

Be still [Authority]

LENT 3B | Study 3 of 6

'Sing and Study' Bible Study Series | compiled by Rev. Irene Bom

SING

BE STILL / CH4 189

by David J. Evans (b. 1957)

1 Be still for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy one, is here;
come bow before him now with reverence and fear:
in Him no sin is found - we stand on holy ground.
Be still for the presence of the Lord,
the Holy one, is here.

2 Be still for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around;
he burns with Holy fire, with splendour he is crowned:
how awesome is the sight - our radiant king of light!
Be still for the glory of the Lord
is shining all around.

3 Be still for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place;
he comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace:
no work too hard for him - in faith receive from him.
Be still for the power of the Lord
is moving in this place.

ICE BREAKER (allow 20 minutes)

Prep: Sing the song (or listen to a recording) and have someone read out the DID YOU KNOW? column.

Song: What connections, memories or feelings does the song evoke for you? Is there a verse, phrase or image that is particularly meaningful?

Theme: Have someone read out the quotation below. Note how 'Authority' relates to the song.

AUTHORITY

source: <https://rachelstarrthomson.com/2018/01/23/jesus-authority-means-say-jesus-lord/>

The iconic Christian 'statement of faith,' given in the New Testament, is 'Jesus is Lord'.

... it's a recognition of who Jesus is. It's seeing and believing in his authority – his right to act, his right to exercise ownership, his right to be worshiped and honored as Lord.

DID YOU KNOW?

This song dates back to 1986 when British songwriter, David Evans, was in his twenties. At the time he was very involved in contemporary worship but felt that many churches were largely oblivious to the awesomeness of God's presence, so he decided to write this hymn. Reportedly his main inspiration was Exodus 3:1-6, the story of Moses and the burning bush; however, the song contains many biblical references throughout.

Scripture references for this hymn, courtesy of hymnary.org: Gen 18:14, Gen 28:17, Ex 3:1-6, Ex 40:34-38, Lev 9:22-24, Ps 46:9-10, Is 6:1-3, Hab 2:20, Zech 2:13, Matt 19:26, Mk 10:27, Lk 2:9, Lk 9:28-36, Luke 12:49, Lk 24:49-52, John 6:69, John 21:1-19, Acts 1:8, Acts 4:30-31, Heb 2:9, Heb 4:15-16, Heb 12:28, 1 Pet 2:22, 1 John 3:5, Rev 1:10-18, Rev 5:11-14, Rev 7:11-12

We can't recognize Jesus as Lord without recognizing ourselves as his servants. We can't acknowledge him as Master if we're not willing to understand that we are the ones mastered – that we were created and do not live unto ourselves; that Someone has the right of ownership over our lives.

In summary the context is:

1. The annual Passover festival is about to begin, and the city of Jerusalem is abuzz with pilgrims and activities related to the festival.
2. This is Jesus' first visit to the temple since his public ministry began.
3. The temple grounds is the domain of the religious elite and the sacrificial system is a huge religious and commercial enterprise.

Read John 2:13-22

DISCUSSION

Listening & Learning Questions

1. What verse jumps out at you? Why?
2. What is the significance of the setting (the temple grounds before the Passover festival)?
3. How is Jesus described?
4. What is Jesus protesting against? What is he protesting for? By what authority?
5. Sylvester O'Flynn writes, 'Everything in John's gospel is written in the light of the resurrection.' How does the resurrection filter through this passage?

Heart & Healing Questions

1. What impact do you think Jesus' actions had on the people present – disciples, leaders, traders, worshippers, bystanders?
2. In cleansing the temple Jesus 'declared war' on the hypocritical religious leaders. Discuss.
3. What do you make of Jesus' radical approach?
4. Read 1 Cor 6:19. What is the value of thinking of our body as a temple the same way Jesus did?
5. What word or phrase from the passage (or the song) will you carry with you this week?

COMMENTARY

v.13 The *Passover* was an annual religious festival commemorating God's deliverance of the Jews from bondage in Egypt. In preparation for the festival each house was thoroughly cleansed to remove all traces of food made with yeast or other raising agent. **v.13** *Jerusalem* was God's symbolic dwelling and became the only acceptable place for sacrificial worship.

v.14 *temple courts* refers to a large courtyard, the Court of the Gentiles, surrounding the temple enclosure. **v.14** *moneychangers* exchanged other currencies for coins minted at the temple, since the religious leaders had decreed that only temple money was acceptable to God.

v.16 *turning my Father's house into a market*: this effectively prevented worship for non-Jewish people. **v.17** *Psalm 69* (a messianic psalm) is quoted several times in the New Testament: John 15:25, John 7:3–5, John 2:17, Rom 15:3, Matt 27:34, 48, Rom 11:9–10. **v.18** *the Jews* refers to the religious leaders in the temple.

v.18 Jesus was not willing to give the Jewish leaders any *sign* to prove his credentials except the sign of Jonah (Matt 12:39ff), i.e. the sign of his death, burial and resurrection.

CLOSING (allow 5-10 minutes)

Sing the first verse of *Be Still* (or listen to a recording) and end with the closing prayer.

JOHN 2:13-22

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¹³ When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.

¹⁵ So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those who sold doves he said, 'Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!' ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it is written: 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' (Psalm 69:9)

¹⁸ The Jews then responded to him, 'What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?'

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.'

²⁰ They replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?' ²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

CLOSING PRAYER

by John van de Laar, posted on sacredise.com

Truth be told, Jesus,
there are lots of tables that need overturning
in our lives;
Beneath the veneer of respectability,
the tidy rows and neat regulations,
hide dark addictions and angry judgements,
hungry greeds and heartless rejections.
We know the pain — and so do those around us —
of keeping up the façade.
What a relief it would be to have it all
upset, smashed, scattered, destroyed.
So, perhaps, Jesus, today you could pay us a visit
and help us to radically rearrange
the furniture of our lives.
Amen