



**Bible Reading:** Psalm 105: 19

**Hymn:** StF 19 Be still and know that I am God [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyDr9-Mpc\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AyDr9-Mpc_s)

Be still and know that I am God  
Be still and know that I am God  
Be still and know that I am God

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust  
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust  
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust

I am the Lord that healeth thee  
I am the Lord that healeth thee  
I am the Lord that healeth thee

**Prayers:**

Lord God, we pray to you, as Father Son and Holy Spirit, to praise you, For You are our God. We pray to thank you for all that You have done for us, for you are always there. We pray to You as our God, who made the world, died for us, rose again to show us the way to heaven, and lives in us all. We bring before you the burden of all the sins we have committed, and we say Lord God, we are sorry for them. We know that such is your Love, we are forgiven our sins. Thanks be to you, Our God, **Amen**

**Old Testament Reading:** Exodus 20: 1-4, 7-9, 12-20

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 21: 33-46

**Sermon:**

I have never been the most patient of people, I want to get on with whatever task is in hand at any given time. One aspect of work that is consuming my life at the moment is the stationing of ministers. I am due to move on from the Ipswich Circuit at the end of August next year and that means that the next few weeks are critical in terms of where my family are going to be in a years' time and who will be coming to Ipswich to replace me. The whole process is governed by "The code of practice" which must be followed by everybody concerned to ensure that the process is as fair as possible.

Whether we like it or not, we live by a moral and ethical code and in all aspects of our lives there are rules that ought to be obeyed. I am careful to say "ought to be" rather than "must" because in recent times we have witnessed at some of the highest levels in society the rule makers becoming the rule breakers and whilst we might prefer to just do as we please, the reality is that there must be a code of behaviour, or human life as we know it will be chaotic and dangerous.

Even back at the early part of the Old Testament story as Moses is leading the Israelites out of Egypt and into the promised land there are no rules, people are just expected to be responsible human beings, caring for one another and looking after each other. Ideal as that might sound, throughout history people have tended to be selfish, looking out for their own self interests and not putting others needs and concerns first, so God gives ten simple rules for harmonious living.

By the time of Jesus the "rules" had become a complex series of hundreds of laws and Jesus with his no nonsense approach manages somehow to encapsulate all this into one single instruction "as I have loved you, so you must love one another" the parable we have just read from St Matthews Gospel reminds us that even in the time of Jesus, people were still putting their own self interest ahead of the Gospel narrative. The story might have a different interpretation today than it had even two thousand years ago, "this is OUR world, and we can do whatever we want in it, and with it" seems to be the modern narrative and look at what a mess we have made of it.

If we take the single command of Jesus seriously, then surely, we should be thinking about how we live our lives with the welfare of all humankind, with its delicate ecosystem in mind. We live in a consumer world, where we take all, we can and want to own the world and everything in it and that approach is simply not sustainable any longer. There is a lot of conversation currently about the climate crisis and taking responsibility for our actions and I believe that goes way beyond flogging our diesel cars and buying electric. It is about our attitude, what drives us, motivates us, what we want and maybe the time has come to look way beyond our own desires.

The stationing process is a good example. The chances are that there will be about half as many ministers available for the appointments that need filling. The responsible attitude would be to start looking at alternatives, but my guess is that, up and down the country, Churches and Circuits will be bombarding God in prayer saying “don’t worry about the others, we are a special case” what does God do? Can he really please everybody? Can we all get our own way?

**Consider:**

- What demands do you put on God? are they selfless, putting other people’s interests above your own?
- Can you give a little way?
- Who does the world belong to, us, or God? what changes can you make, even small, or insignificant, that can make a difference for the welfare of others.

**A time of prayer**

Gracious God, we bring before you our prayers for the world

We pray for all those who lack physical things, food, shelter, water, and all of life’s necessities.

We pray for those who mourn, and those who ail. Lord, for those we may help, may our hands work quickly, and for those we personally cannot help, we pray for the hands that will.

We pray for all those who work to provide care and help to others. Lord bless them and keep them from tiredness and error, and those they care for, keep them from despair. We bring the names of those known to us before you...

We pray for all in spiritual distress, who struggle to hear your message, or to come to you in prayer. Lord, help them to heed.

We pray for ourselves. Strengthen us to come through renewed in faith in certainty.

We pray for our land and nation. Lord, help us all to endure, to do our duty and to serve you faithfully. May our land be brightened by the Light of Lord as we leave these times behind.

Lord, we ask these things, knowing that when we pray, wherever we pray, you hear our prayers. Thanks be unto you, Father Son and Holy Spirit, Amen

**The Lord’s Prayer:**

**Hymn: StF 351 In Christ alone** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljlsOQ269I4>

In Christ alone, my hope is found  
He is my light, my strength, my song  
This Cornerstone, this solid ground  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm  
What heights of love, what depths of peace  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease  
My Comforter, my All in All  
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone, who took on flesh  
Fullness of God in helpless babe  
This gift of love and righteousness  
Scorned by the ones He came to save  
'Til on that cross as Jesus died  
The wrath of God was satisfied  
For every sin on Him was laid  
Here in the death of Christ I live, I live

There in the ground His body lay  
Light of the world by darkness slain  
Then bursting forth in glorious Day  
Up from the grave He rose again  
And as He stands in victory  
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me  
For I am His and He is mine  
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death  
This is the power of Christ in me  
From life's first cry to final breath  
Jesus commands my destiny  
No power of hell, no scheme of man  
Can ever pluck me from His hand  
Till He returns or calls me home  
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

**A prayer of blessing**

Lord, as we go forth, may we see all the things you long for us to notice. May we be your people in all we do and say. Amen