



Heacham Parish Church



**Sunday Service 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent**

*Shona plays 'My lips shall praise you' on her clarinet*

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you; **and also with you.**

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God; So let us come together to be God's people.

Come together and be yourselves.

Bring to God your joys and your struggles.

Bring to God your hopes and your fears.

Come together to be God's people,  
and let us worship the living God.

Loving God, thank you

for drawing us together to be your people.

Help us, as we meet together, yet apart,  
to see ourselves as you see us.

Give us faith to hear your words of love,  
beyond some of the hard realities of our lives.

May your Holy Spirit guide and inspire us  
to recognise your presence in all we do.

**Amen.**

*Prayers of confession and absolution*

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Let us confess our sins remembering before God the times when we have fallen from temptation into sin.

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love:  
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:

fill us with your Spirit.

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:

fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of love  
bring us back to himself,  
forgive us our sins,  
and assure us of his eternal love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Song: **The servant king**

sung & played by Colin, Rosie, Terry, Karen, Hilary, Lesley, Richard C,  
and Richard G

From heaven you came helpless babe,  
Entered our world, your glory veiled,  
Not to be served but to serve,  
And give Your life that we might live.

*This is our God, The Servant King,  
He calls us now to follow Him,  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to The Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears  
My heavy load he chose to bear;  
His heart with sorrow was torn,  
'Yet not My will but Yours, ' He said.

*This is our God .....*

Come see His hands and His feet,  
The scars that speak of sacrifice,  
Hands that flung stars into space  
To cruel nails surrendered.

*This is our God .....*

Let us learn how to serve  
And in our lives enthrone Him,  
Each other's needs to prefer,  
For it is Christ we're serving.

*This is our God .....*

*Bible Reading:* Mark 1: 9-15 read by Lynn Shannon

*A Reflection* by Penny Sutton

As we begin the season of Lent, we look today at how Jesus began his ministry.

For many of us, the start of our career or adult life meant we left our childhood home. This is often a time of great change when we make new discoveries about ourselves and set out on a particular path. Mark tells us, 'Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee'. In other words, he left his childhood home and set out on the path which would lead him to the cross.

Our Bible passage appears to have two themes. Firstly, the baptism of Jesus and secondly, the temptation of Jesus. On closer inspection however we find that Mark gives us little or no detail of either because his emphasis is elsewhere. He is concerned with the active presence of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit during these two events. The Father's endorsement of his Son reminds us of the divinity of Jesus, while the presence and support of the Holy Spirit reminds us that Jesus was fully human. When Mark writes 'heaven was torn open' he has used Old Testament language to show his readers a first glimpse of a concept which will become more familiar later in his gospel. The Kingdom of Heaven is a dimension, a different reality by which the Christian faith teaches us to live.

The fully divine and fully human Jesus needed to hear the words, as do we, 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased'. Sadly, we live in a world where many children never hear acceptance much less such endorsement from their earthly parents. When God looks at any baptised and believing Christian, he says to us what he said to Jesus that day; because he sees us as we are in Christ not as we were before we gave our lives to him. This is especially difficult to accept and understand for those whose human parents did not support them. How can this be for any of us, that by the grace, gift, and choice of God we are his beloved daughters and sons? That is what the entire gospel explains. How Jesus made this possible for each one of us.

We see two facets of the Holy Spirit here. Firstly, the gentle enfolding supporting dove and then, the mighty powerful spirit of creation which propelled Jesus out into the wilderness; which is where many of the Old Testament prophets received their commissions. The purpose of this time in the wilderness was for Jesus to face and conquer the temptations of Messiahship and set the divine 'sat nav' for his mission. The human Jesus was, like us, subject to temptation. Even when we have a clear goal we digress; we diverge, and we prevaricate. In the wilderness, where there were no distractions, the human Jesus learned to rely totally on the Father and the Spirit to achieve his singleness of purpose.

Today the gospel takes us to the wilderness, an in-between place. We leave behind what was; and what will be is not yet clear. In this space we come face-to-face with the reality of our lives. Things we have done or have omitted to do. Our fears, hopes, dreams, sorrows, and losses as well as the unknown. Some of these are the wild beasts and some our temptations. We can never avoid the wilderness. Like Jesus we must go through it, facing the temptations and being with the wild beasts BUT we never go alone. The Holy Spirit will be there with us constantly telling us 'remember who you are. You are a much-loved child of God. You are the one he is pleased with'. Each time we remember this, temptations fall away and we take another step on the path God has given us. That is the way through the wilderness of life.

'I am a much-loved child of God. With me he is well pleased' is the God given 'sat nav' setting for home.

*Music for reflection - Shona plays 'When I survey the wondrous cross' on her clarinet*

*Prayers of Intercession* led by Richard Gowland

Heavenly Father, we are here to worship you – apart, yet together. May we continue to show full reverence for your presence in church or at home. Our sacrifices in lockdown are as nothing compared to the suffering of Jesus in his mission to save us.

Lord in your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the Church and for the world in the name of Jesus Christ. Renew the life and faith of the Church at this difficult time. May we take time to reflect on how we rebuild an even stronger church family. Strengthen our witness; and make us one in Christ. We pray for our leaders, Archbishops Justin and Stephen and Bishop Graham, may they continue to guide us in ways of truth and faith. We pray for our own Veronica, and the group of readers at St Mary's, may we faithfully follow their leadership and teaching. Enable us to do what you need in growing the faith community. We await the appointment of a new Bishop of Lynn. May the selection be in accordance with your will.

Lord in your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for good government. Our leaders have faced the pandemic crisis with dedication and have even admitted the errors made in the past months. Despite the many voices complaining at the delay in relaxing regulations, to allow a return to normal, we need to proceed with caution. The risks of a further crisis are not to be ignored. Help all of us over the next few months. All need to turn to you and to embrace Jesus' message to love one another and work for the common good. Our society will need to examine its priorities and become less selfish when we return to normal. Guide us as we re-build a more just vision. Justice and safety lie only with you.

Lord in your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

Continue to guide this church family at Heacham. Help us to decide our personal priorities and where the wellbeing of this community and the church should be.

May we show compassion towards those in need, wherever they come from. Let us not fall into the habit of assuming that someone else will deal with it; government, charities, and other individuals. It is up to us **PERSONALLY**.

Lord in your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

We thank you for the service of our Queen and her family. May they continue to serve the nation and you, faithfully. Our Queen is rightly admired for her wisdom and her sense of duty. Thank you for guiding her in all she does and is. The media do not always portray the truth in their desire to promote their own agenda. May this not affect the Queen's happiness.

Lord in your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

We raise before you now in a few moments of silence those known to us who specially need prayer. In illness, bereavement, worry, and people who are hurting. Our prayer chain is an active example of duty for us to observe. May this be used more. May we learn to pray more and to talk to you through prayer. We specially remember at such a time those in hospital.

Lord in your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

Remember the souls of your servants no longer here on earth with us and those who are saddened by their passing. Be with the bereaved in their loneliness and give them the faith to look beyond their present troubles to your son Jesus Christ, who died and rose again and who lives for evermore. We shall all be reunited in heaven.

Merciful Father; accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

**We pray together the Lord's Prayer** led by Keith Dormer-Ainge

**Song: How firm a foundation**

sung & played by Sue, Judith, Richard G, Lynda, and Hilary

How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word;  
What more can He say than to you He has said,  
You who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Fear not, He is with thee, O be not dismayed;  
For he is Thy God and will still give thee aid.  
He'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by his righteous, omnipotent hand.

In every condition, in sickness, in health,  
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth;  
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,  
As thy days may demand shall thy strength ever be.

When through the deep waters He calls thee to go,  
The rivers of grief shall not thee overflow;  
For He will be with thee, in troubles to bless,  
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,  
His grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;  
The flame shall not hurt thee, His only design  
Thy dross to consume and the gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose  
He will not, He will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,  
He'll never, no never, no never forsake.

*Closing prayers:*

Creator God, you made us in your image  
to be your people, wherever we go.  
This coming week, whatever we experience,  
wherever we find ourselves,  
help us to know that you are with us –  
guiding, revealing, and sustaining – always.  
**Amen.**

The love of the Lord Jesus  
draw you to himself,  
the power of the Lord Jesus  
strengthen you in his service,  
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts;  
and the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with you and those you love now and always. **Amen**

*David and Kath play one of David's pieces called ' Dozing'*

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