.

HYMN STF 94 (*Frances Jane van Alstyne – Fanny Crosby – 1820-1915*)

To God be the glory, great things he has done!  
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,  
Who yielded his life in atonement for sin,  
And opened the life-gate that all may go in;

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
To every believer, the promise of God!  
And every offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives;

*Praise the Lord Praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear his voice!  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;  
And give him the glory-great things he has done!*

Great things he has taught us, great things he has done.  
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
But purer, and higher, and greater will be,  
Our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.

BLESSING: God, sustain and empower us in the coming days. Let us live in ways that reflect our holy calling as your children. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.