



for Sunday 23 August 2020

Dear friends,

Welcome to another service. For those in the Zoom service, for the first time our worship is an evening one. This morning in Naseby we will be able to judge how successful the first service with the building open has been.

Please remember, if you wish a place, to phone the special number on a Friday (07851 591 503 between 10am—3 pm) and if you have had a turn, in all kindness, allow others to attend the following week. We are fortunate to have a large congregation but the downside, of course, is the Scottish Government's reluctance to allow places of worship to adapt their buildings whilst keeping to the social distancing measures. We are capable, more than capable, but the number picked out like a raffle ticket seems to be 50 (allowing for those who are carrying out a function) but has been restricted.

I cannot speak for other faith groups but I find this discriminatory when other areas have been opened up.

Please remember in your prayers - the California fires, the Covid situation, the migrants attempting the dangerous crossing, the storms and the flooding...

... these are some prayer points.

Can I, as always, hold you in my thoughts and prayers knowing that God holds you close through every day.

George

Pentecost 13A Sunday 23 August 20 (Proper 16)

For those who like to follow all the lectionary readings for the Sunday and dip into the Old Testament and Epistles, the readings are: Exodus 1:8-2:10; Isaiah 51:1-6; Psalm 138; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20.

Our Sunday reflection will be based on Matthew but please read and ponder the suggested Scripture and see how it connects and what it says to you.

.... read, reflect, rejoice...

CALL

In the name of the Lord Jesus
the bread breaker
the light gatherer
cross carrier
Welcome.

May the peace of the Lord Jesus
the peace maker
and the temple disturber
friend of the sinner
and companion on the road
be with us all.

Let us draw close to the Lord Jesus
the saviour
the healer
the teacher
and worship him
and ask ourselves
who do we say he is?
AMEN

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

INTROIT

How deep the Father's love for us,
how vast beyond all measure,
that he should give his only Son
to make a wretch his treasure.
How great the pain of searing love;
the Father turns his face away,
as wounds which mar the chosen One
bring many souls to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross,
my sin upon his shoulders;
ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
call out amongst the scoffers.
It was my sin that held him there,
my pardon he accomplished;
his dying breath has brought me life –
I know that 'it is finished'.

I shall not boast in anything,
no gifts, no power, no wisdom;
but I will boast in Jesus Christ,
his death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from all of this?
I cannot give an answer;
but this I know with all my heart,
his wounds have paid my ransom.
(CH4 – 549)

Welcome to our time of worship in homes and in hearts.

PRAYER

'Who do you say that I am?' asks Jesus.

'Christ anointed?'

'Prophet, priest, king?'

'Son of Man' says Peter

and nails it on the head...

and on his hands and feet.

The man with the feet of clay

has had an epiphany;

this stormy fisherman

has seen the light...

and then it passes

and the feet of clay

and the rock

sinks back.

And he will be at odds throughout his life

as we are too.

Who are you?

Perhaps only Jesus can truly tell us

and when he does,

we may then know ourselves :-

a sinner – because Jesus calls himself a Saviour,

a friend - because he calls you a friend,

a lamb – because Jesus is a Shepherd

and you learn what it means to be nurtured and made secure.

Father,

whatever way we describe ourselves

we are children of you,

growing

and knowing,

knowing me, knowing you

AMEN



And now we turn to Scripture, to Matthew 16:13-20

Let us listen, read and hear the Word of God ...

... this is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to Him.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

May our thoughts be filled with transformation. May our words reflect the yearning of our hearts. And may the Spirit that binds within us as we gather, hallow each and every moment we know here together. AMEN

REFLECTION

... and now a quiz...

Think of someone you love, it might even be your spouse!!! You might actually be sitting next to them. With paper and pencil answer the following questions about them:-

Name their favourite colour?

Their favourite book; film; piece of music?

Their favourite food?

The car they would love to drive the most?

Now, pass the paper across, if you are sitting next to them, and let them mark it. Ok. Put the red pen down. Lower your temperature. Don't get annoyed that he/she didn't know!!

Jesus said, 'Who do you say that I am?'

Let me get this clear. This is not a question that requires a creed. It is not an answer that gives the pat answers of a title – 'You are the Saviour.' 'You are Lord.' 'You are the One who came to save.'

In the same way the answers of John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah were not the ones that Jesus sought. The answers we give and the answers that were exclaimed in excitement by the disciples are benign. They are gentle and soft and unthreatening. They are traditional words. They are churhly words.

And they lack intimacy and they lack feeling.

Jesus is not looking for a title, or a label.

He is not looking to be summed up.

He is talking about a relationship. 'How much do you know of me as we have journeyed to this point? The roads we have travelled; the meals we have shared; the bread we have broken together; the joys we have laughed in; the pains and the heartaches – what does that say about me and who I am?'

Heads down. Awkward silence.

Over the years I have tried to emphasise to couples standing in front of me that marriage is a journey not an arrival. It is about learning and loving every day of their lives so that they become more deeply intimate. It is about discovery. It is not about a title, 'Mr' or 'Mrs', nor is it about what you do but who you are.

Likewise, how sad is it that at funerals people say, 'I didn't know he liked this. I didn't know she went there.'

It is not just the Bee Gees who ask 'How deep is your love?' How well do we know those who sit in the same pew ? We might know their name but can we comprehend the worries they may have? Peter is right – Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God but he is also wrong because he has failed to understand what that entails and hasn't really learned from the relationship that he has had.

'Get behind me Satan' Jesus says.

To call Jesus the Messiah is the beginning, not the end. To say 'I do' on the

chancel is a recognition of new paths that have to be walked in the exploration of finding each other's new identity.

Peter had a lot to learn about the identity of Jesus and about himself, for when faced with the truth, he backed off. Pam has often said to me , 'I know you better than you think'. If there ever was an example of Jesus showing how well he knew Peter it was knowing that he would deny him three times. He knew he would be a coward but he also knew that on a beach as breakfast cooked, Peter would be relied on once more.

Who am I? Who are you? Perhaps legion, in the sense that there are many facets to who we are and, more importantly, in every new relationship we discover more of who we are.

So let me go back to the quiz.

Pam's favourite colour – yellow.

Favourite film – Shawshank Redemption.

Favourite book – 'To kill a mockingbird '.

Favourite car – Jaguar E Pace – but these are only beginnings. There's more much more to find out together – strengths, qualities, hopes, dreams, hurts, sadnesses, joys..

how well do you know those dearest to you?

How well do you know the community of Christ?

How well do you know yourself?

How well do you know Jesus – who do you say that he is, in truth?

And as you move on in this relationship, think of how much you still have to learn!

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

PRAYER

'Come back Peter, come back Paul'.

We are so much like the 'Rock'.

We are similar to the fiery.

Jesus says, 'Come and follow'

and we want to try a different path.

Jesus shows us that the road is rough
and we look for the smoother, straighter,
less onerous way

and we stand, arms folded,
determined to argue the point.

God of mystery

we can be stubborn in our stance,
immovable when it comes to change,
argumentative because we like the status quo.

We believe we are disciples transformed

but our religiosity weighs us down.
Lift these burdens from us.
Help us remember
that others have looked in the mirror
and prayed for strength,
the strength not to hide the scars
or the weaknesses,
for these marks define who we are.
Help us be proud in your eyes,
that as others see our imperfect self
they too will be honest
and open to a new story
and new truths that lie ahead
as we find out, in your love,
who we are.

AMEN

BENEDICTION

Who do we say Jesus is?
How do our lives reflect this?
We go now to live out our faith in word,
in action and in love.
And we go,
knowing the love of God the Father,
strengthened through knowing the risen
Son
and inspired by the Holy Spirit,
in this place and at this time, always.
Go in Peace...
and may the Blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with you all.

Whose house is this?
(Last week, it was Sigrid and Jack
Hendry)

