



Call: God our Father, we come before you today with hearts and minds open to receive your wisdom. We hope to find comfort in the familiar, but also to be challenged. We may hear familiar stories, and well-known hymns, that soothe our souls, but you, O Lord, stir in us new understandings to refresh and renew our faith. Humbly we come before you ready to learn, to grow, and to be the people you mean us to be. AMEN

Hymn: STF 82 How great Thou art

Watch on YouTube : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALPJ-5TqG0c&list=RDAIPJ-5TqG0c&start_radio=1

O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed:
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great Thou art!*

Refrain

And when I think that God His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die-I scarce can take it in.
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:

Refrain

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home-what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
And there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!

Refrain

Stuart K Hine © 1953 Stuart K Hine/The Stuart Hine Trust/Published by kingswaysongs.com.

www.kingswaysongs.com. Worldwide (excl. North & South America). Used by permission. CCLI Licence No. 1085607

Prayers:

Loving God, all-good, all-true, all-powerful, almighty, we worship you.

Gracious God, all-merciful, all-faithful, all-compassionate, we thank you.

Mighty God, always active, always leading, always calling, always knowing, we commit ourselves to you.

Saving God, always forgiving, always teaching, always restoring, always encouraging, we confess our faithlessness to you.

Sovereign God, all in all, now and always, we praise you, we adore you, we worship you, we lift up our hearts to you.

Father God, we celebrate your goodness, we rejoice in your blessings, we marvel at your mercy, we thank you for your guidance, we offer our lives in response to you.

Living God, take this service, this day, our various churches and fellowships, and our lives. Use them for your purpose and your kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. AMEN

Heavenly Father, we confess that we stumble from day to day, failing to consider our lives in the light of our faith.

Father, forgive us our failings and bring us back to you.

Lord, we measure ourselves by the standards of society, afraid of what others might think, not you.

Father, forgive us our failings and bring us back to you.

We become enslaved by worldly influences, filling our minds with ideas that do not feed the soul and our lives with things that bring only fleeting pleasure. **Father, forgive us our failings and bring us back to you.**

We recommit to the ways taught us by Jesus. Help us to count the cost of following him.

Father, forgive us our failings and bring us back to you. AMEN

LORD'S PRAYER :

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

Reading: Luke 14:25-35

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.' "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

Hymn: STF 563 O Jesus, I have promised

Watch on YouTube : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pmGPFvm5VQ&list=RD5pmGPFvm5VQ&start_radio=1

O Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end;
Lord, be for ever near me,
my master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle
if you are by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if you will be my guide.

O let me hear you 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;
Lord, speak, and make me listen,
O guardian of my soul.

O let me feel you 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, now draw nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

O Jesus, you have promised
to all who follow you,
that where you are in glory
your servant shall be too;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end;
O give me grace to follow
my master and my friend.

John E Bode Used By Permission.

Message: "Counting the cost"

I love my family and enjoy spending time with them. So does that make me a "bad" Christian?

Jesus said we must hate father, mother, wife or husband, children, brothers and sisters. We must even hate our own life – to the point of death. That's tough talk, making us stop in our tracks. But that's the point, isn't it?

Being Jesus' disciple is tough, it requires total commitment, no half measures.

Imagine a politician campaigning by with slogans like, "we promise higher taxes and lower wages!" "you will lose your family and your home." Does that sound appealing, losing all those things you love most?

But that is what Jesus is saying.

Now imagine you are the leader of an expedition tasked with rescuing the people in a remote village, cut off from the outside world, that can only be accessed by treacherous mountain paths and deep ravines. Your advert says, "leave your packs behind, the paths are too steep to carry heavy loads." "Write your last postcard home – this is a dangerous route and many have not made it back."

We might not like it, but we can probably see the reasoning behind the statements. There is an honesty about what this will cost, not some empty promise or half-truth. Even so, I would want to consider carefully before committing to such a risky endeavour.

Jesus says, if you are going to build a tower don't you work out the costs and examine your own resources before you start building? It would be a waste of effort to lay the foundations and then realise you can't afford to complete the building.

Or if you were a king and about to go to war with a neighbouring king, you would weigh up whether your small army of 10,000 had any chance of defeating an army 20,000? If not, surely, the wisest course would be to seek peace. So let us consider what it is Jesus is asking us to do. I do not believe Jesus is asking us to literally hate our family.

In Judaism, family is perhaps even more important than in our culture. Jesus is saying that no love, not even the deepest love for our family can compare with the love we have for him.

Land was the most important possession of the Jewish people. And we still see that playing out, with devastatingly tragic consequences today. It's more about where our priorities lie. Are we prepared to commit to Jesus, even though it may put us apart from those we love? Are we prepared to give up our treasured possessions?

It's a hard question. What is the cost to us? There are people who have indeed sold their homes, given away possessions as part of their faith. We may not feel this is something we can do, but are we prepared to respond with extravagant generosity if called to do, for some urgent emergency for example?

Are we prepared to carry our own cross? This was not simply a metaphorical question – are we prepared to go through tough times, following Jesus is not always easy. Rather it is also literally are we prepared to carry our own cross.

Death by crucifixion was reserved for the worst criminals. It was a painful and very public death. The convicted criminal was forced to walk through the streets carrying his own cross as a symbol of shame and of submission to the Roman authorities.

I hope and pray that none of us ever have to face death as a consequence of our faith, but there are parts of the world where this is a very real cost of discipleship. However, we may face ridicule and humiliation in an ever more secular society. Are we prepared to speak out about our faith, even though we may be ignored, or even ridiculed and humiliated?

These are all difficult questions that seem to ask a lot of us?

Jesus asked these questions to get the crowds to think through their enthusiasm for him. He encouraged those who were superficial to go deeper or to turn back.

Do you want to go deeper?

What are you prepared to give up to follow Christ?

Where do your priorities lie?

Hymn: STF 696 For the healing of the nations Fred Kaan © 1968 Stainer & Bell Ltd Used By Permission. CCLI Licence No. 1085607

Watch on YouTube : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dc-2tiAfSyY&list=RDDc-2tiAfSyY&start_radio=1

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord,
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom,
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow life's brief span.
You, Creator-God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

Intercessions:

Lord, there is nothing hidden from you. All our thoughts and plans and secret fears are open to you, even when we try to hide them. Deal with the doubts and misgivings of your Church, with the love and mercy which are your very nature. Gracious God: **in you we trust**

Lord, you feel for the oppressed and the forgotten; you understand the damage which can lead to violence, the insecurity which can lead to defensiveness, and the neglect which can lead to lack of control. Heal the nations; restore what has been lost; and turn our hearts to discern your will. Gracious God: **in you we trust**

Lord, you see the point at which discussions turn into arguments and preferences into selfishness. You know the love inside our hearts for one another that sings and dances and aches and worries. Work on us now in the depth of our being and bless our loved ones with a sense of joy. Gracious God: **in you we trust**

Lord, you suffer with those who suffer and weep with those who weep; we, too, stand alongside them now in whatever pain, distress or sorrow is engulfing them, longing for them to be comforted. Gracious God: **in you we trust**

Lord, death and resurrection proclaim the message of hope amongst the tears of grieving for those who have died. Welcome them into the eternal light of your kingdom.
Gracious God: **in you we trust**

Lord, your way may be costly but to whom else could we go? For you alone have the words of eternal life, and we offer you our gifts and ourselves. Gracious God: **in you we trust**
Merciful and gracious God, accept these and all our prayers in the name of your only Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Lord and King. AMEN

Hymn: STF 341 All for Jesus, all for Jesus,

Watch on YouTube : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2M1f_34veo&list=RDA2M1f_34veo&start_radio=1

All for Jesus, all for Jesus,
this our song shall ever be;
for we have no hope, nor Saviour,
if we have not hope in thee.

All for Jesus, thou wilt give us
strength to serve thee, hour by hour;
none can move us from thy presence
while we trust thy love and power.

All for Jesus, at thine altar
thou wilt give us sweet content;

there, dear Lord, we shall receive thee
in the solemn sacrament.

All for Jesus, thou has loved us;
all for Jesus, thou hast died;
all for Jesus, thou art with us;
all for Jesus crucified.

All for Jesus, all for Jesus,
this the church's song must be,
till, at last, we all are gathered
one in love and one in thee.

William J Sparrow-Simpson Used By Permission.

Blessing: Loving God, lead us out into the world, renewed in vigour, in hope, in faith, and in purpose, ready to accept the cost of following you. Send us back into the world to live and work for you, sharing your love and living your life. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN