

# Worship from King's College Chapel Podcasts

## Season 3 – Wednesday Worship Winter Term 2021

### Episode 9 Transcript – The Beatitudes: Blessed are the pure in heart

**Voiceover** This podcast is brought to you by the University of Aberdeen.

**Introit** *People look East* Malcolm Archer (b1952)

**Rev Marylee Anderson** Well, a very warm welcome to King's College Chapel for our Wednesday Worship tonight. My name is Marylee and I'm one of the Chaplains here at the University and it's great to have you with us. A very warm welcome as well to Gary Smith, who will be preaching for us later in our time together. Gary is one of our Honorary Chaplains and minister at Crown Terrace Baptist Church. I can't quite believe that I'm about to say that this is the last time that we will get together here in the Chapel for Wednesday Worship this term, next week we have our Carol Service and the next time we will gather together like this won't be until Wednesday 26 January. Please do join us for a tea and coffee after the service, you'll probably need a heat up, just in James Mackay Hall across the quad there between the lion and the unicorn. Also, just to remind you that there is a retiral offering for the Shining Light Scholarship, which is for University of Aberdeen students who have refugee and asylum lived experience.

We gather together tonight at the beginning of our advent journey, a time when our days are shorter and darkness draws in. Advent reminds us that we are all invited to trust in God who, in spite of our own experience of desolation, will bring consolation. God's promises that bring light and hope will be fulfilled. God's love will be the blanket that wraps around us all and all are welcome in this place. Let's continue with our opening affirmations.

#### Call to Worship

(based on Isaiah 40: 1-11)

Leader: The God who speaks comfort to us calls us here.

**All: The God who addresses us with tenderness meets us here.**

Leader: The God who guides us with gentleness cares for us here.

**All: We come to prepare a way for the Lord.**

Leader: We come to ready ourselves for the transformation of our lives.

**All: For the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it.**

We'll stand together and sing hymn number 273, leaving out verse three. O come, O come Emmanuel.

**HYMN 273** O come, O come, Emmanuel (*omit v3*)

**Rev Marylee Anderson** Please do have a seat. Let's continue in worship as we come together and pray. Let's pray.

Good and gracious God, we give you thanks for gifts of life, for gifts of love and joy during this advent season, for gifts of comfort when we do not or cannot feel that joy, for gifts of

healing and mercy, for gifts of patience and serenity, for gifts of hope as we prepare our hearts for Christmas.

God of hope, you brought love into this world. We thank you that your love dwells among us today as our days are short and dark as we begin this season. May you remind us that in the midst of our darkness, you are bringing us peace and light to calm our anxious spirits and hectic lives. As we gather together, turn our hearts again towards you and make us ready to receive your love.

God of love as we prepare our hearts this advent, at the end of a difficult year we are only too aware of how much we need you. We have spent hours debating with friends and neighbours but have failed to care for them. We have shared posts crying for justice, but turned our eyes from the overlooked in front of us. We've spoken of a God whose love is boundless, but we're scared to unpack the bias in our own hearts. We look for light but find only darkness, for brightness but find changing shadows. This advent we wait, with a sobering awareness of our own humanity and hypocrisy. And yet, as we pray these words may be filled with hope, joy and assurance that your love knows no limits. Through the guidance of your spirit, lead each one of us in the pathways that make for peace in the name of Emmanuel, God with us. And together we pray as God taught:

**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 this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever. Amen.**

We have our scripture reading:

**Psalm 24  
Entrance into the Temple**

**Matthew McVey** A reading from the book of Psalms

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it;  
for he has founded it on the seas,  
and established it on the rivers.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?  
And who shall stand in his holy place?  
Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,  
who do not lift up their souls to what is false,  
and do not swear deceitfully.  
They will receive blessing from the Lord,

and vindication from the God of their salvation.  
Such is the company of those who seek him,  
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O gates!  
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!  
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is the King of glory?  
The Lord, strong and mighty,  
the Lord, mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O gates!  
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!  
that the King of glory may come in.

Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts,  
he is the King of glory.

Reader: For the Word of God in Scripture,  
for the Word of God among us,  
for the Word of God within us.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**Rev Marylee Anderson** Thank you, and we'll stand together and sing hymn number 289,  
Lift up your heads.

**HYMN 289** Lift up your heads

**Rev Marylee Anderson** Please do have a seat. Let's pray together:

Advent God, who comes to us in love, peace and joy. We thank you for love that nourishes and sustains our hearts, for peace that enables us to live in friendship with others, for joy that lights and inspires our lives.

God of peace. At this time we pray especially for those experiencing modern slavery and those who work against it. We pray for those trafficked, abused and exploited for the profit of others. And we remember those who risked their lives trying to reach freedom and the families of those who have been lost on that journey. They are not strangers to you, you know their names and you count their every tear. Make governments have wisdom and generous hearts as they discern ways forward and help us use our power and voice to keep the vulnerable and helpless safe.

God of comfort. We pray for all those we know who are ill at this time, whether in body, mind or spirit, whose names we hold in our hearts and bring before you now. We bring them to you in the confidence that you love them and know their every need. Reassure them of your love unending promises and provide the right help and strength they need.

God of light. You came to us as a light to the world, a light that no darkness can extinguish and today we pray for those who have still been left with no power over the last week. We pray for wisdom and speed to those who are working tirelessly and in difficult circumstances to restore power and water. We pray for and remember those who have lost their lives and their loved ones that you will bring comfort.

God of wisdom, as we come towards the end of the academic term, we remember our students and staff. We pray for strength and motivation as assignments and tests are completed and marked. We remember those who will soon travel to be with loved ones and pray for safety as they journey. Loving God as we walk the familiar path through Advent and hear again the stories we know and love teach us something new this year. May we experience your love in a new way. May we be vigilant to the needs of those around us and have the courage to speak out in faith knowing that you walk beside us all the way? Emmanuel, God is with us. Amen.

The choir are going to continue leading us in worship with the anthem, My heart is longing.

**Anthem**      *My heart is longing*                      arr Bradley Ellingboe (b1958)

**Rev Gary Smith** It's a pleasure to be here with you this evening as you continue your series in the Beatitudes, I bring greetings from Crown Terrace Baptist. It's a long time since I was a student here at the University and used to be sitting down there, so it's a very different feel to be up the front.

I want to start with a story. For a young man it was a lovely evening and he went to a fast food chicken place to buy a nine piece bucket of chicken. He was going to the park for a romantic picnic with his girlfriend. When they got to the park he reached into the bucket expecting to find a piece of chicken but there was no chicken in the bucket. Instead of chicken he discovered what was apparently the takeaway's night deposit, thousands of pounds in the bucket instead of the chicken. This young man being basically honest and, well really hungry, brought the bucket back to the takeaway. He went into the store and he asked for his chicken in exchange for the bucket with the money. Well, the manager was dumbstruck at this young man's honesty. He asked for his name and he told them that he wanted to call the newspaper and STV to do a story on this man. He would become a local hero, an example of honesty and morality that would inspire others. The hungry man shrugged it off. "My date's waiting, I just want my chicken." While the manager of the takeaway was amazed even more at this young man's humility, almost overwhelmed by it. He begged to be allowed to tell the story on the news. At this the honest man became angry with the manager and demanded his chicken. "I don't get it," the manager responded. "You're an honest man in a dishonest world. This is a perfect opportunity to show the world that there really are honest people still willing to take a stand for what's right. Please give me your name and also the woman's name. Is it your wife?" "That's the problem," the young man said. "My wife's at home. The woman in the car is my girlfriend. Now let me have my chicken so that I can get out of here." It's easy to look good to people who don't know us. Many of us do a good deed here and there we may go to church, we may say the right things and everyone thinks that we're something we're not. God, on the other hand, is more concerned about the purity of our inner lives than the goodness of our outward actions. That's what the Sixth Beatitude is all about. Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. The conduct of our hearts, the inner person, the real US is critically important to Jesus, and it should be to us. God is far more concerned with our inward character than our outward conduct. He's more interested in our attitudes than our actions. He wants us to have pure hearts, pure hearts that compel us to pursue righteousness and live obediently. Pure in heart speaks to that moral integrity that was lacking in the young man. It reflects what was shared in Psalm 24, pure in heart is not about ritual cleanliness, but the purity of our inner being. It's not about putting on a good show that others can see while lacking that inner internal purity. It's not about actions being done for the praise of others, but engaging with God. Later on in the sermon on the Mount, Jesus provides perhaps the best commentary on this beatitude. He contrasts the outward behaviour of the

Pharisees with what God is really looking for. It's not about making a show of giving to the needy, but doing it in secret. It's not about standing up and praying long winded flowery prayers, but praying to God in private behind closed doors. It's not about contorting our faces to make it look as if we are fasting, but taking time to make sure our faces look like they always do. Jesus says, "Be careful not to practise your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your father in heaven." And the reward for those who are pure in heart, they will see God. We aren't to read this as some sort of figurative, sentimental or even mystical desire. It's a promise of what's to come, one day in the new heaven and the new earth. Jesus' disciples will literally see God. This was something that many characters in the Old Testament longed for longed to be able to do. Moses came the closest, but he was warned that no one could see God and live. Yet Jesus, the new Moses, promised his followers what even the old Moses could not experience. When his followers are resurrected and glorified and every trace of sin is removed from them, they will enjoy unhindered fellowship with God, even to the extent of seeing him, or as Psalm 24:6 puts it, 'Those who seek your face, God of Jacob, will see him at last.' It doesn't really matter how much you do or what other people think of you. What matters is what's on the inside or is the message puts today's beatitude. You're blessed when you get your inside world, your mind and heart put right. Then you can see God in the outside world. May we be pure in heart.

Let's rise and sing our next hymn, Breathe on me. Breath of God.

**HYMN 596** Breathe on me, Breath of God (tune: 202 *Carlisle*)

**Rev Marylee Anderson** May you go from here to love and serve the Lord, and may the blessing of God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be with you now and all those whom you love and hold in your hearts now and ever more.

**Amen sung by Choir**

**Recessional**

*My Heart is Longing*

S Scheibe (b1999)

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