

Call to Worship

Psalm 119:17-20 (LB) Bless me with life so that I can continue to obey you. Open my eyes to see wonderful things in your word. I am but a pilgrim here on earth: how I need a map – and your commands are my chart and guide. I long for your instructions more than I can tell.

Prayer

Lord, as I spend time in your presence today, I lift my voice to give you praise. Open my eyes to see and my ears to hear what you are teaching me from your Word. And open my heart to pray for my brothers and sisters in Jesus and for my neighbours. Amen.

Song: “For the Beauty of the Earth” (MHB 35, by Folliot Sandford Pierpoint)

1. For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies.
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies,
Gracious God to Thee we raise, this sacrifice of praise.
2. For the beauty of each hour of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light ...
3. For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight,
For the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight ...
4. For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild ...
5. For each perfect gift of Thine to our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine, flowers of earth and buds of heaven ...

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Prayer of Intercession

Lord, I pray for peace in places which are of a high profile in the press such as Ukraine and Israel/Gaza and now Iran. I pray also for those countries not in the news cycle, and especially for the Christians there who suffer food deprivation, job insecurity and housing difficulties. I pray particularly for those where persecution is characterised by violence.

- Sudan, where a brutal civil war has forced 11 million people out of their homes and off their land, and many, including Christians into refugee camps in neighbouring countries.
- Nigeria, where Christians in some northern areas suffer violence from Islamic State.
- Myanmar, where there are violent attacks and bombing of Christian villages by the extremist Buddhist military power.
- Congo, Uganda and Mozambique where Islamic State has killed thousands of Christians, including school children.
- North Korea, where Christians keep their faith secret, even from their children who are questioned in school, or risk arrest, imprisonment and torture.

Who's the Boss?

Lord, I pray for an end to this violence and thank you that it will end when you come again. Until then I pray you will help, sustain, and comfort them in their suffering. And I pray and thank you for those organisations like Barnabas Aid who support Christians and churches in these places. Amen

Song: "We too have Overcome" (by Robinson, Thompson & Fielding)

1. Take heart where there is trouble, this world belongs to him
Rely upon the words of Christ the King
He said there would be trials, but He has overcome
The battle is the Lord's, and he has won.
2. Take heart where there is failure, where sin fights for a hold
Rely upon the power of his blood
There is no condemnation for Jesus paid it all
So praise the God of mercy, oh my soul.

*On the cross he stormed the prison, by His death he broke the bars
When He rose he feed His children from the dark
And he bound the great deceiver and He leads me in His love
Praise God, in Christ we too have overcome.*
3. Take heart where there is sorrow, in sickness and in death
Rely upon the peace that He has sent
He promises a future where joy will never cease
And there I know a home awaits for me.
He is risen and He reigns, it is finished it is done
So take heart, He has overcome. Yes, the victory we need is the victory He won
So take heart, He has overcome, in Christ we have overcome

Chorus

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Bible Reading:

- Philippians 2:5-11

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on the cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Who's the Boss?

Message: "Who's the Boss?"

We have all taken a walk down memory lane at some stage, sometimes when we have returned to a place of our childhood, or to the place of victories or even defeats. The memories are usually quite vivid. The Mundulla Oval is one for me when my footy team won its first premiership in 1977. The smell of freshly cut grass brings back the memory. I can remember perfectly, dodging and weaving in the forward pocket, spinning onto my left foot and kicking a check-side goal at the western end! It's as clear as a bell to this day!

Many of Jesus' disciples, and not only those in the eleven, would have lived in Jerusalem up to AD70 when the Romans besieged and sacked the city, thus ending the existence of the nation of Israel until 1948. For maybe 40 years those disciples walked the same streets of Jerusalem where they had walked with Jesus. What were they remembering as they walked past the house where the Last Supper was held, perhaps into the garden of Gethsemane, up the hill to Golgotha, into the area of the tombs where Jesus was buried and resurrected? They must have been very vivid memories.

Over the years of Jesus' ministry there must have been a changing understanding of Jesus. They would have remembered a night on the Lake of Galilee when a storm blew up that put them in fear of their lives. They wakened Jesus who was sleeping peacefully in the midst of this chaos. He stood and commanded the wind and the waves to calm down. The disciples were stunned, and wondered who this Jesus really was, who had this power over nature itself. Their understanding grew but maybe not to the point, at this stage, where they recognised his role in the creation of this world.

Who was the boss of nature itself? Jesus!

They would have remembered his demonstration of power and compassion in feeding the thousands, in healing the blind, the deaf, the lame, and raising to life those who had died. The understanding of who he is must have grown through all these events.

Who was the boss over disease and disability and death itself? Jesus!

What memories they would have held of the Thursday before Jesus' death. They would have often walked past the building where the Last Supper was held. And just outside the eastern wall city walls they could see the Garden of Gethsemane where they went afterwards. Jesus organised and led the Last Supper, explaining right up to those last few hours why he must die. Even as he washed his disciples' feet, demonstrating servanthood, he was in charge, putting aside the protests of Peter (John 13:8, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."). Even Judas's departure to betray him was determined by Jesus (John 13:27 "What you are about to do, do quickly").

Who was the boss at the Last Supper? Jesus!

And then in the garden of Gethsemane when the soldiers came to arrest him, Jesus was in control. "Who is it you want?" he asked. When they said it was Jesus of Nazareth, he said, "I am he", and they drew back and fell to the ground. The exchange was repeated and Jesus said that he was the one they wanted and to let the disciples go. And then Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant. Jesus directed Peter to put the sword away and then healed the servant. Hardly the way you would expect a victim

Who's the Boss?

under great stress to conduct himself. All this of course after he had agonised in prayer about the death he was facing – but submitting to his Father, “...yet not my will, but yours be done”.

And because of this, who was the boss in the garden? Jesus!

Peter especially would have remembered the High Priest's house where he denied Jesus. It was the scene of the interrogation of Jesus by Annas, the high priest, and the reported conversation (John 18) indicates that Jesus was totally unintimidated. Even being slapped around didn't stop him being in control of the questioning. Then it was off to more well remembered sites in Jerusalem, Pilate's house and Herod's palace. Neither of these powerful politicians had any power over Jesus. The conversations indicate that Jesus was in total control of the situation, not his inquisitors. Pilate was so indecisive that he bowed to public opinion rather than exercise his own authority to have Jesus crucified.

Who was the boss in Jesus' trial? Jesus himself!

The disciples for many years were never far from the hill of Golgotha where Jesus died - painful memories perhaps. Only one disciple turned up there, probably John, while the rest were keeping their heads down, confused and afraid. This was Jesus at his most vulnerable. Nailed to a cross, naked, facing imminent death, facing the mockery of the crowd. But despite his pain, not only from the nails but from the burden of the world's sin, he was still in charge. He spoke to John and arranged for the care of his Mum. He spoke to the thief and assured him of a place in paradise. And then the ultimate act of being totally in control, gave up his spirit at a time he decided, and deliberately died. This was accompanied by a declaration, praising God, from an unlikely source. A Roman centurion said, obviously in the hearing of others, that this Jesus surely was the son of God. And Jesus confirmed with his last words, declaring that his Father's purpose was fulfilled, “It is finished”.

So, who was the boss at the cross? Jesus!

When you think about it, throughout all the gospels, was Jesus ever *not* in complete control, having the authority that was his as the Son of God? The temptations? The wedding at Cana? His healing ministry? His confrontations with the scribes and Pharisees? In the temple as a 12-year-old? His authority was wielded as no other. He had a deep compassion for those he healed and for those he fed with the loaves and fishes. He paused before exercising his authority over death itself, to weep for his friend Lazarus. And one time, leaving Jerusalem, he paused and looked back and wept for that city. We are urged in the Philippians passage above that our relationships with each other should be guided by the way Jesus demonstrated the way to live life - humility, servanthood and obedience. And only then does God exalt us and give us authority and power over so many aspects of our lives, always giving God the glory.

This Jesus, the Son of God, the Saviour, had deep love and compassion for you and me, had us in mind when he prayed for us (John 17), and when he died for us. Praise God! We can put our lives, our whole selves in his hands, and he makes us into new beings (2 Corinthians 5: 17). We put ourselves in his hands and the one who is always in control gives us, by his Spirit, the fruit of self-control. What a Saviour! Praise God!

Who's the Boss?

Song: MHB 153 "Hallelujah! What a Saviour" (by Philipp Bliss)

1. Man of sorrows! What a name for the Son of God who came
Ruined sinners to reclaim! Hallelujah! What a Saviour!
2. Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned He stood:
Sealed my pardon with His blood: Hallelujah! What a Saviour!
3. Guilty, vile, and helpless we; spotless Lamb of God was He:
Full atonement – can it be? Hallelujah! What a Saviour!
4. Lifted up was he to die. It is finished! was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high: Hallelujah! What a Saviour!
5. When He comes, our glorious King, all his ransomed home to bring,
Then anew this song we'll sing: Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

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Benediction

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes I'm coming soon". Amen. Come Lord Jesus.
The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people.

Amen. (Rev 22:20-21)

This service was prepared by Ron Tiller for HopeNet SA