



## Wonky Angel - 28th June 2020

Ruth Dawson

### Transcript

Let us be still for a moment as we draw near to worship,  
Take a few moments to remind ourselves why we are gathered together today,  
Listen; God speaks even through the background noise of the world around us,  
Lord God in this short time together open our ears and our eyes to see your  
vision for this community and our place within it,  
Teach us, hear our prayers and enable us for service wherever you might take  
us,  
To Your praise and glory  
Amen

Welcome to worship here at Salford Methodist Circuit, we welcome old friends  
and new, and you are more than welcome if you have just popped along to see  
what we're about, Hopefully you have a brew and are in a place of comfort as we  
turn to worship the Lord.

Now you may have noticed something a little different...

Some of you may be aware of my many conversations with God that take place  
in my car, as I regularly journey up and down the M62 between Salford and  
Liverpool. A couple of people have joked that maybe I should take my service  
from my car... So here we are!

We shall start our service with the hymn 'Speak O Lord as we come to you, to  
receive the food of your holy word' and Clare will lead us

### Hymn: Speak, O Lord

*Speak, O Lord, as we come to you  
to receive the food of your holy word.  
Take your truth, plant it deep in us;  
shape and fashion us in your likeness,  
that the light of Christ might be seen today  
in our acts of love and our deeds of faith.  
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us  
all your purposes, for your glory.*

*Teach us, Lord, full obedience,  
holy reverence, true humility.  
Test our thoughts and our attitudes  
in the radiance of your purity.  
Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see  
your majestic love and authority.*

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*Words of power that can never fail;  
let their truth prevail over unbelief.*

*Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;  
help us grasp the heights of your plans for us.  
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time  
that will echo down through eternity.  
And by grace we'll stand on your promises,  
and by faith we'll walk as you walk with us.  
Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built  
and the earth is filled with your glory.*

Some powerful words there, in that hymn written by Getty and Townend.

*"Come cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see Your majestic love and authority."*

*"And by Grace we'll stand on your promises and by faith we'll walk as You walk with us."*

Words in these different times enable us to remember the promises of God, and open our eyes, our ears, walk with God as we need to.

We are going to be led in prayer by three different people:

First Andy Dye Programme Team Leader for Global Relations in his prayer 'For Creation'; followed by Leslie Newton Chair of the Yorkshire North and East district with his prayer 'For Home'. Our final prayer will be led by one of our Methodist Church Youth Representatives Gemma Curtis

Let Us Pray

*Creator God  
Thank you for this beautiful world  
Fashioned in detail and speaking of your love.  
We pray for this world;  
For those in countries where resources are scarce,  
Where funds are low.,  
Where people are fearful of Covid-19.  
Help those who are planning and serving and caring.  
Help us think beyond our local circumstance,  
To give and to receive across the world  
And to face this time together,  
In your love.  
Amen.*

*God of love, in these strange 'stay at home' days,  
We rejoice in your eternal promise that you will bring us home to a place  
that's safe and free from fear.  
But we know that in these days too many homes will not feel safe and will  
be bearing all too much fear.  
So, gracious God, we pray for our homes and for homes everywhere...  
Bring calmness to anxious hearts,*

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*peacefulness to angry minds,  
kindness within strained relationships,  
forgiveness for yesterday's mistakes,  
patience for today's shortcomings,  
hopefulness for tomorrow's yet-to-be,  
And space enough, within our walls, to flourish and to grow in  
unanticipated ways.  
All this we ask, in the name of Jesus who blessed us by making his home  
amongst us, full of grace and truth.  
Amen.*

*Loving God  
When we feel alone help us to feel your presence,  
When we're isolating at home or out on the front line,  
Draw near to us in this time.  
When we face uncertainty, remind us that you know what lies ahead,  
When we feel worried and scared, give us a fresh sense of how much you  
love us,  
When we feel like we can't go on, remind us that you have already won  
the battle.  
Father, we thank you for your unfailing love,  
For your guidance and your protection in every season of our lives.  
You are worthy of our praise.  
We worship your holy name.  
Amen*

We are going to hear this morning's scripture reading taken from 1 John chapter 4 verse 7 to 21. It all begins with God's love, and here in this reading 1 John makes it crystal clear – God is the source and definition of Love. God is Love.

In this reading we hear how this is love in action, not an abstract concept, made real when God sent his only Son to live amongst us and to die for us –

## **Reading: 1 John 4 : 7 - 21**

*Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God.  
Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love  
does not know God, for God is love. And God showed his love for us by  
sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through  
him. This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he  
loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.*

*Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another.  
No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in union  
with us, and his love is made perfect in us.*

*We are sure that we live in union with God and that he lives in union with  
us, because he has given us his Spirit. And we have seen and tell others*

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*that the Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If we decide that Jesus is the Son of God, we live in union with God and God lives in union with us. And we ourselves know and believe the love which God has for us.*

*God is love, and those who live in love live in union with God and God lives in union with them. Love is made perfect in us in order that we may have courage on the Judgment Day; and we will have it because our life in this world is the same as Christ's. There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment.*

*We love because God first loved us. If we say we love God, but hate others, we are liars. For we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love others, whom we have seen. The command that Christ has given us is this: whoever loves God must love others too.*

## **Hymn: Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)**

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me,  
I once was lost, but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see.*

*'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved,  
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.*

*My chains are gone, I've been set free,  
My God, my Saviour has ransomed me,  
And like a flood His mercy reigns, unending love, amazing grace.*

*The Lord has promised good to me, His word my hope secures  
He will my shield and portion be, as long as life endures.*

*My chains are gone, I've been set free,  
My God, my Saviour has ransomed me,  
And like a flood His mercy reigns, unending love, amazing grace.*

*The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, the sun forbear to shine,  
But God, who called me here below will be forever mine.*

*My chains are gone, I've been set free,  
My God, my Saviour has ransomed me,  
And like a flood His mercy reigns, unending love, amazing grace.  
Unending love, amazing grace, unending love, amazing grace.*

Thanks to Emma for our reading today, and to Clare for reading our hymns.

The words Emma has read to us talk to us of God's love. Of a passion expressed in Action, God's love surpassing anything we could ever understand as He sent

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his only son to live and die for us. This love does not depend on our initiative or our worthiness, we don't even have to reach out to God, or even believe in God in order to be loved. He loved us even before He made us.

We don't need to clean up our acts before God can love us, or measure up to any predefined standard to be loved. We are immersed in God's love whether we deserve it or not.

In the passage, 1 John tells us that the more we know God, the more the immense reality of God's love dawns on us, when we open to the warmth of God's presence, we find even our deepest, darkest secrets, the ugly parts of ourselves we keep hidden are not beyond God. Nothing is so broken, so disgusting that God is unwilling to touch it. God takes us as we are completely, loves for who we are and works with us to make us whole and new.

There is much going on in this world today. We can see this passion expressed in action. We see communities coming together to help those shielding from Covid-19, shopping or ensuring conversations take place with those alone, people working tirelessly to create a vaccine, key workers ensuring food is distributed, refuse is cleared, transport is maintained for those who need it, medications being available, the sick being cared for, and those who grieve being comforted

Passion in action was illustrated for me, powerfully by the Black Lives Matter campaign, though campaign may not be quite the right word...

Watching the horrors suffered by others played out across the media, social media and in the lives of those around us. I have been part of many conversations in recent weeks trying to explain White Privilege, how unwittingly often we are part of institutionalised racism that adds to the way people are treated. I was out for a walk a couple of weeks ago, and overheard a lovely conversation between a teenage daughter and who I assume was her mum. The young lady tried to explain calmly how white privilege works for them, and against their black friends, how they may never understand the experiences of their friends, as they can never live those lives, but that she would stand with them, and call out racism wherever she saw. Sat there, in the Old Man's Shelter in the middle of a bustling village green scene, the only voice I could hear was hers, her explanations in simple language with the examples she'd seen, and the deep concentration of her mother as she tried to understand how they could change things, left me in deep thought. The images across our screens, of murder played out in front of us, of grotesque beatings, of unjust stop and searches, of children still unable to eat in restaurants in America purely because of the colour of their skin, it is here where our passion must be in action. God's love is for all, and are all made in his image, and we must all ensure where people are treated unjustly we stand.

People in Action also applies to us. How do we love ourselves for whom we are? God does, God loves you and he loves me, just as we are, flaws and all.

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Two / three weeks ago, I found much of life difficult. I have the privilege of being able to work, but was working long hours, my children live in three different places, and though in constant contact on WhatsApp, it clearly isn't the same as seeing with your own eyes. When they struggle, it is difficult to ascertain the level of struggle with snapshots of messages. I became overwhelmed with the pressures of the day to day. I even spat out me dummy, so to speak, to poor Clare one Thursday evening – sorry Clare! Something had to give, and this course was it!

The following day I gave myself a break, it would be a day just for me. Now some of you, like me, have been knitting Angels for Revd Kate LeSeur at the MHA.

So this particular Friday, I settled down in my comfy spot on the sofa, turned on my box set of Downton Abbey, which I have been addicted to, and picked up my knitting needles. I had an odd ball of multi coloured wool, and this wasn't lost on me as I began to weave a new angel. This would be an angel of all colours, as in creation, we are all made in many shades. As my needles clinked I was aware that I wasn't fully concentrating on what I was doing, half watching Downton, half an eye on a knitting pattern, but pondering the issues of the previous few weeks. Somehow this angel wasn't quite right. It had a certain wonkiness about it. Try as I could it just wouldn't fit. But as each stitch unfolded, I became calmer, it would be right in the end. And it was. I worked out that I hadn't started with enough stitches, but I didn't go back and start again, I continued with what I had. Just as God does in each of our lives. Wherever our wonkiness, and wherever it lies, it is not reworked, or removed, it is part of us, of who we are, the very essence of why we are loved. God spoke very clearly to me that morning, each line of knitting, each clickerty click of needles, each mass of colour as the ball rolled across the floor, we are each good enough to work in God's plan, whatever or wherever that may be.

I finished my wonky angel, and I'm going to keep this one. It is a daily reminder of all the wonky angels that make up God's plan, that I am not perfect and that is absolutely fine with God.

God commands us to love one another as God has loved us, we therefore must accept the wonkiness in others. As 1 John tells us, if we love others (and ourselves) as God loves us, there are no boundaries. God's love was made visible in Jesus, and is the source of Love we share with others. When God's unimaginable limitless love comes alive in us, we become the real presence of God in this world. We can stand with those who suffer injustice. We can love ourselves, we can be the wonky angel in all our glory!  
Amen.

We come to our prayers, and I am using the Thy Kingdom Come Prayer .

Let us pray.

*Thy Kingdom Come - Lord teach us how to pray,*

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*for all to know your joy, your peace and love  
And to know your friendship each and every day  
the breath of Christ, the Father's gentle dove  
Thy Kingdom Come – Christ's prayer to make us one, that all may know  
the Father sent the son  
To celebrate the victory He has won, in love and grace we pray. Thy will  
be done.  
Thy kingdom Come – we pray for those we know, to turn and follow you  
all their days  
And in your love find peace and service grow our one desire and hope  
your highest praise  
Thy kingdom come – transform our human ways our lives laid down in  
mercy, truth and care.  
Nations renewed, in giving thanks and praise to see God's kingdom come,  
this is our prayer  
Thy Kingdom come – we praise your holy name your sacrifice and rising  
sets us free  
That by our words and lives we may proclaim By Jesus' risen life, God's  
Victory  
Amen*

Such amazing words, and they will form our final hymn. So as you may listen, sing, dance as you are able, our final hymn comes with the video 'Thy Kingdom Come'

## **Song: Thy Kingdom Come**

*Thy Kingdom Come – Lord teach us how to pray  
For all to know your joy, your peace and love  
And know your friendship each and every day  
The breath of Christ, the Father's gentle dove*

*Thy Kingdom Come – Christ's prayer to make us one  
That all may know the Father sent the Son  
To celebrate the victory He has won  
In love and grace we pray: 'thy will be done'*

*Thy Kingdom Come – we pray for those we know  
To turn and follow you for all their days  
and in your love find peace and service grow  
Our one desire and hope your highest praise*

*Thy Kingdom Come – transform our human ways  
Our lives laid down in mercy, truth and care  
Nations renewed, in giving thanks and praise  
To see God's Kingdom come: this is our prayer*

*Thy Kingdom Come – we praise your Holy name*



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*Your sacrifice and rising sets us free  
That by our words and lives we may proclaim  
By Jesus' risen life, God's victory!  
God's victory! Thy Kingdom Come  
Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Kingdom Come*

I hope you have enjoyed this time together, and have found something you can take with you as you move forward into a new week, full of opportunities, new experiences and new spaces to spend with your God, I give you this blessing:

May the Father's hand keep you from stumbling  
The footprints of Jesus give you confidence to follow  
And the fire of the Spirit keep you warm and safe in you walk with God today  
and from this day forward.  
Amen.

Speak, O Lord - Keith Getty & Stuart Townend

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Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone) - John Newton (1725 - 1807)

Thy Kingdom Come - Neil Hamilton Thompson & Harvey Jessop

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