



Heacham Parish Church

Heacham Parish Church on-line

Sunday 23rd August 2020

Opening music: -

Alison Hoyle plays a setting of 'When I survey the wondrous cross' to the tune Rockingham. Written by Isaac Watts in 1707 this was the first hymn to use the personal pronoun 'I' and thus express the individual's experience of faith.

Welcome to our Service of worship

Today, some are reading this from hard copy. Others are joining us via You-tube and watching on phone, tablet or pc, while others are together in Church. We meet at different times and in different ways but we are all part of one body, the Church of Jesus Christ.

Welcome in the name of Christ.
God's grace, mercy and peace be with you.
and also, with you.

We meet in the presence of God
who knows our needs,
hears our cries,
feels our pain,
and heals our wounds.

God of our days and years,
we set this time apart for you.
Form us in the likeness of Christ
so that our lives may glorify you.
Amen.

We may not be able to sing in the Church building at present but we can sing in our homes. I do encourage you to join with our musicians, Hilary and Lesley and singers Judith, Lynda, Sue and Richard

Be still and know

Be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee,
I am the Lord that healeth thee.

In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust,
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

Bible reading:

Matthew 16 v 13 – 20. Read by John Bird.

A reflection from Pip Lawrence **Thoughts on Matthew 16: 13-20**

“There are places I remember all my life, though some have changed”. Hearing those words, does it make you want to sing the rest of the verse? If it doesn't you clearly are not a fan of the Beatles. They are the opening lines to their song “In my life”. The song suddenly popped into my head when I was pondering over the bible reading for today. Oddly at that precise moment I was mulling over the sticky verses in the text. Verses 18-20 are ones that have got theologians very hot under the collar down the ages. Depending on your religious persuasion these verses have been used to verify and defend various schools of religious thought and practice.

The distraction of the song whirling around my mind helped me to realise that I was being pulled along a very unproductive path. I would be trying to explain matters that others have taken various stands on and the end result has been disagreement and distress. What a waste of time that would be. Raking over centuries of arguments isn't conducive to keeping things to the limited time we have to look at the word. So for the purposes of these thoughts on the reading I will be leaving the controversial verses to one side. Instead I will be concentrating on the place in the reading and the all important question.

The place in this revealing episode in the life of Jesus and his disciples was the region of Caesarea Philippi. Mark's version of this event tells us that the conversation took place on the way to villages around Caesarea Philippi. It is often the case isn't it, that we can have very deep and meaningful conversations as we walk with other people. We will all no doubt be aware that this event marks a turning point in Jesus's ministry. Until this point much has been concealed, now things are being revealed. The bigger plan is being opened up, at least to the disciples, who are warned at the end of the conversation not to tell anyone else.

Visualise the scene, a group of people chatting to one another, nothing out of the ordinary. We, however, have the benefit of hindsight so perhaps don't appreciate how the disciples would have been that day. They will have been completely unaware of the ramifications of the leading questions Jesus asked, totally unprepared and basically clueless. "Who do people say the son of man is?". Maybe, confidently, they reply "some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets".

Then comes the deep and searching question, "but what about you, who do you say I am?". Before we move on let's stop and take a brief look behind the question. It is indeed the 64 million dollar question. How it is answered could be life transforming. Either the disciples would recognise who Jesus was or they would not. Acknowledging the truth about Jesus would be totally transformative but also massively challenging. Missing the moment and remaining blind to his divinity would be completely tragic.

As usual Peter steps up, always ready as the saying goes, to rush where angels fear to tread. "You are the Christ, the son of the living God". Peter is rewarded by the wonderful words "blessed are you Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my father in heaven".

Have you ever compared and contrasted this conversation with the one that takes place at the trial of Jesus? The high priest says to Jesus "I charge you under oath by the living God. Tell us if you are the Christ". Only able to speak truth Jesus says "it is as you say". In content a very similar conversation, but absolutely no acceptance of who Jesus was and is. So the high priest, apparently the one with all the knowledge and privilege does not receive the affirmation and commission that Peter does.

So what does this mean for us today. A conversation long ago in a place we have probably never been or seen? It has not been our privilege to have a physical conversation with Jesus. However, I am assuming that as we are engaging with this message we have had an encounter with Jesus. We are still privileged as Peter reminds us in his first letter. " Though you have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls."

If we have genuinely acknowledged Jesus we will know his peace that passes all understanding. In the current circumstances of uncertainty we will have an anchor that enables us to walk confidently in to the future. Whatever unfolds we can be assured that He will be with us. His presence will guide us and He will also be our rearguard.

Where were you when you first encountered Jesus? If you can, name the place in your heart. Revisit the place in your mind's eye, give thanks that you recognised the son of the living God. If you haven't a clue what I'm talking about that take time now to answer the question from Jesus " what about you, who do you say I am?"

Amen

In response to that message let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name: that at the name of
Jesus every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of
God the Father. Amen.**

Time to sing again as Karen and Terry, Rosie and Colin accompanied by Hilary and Lesley bring us

I will build my church

I will build My Church
And the gates of Hell
Shall not prevail against it

I will build My Church
And the gates of Hell
Shall not prevail against it

So you powers in the heavens above, bow down
And you powers on the earth below, bow down
And acknowledge that Jesus
Jesus, Jesus is Lord
He's Lord!

Prayers of intercession

Led by Jennifer

The Lord's Prayer

Led by Bridget

Closing prayers

Let us give thanks to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.**

Before the world was made, God chose us in Christ, **that we might be holy and blameless before him.**

Let us praise God for the glory of his grace,
for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son.

To Father, Son and Holy Spirit
**give praise and dominion, honour and might, for ever and ever.
Amen**

**In darkness and in light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust your love,
to serve your purpose,
and to praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Glory to God, whose power at work among us,
can do infinitely more than all we can ask or conceive;
to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and
ever. Amen.**

Closing music

Alison plays 'Diapason Movement' by John Stanley. The title refers to the diapason stops on an organ which create this warm, vibrant sound.

HEACHAM PARISH CHURCH online service will be on YouTube from 8am on Sunday morning

www.youtube.com/channel/UCefWbBrE77u7MPpdjWtwzow

Morning Prayer Mon, Tues, Thurs, Friday use link below

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88053867570?pwd=QIRKNm1DakVZb0dGZ0Y2OXRwWDIRUT09> Meeting ID: 880 5386 7570 Passcode: 873154

Wednesday MP contact Bernard and Kate.

Church Open for private prayer

Saturday afternoons 2-4pm and Wednesday 10-12noon.

For those without access to the internet:

The telephone worship service: Daily Hope, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044. This is a freephone service.

Also The Diocesan weekly podcast Sunday Hope can be listened to via your phone by calling 01603 537577- calls for this are charged at a local rate.

Judith's Honey

If you are interested in freshly produced honey please contact Judith Evans in church today.

Word on the Wash 2020

We took the decision to put on our website brief summaries of all the seminars from the different invited speakers and Tim Savage kindly promised a message from the Word of God for the Friday and Saturday of the weekend September 11 and 12. Not quite a virtual meeting but an opportunity for you dear friends to set aside the weekend and take time to lock on to www.wordonthewash.org.uk and listen in for what God has to say to you in these strange days of the pandemic.