

## Morning Praise @ Home 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024

### 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 Reading** Mark 1: 1 – 11

### Reflection from John *The Baptism of Jesus*

- The car wouldn't start and you were late for the interview.
- The taxi didn't come and you were late for the start of the film
- The Message never got through and your friend didn't come to take you to the party.

**What happens before a main event can be really significant and today the main event is the Baptism of Jesus.....but we need first to notice John the Baptist.**

The Gospel begins with John to show that while God is doing something exciting and new....it is the fulfilment of an older story.

- John is the signpost – the human link piece between Old and New Testament.
- The voice of the Prophet had been silent in Israel for 300 years but now as promised God's messenger had come.
- John was a man of burning convictions and uncompromising message calling people back to God.

If you go to the Rotary Club or Probus I wonder If you'd invite him to become a member?

If John was a Minister....how welcome would his ministry be among us?

YET Jesus described John IN THESE TERMS:

*For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. (Luke 7:28)*

John was a giant of a man...his role deeply significant - yet we have been given so much more revelation than he had by Jesus...how much more special are we in Kingdom terms.

- HE was a signpost to Jesus..... **How are we a signpost to him today?**
- HE was bold in his witness.....**How bold are we?**
- HE stood for truth in places of authority...**when did you do that as a member of the Kingdom of God?**

John the Baptist was sent from God, and he urged the Jewish community to be baptized with repentance for their sins, and his impact on the life of the nation during the six months of his ministry was shattering. And then Jesus himself comes on the scene. Jesus leaves his home his ordinary home in Nazareth and comes to the desert. He comes from Aunt Mary's house to see his cousin John.

Jesus is utterly indistinguishable from all the rest. He was fully and gloriously human. The lad from up the road.

YET He has come there that he might be baptized by John.

Here he was....The Lord, The Lamb of God.....the Anointed One who would send the Holy Spirit on all who followed him.

That Jesus, utterly Human and gloriously divine....came to John for Baptism. Why?

### **1. JESUS WAS BAPTIZED TO INAUGURATE PUBLICLY HIS MINISTRY.**

The Lord Jesus didn't drift into his ministry. There was a start, a public induction performed by John, confirmed by God speaking from heaven and the coming of the Holy Spirit. This signified the arrival of Christ on the world stage.

Baptism was the beginning to Jesus' ministry which John declared to all.

"Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn. 1:29). That is what he had come to do.

Jesus' Jordan baptism inaugurated him into a ministry whose climax would be not in a pool but on a cross.

### **JESUS WAS BAPTIZED SO THAT HIS UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BE MADE KNOWN.**

It was not that at this moment Mary's boy was adopted by God as his Son, but that at his baptism, the eternal Sonship of Jesus our Lord was made known.

John the Baptist who was alongside Jesus when he had baptized him. **"John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.'"** (John 1:32-34).

Now Jesus' true nature was made known to a wider audience and as he was revealed the door was opened to you and me too that we might know the Saviour for ourselves and share his love with others. **Amen**

#### **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 Philip**

Father, we come before you now, giving thanks for your son who lived among us and whose journey took him from a humble stable, the child of the nativity, to living among his disciples as he preached your word, challenging the established order, with a message of love, peace and hope.

That journey led to his execution by the authorities on a cross. But we know that journey did not end there, we know He was raised from the dead and lives among us all now. We ask that you help us walk that journey alongside Him, that we may take His strength as we journey into the new year and in our daily lives.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Christmas will have for many been a time of love and warmth. However, for so many, the hopes of the perfect Christmas do not materialise. Loneliness, grief for lost loved ones, family rifts and domestic strife will have left many scarred and hurting. They will be glad that Christmas is over – for another year at least. So, Father we ask for your peace, for your healing and for your love, especially in those situations where Christmas was a time of pain and anger.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We reflected at our carol services on this broken world of conflict, at how difficult it can be to appreciate the Christmas message of love, peace and hope when we see such violence on our televisions and news feeds. We recognise it can make us question our God, sometimes in anger.

Father, we acknowledge this is a broken world, that more than ever it needs your love and peace and hope. Too many are having to walk through the Valley of the shadow of death. Be with them Lord, comfort them Lord. We are outraged at the ongoing greed and brutality of nation to nation, of man to man. We ask for your understanding when we question you, also for your forgiveness for all our failings, but Lord mostly we ask for your will to be seen in the world and for justice and peace to replace oppression, hatred and tyranny.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Father, we thank you for our communities in and around our churches in Shotwick and Burton. We thank you for the love and support we do regularly see, for the care and compassion shown to elderly neighbours and the sick. Help us Lord to ensure that we see growth in our communities, that there is a real sense of community, of care, that we all do more to look out for each other, not just at Christmas but throughout the year.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Lord, we ask that you keep us in your love and care as we journey into the new year. Help us to always remain focussed on you. When we stray, may your compass guide us back to your path, because we know that only when we keep to your true North that we find peace and rest.

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**