**Morning Praise @ Home 12th February 2023**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings 1 Corinthians 3: 1 – 9 Matthew 5: 21 – 37

**Reflection**

*‘But I say to you…’ (Matthew 5:22)*

The former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, says that this little phrase ‘but I say to you’ is the point that marks Jesus out from all his contemporaries and from all the Jewish prophets throughout history. Others would seek to interpret and explain the words of scripture; no-one else has ever dared to say ‘but I’m saying something different’.

As always, Jesus goes deeper. It’s not just murder that matters; it’s being angry. It’s not just adultery; it’s looking lustfully. It’s not just swearing falsely; it’s swearing by anything, because your ‘yes’ and ‘no’ ought to be enough. Jesus enhances and enriches the received teaching and takes it to a new level. Jesus wasn’t establishing a new set of laws; he was inviting a new way of looking. He was saying: look deeper, look to the root of the issue, look with God’s eyes. If we begin to see things the right way up for a change, instead of the topsy-turvy way the world teaches us, we will begin to glimpse the new creation Jesus was so passionate about. And once seen, never forgotten. As C. S. Lewis said: ‘I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen; not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.’

The challenge for us is to take the profusion of wise sayings that Jesus offers in the collection we call the Sermon on the Mount and ask ourselves where we feel the arrow hitting the mark. It’s hard to read the astonishing nuggets without being convicted of something. Read through today’s passage again and ask God to show you where there’s some room to address. That’s where the praying starts.

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Tony**

Let us bring our prayers before God, holding before him the chaos and sufferings of our world and trusting in his power to bring peace and harmony to his creation.

We pray particularly today for the people of Türkiye and Syria following the recent earthquakes.

We mourn the death and destruction and hold in our hearts those who are injured and those who have lost loved ones, livelihoods, and homes. We pray for those seeking to give aid and comfort.

Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer

We pray for all who are or feel that they are sinking amid the storms of life, all who are in dangerous or violent surroundings, all suffering from floods, storm or any other natural disaster due to global warming and the rising of sea levels. We pray for areas where crops have failed and homes have been destroyed.

Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer

We pray for all in our congregation, that God will give us pure hearts ready to receive him into our lives, and that we may respond by bringing his light to those whom we meet. Today we especially pray for the local branch of the Mothers’ Union and give thanks for the leadership given by Ann Rudd and Anne Parsons and the fellowship of the group.

Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer

We remember friends and loved ones who are going through a time of illness or distress. In a moment of silence, we bring before you all those we know who are suffering at this time, whether nursed in hospital or at home. Give them courage and hope, may they trust God and know the comfort of his presence.  
Lord in your mercy – Hear our prayer

We thank God for the lives of those who have departed and found their final rest. In a moment of silence we bring them to mind. And we pray for all those who have been bereaved, that they may know the comfort and love of God.

In times of darkness, in times of stress, Lord, you are there. Always there.  
In times of tempest, in times of shock, Lord, you are there. Always there.  
In times of anxiety, in times of doubt, Lord, you are there. Always there.  
In times of loneliness, in times of despair, Lord, you are there. Always there.  
In times of celebration, in times of joy, Lord, you are there. Always there.  
In times of emptiness, in times of plenty, Lord, you are there. Always there

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**