



Heacham Parish Church



Sunday Service 28th February 2021 - 2nd Sunday of Lent

We have a Welsh theme to some of our music today, as it is St David's Day tomorrow, and Adrian our organist is Welsh!

No.2 'Rhosymedre' from 'Three Preludes founded on Welsh Hymn Tunes' composed by R. Vaughan Williams

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 if you are hungry,
because God longs to feed you.
Come if you are searching,
because God longs to find you.
Come if you are weary,
because God longs to give you rest.
Come to the God of salvation,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Prayers of confession and absolution

We recognise that we have failed God and our neighbours.
We confess that we have fallen from the life that is offered to us through the death of Jesus Christ.
We acknowledge that the love of God is rescuing us from sin and restoring us to grace.
In testing, hardship, and suffering, may we be willing to offer all that we are, and all that we have, to be followers in the way of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

May we know that the God of love
brings us back to himself,
forgives us our sins,
and assures us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

***Song:* O Jesus I have promised**

sung & played by Judith, Lynda, Hilary, Richard C, Lesley, and Sue

O Jesus, I have promised
to serve Thee to the end;
be Thou forever near me,
my Master and my Friend.
I shall not fear the battle
if Thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if Thou wilt be my Guide.

O let me feel Thee near me;
the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, draw Thou nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear Thee speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten, or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou Guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, Thou hast promised,
to all who follow Thee,
that where Thou art in glory
there shall Thy servant be;
and Jesus, I have promised
to serve Thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow
my Master and my Friend.

O let me see Thy footmarks,
and in them plant mine own;
my hope to follow duly
is in Thy strength alone;
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my Friend!

Bible Reading: Mark 8: 31-38 read by Liz Dormer-Ainge

A Reflection by Pip Lawrence

Let's pray,
Father we ask as we look into your word that you would speak to our hearts and give us ears to hear your voice. We ask in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Have you ever signed up for something without really thinking it through? As time goes by you start to realise that you are in way over your head and it just isn't what you thought it would be. I always think this when I read these verses from Mark which come around during Lent. Why do I think this, well because it seems to be how the disciples were feeling too? They had been riding a rollercoaster of miracles, healings, extraordinary picnics, and parables. Then there had been the amazing revelation that Jesus was the actual long-awaited Messiah. It was a glorious time; they had happily signed up for that.

Then we read the words where Jesus predicts his death. In Verse 32: "He spoke plainly about this..." there was no escaping the meaning of his words. However as we are all inclined to do, Peter focused on the bad news, the news of Jesus' death. Maybe Peter didn't hear the part about "after three days rise again". This was not the plan things had been going so well. Peter decided to have a word with Jesus, to tell him he needed to get a grip and forget this death talk. So, Peter takes Jesus aside and tells him, in a way, to get with the programme.

We all know that the result was a resounding rebuke. Jesus makes it clear that the programme was in God's power and He had made the plan. How hard it must have been for Jesus in that moment, he was alone, and his disciples were not on board with the way things were developing. Although we do know from John's gospel that the disciples didn't throw in the towel, they realised that only Jesus has the words of eternal life. Nonetheless Jesus does not stop there with the difficult news. He turns to the crowd and tells them along with the disciples and said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and the gospel will save it". As I pondered these words it occurred that Jesus actually lived them. He made no attempt to save his life during the lead up to the cross despite the opportunities that were presented. His death resulted in the glorious resurrection that opened the door for us to be with him in heaven.

The rest of the reading continues with more challenges and warnings and directions about the importance of being careful in taking care of our spiritual life. So, what can we take from this challenging reading today?

I don't know about you but currently I think I have had enough challenges. We are in our third lockdown. The coronavirus pandemic has been messing with us all for a year now. The thought of the possibility of a second Easter without the ability to meet and celebrate together is not an encouraging nor a happy one. None of us signed up for a pandemic, with all its attendant sadness, difficulty, loneliness, and loss. But here we are.

Where is Jesus?

He is right here in the middle of the muddle and the misery and the mess, just like He has always been. He promised to never leave us nor forsake us. Life is often not what we signed up for. It often throws us curved balls that completely knock out our plans and dreams. This pandemic is just another thing that has come to pass. So perhaps the question we need to ask ourselves is, are we trusting Jesus at the moment? Or do we only trust Him when things are going well? Do we feel like the disciples in the reading, do we want to tell Jesus he has it all wrong?

People of God, Jesus never had it wrong. He made it clear that life is challenging, and his instruction was and is "in this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world".

Take heart today - remember if Jesus is for us nothing can stand against us. **Amen.**

Song: **Beneath the cross**

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

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I fain would take my stand -
the shadow of a mighty rock
within a weary land;
a home within a wilderness,
a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontide heat
and the burden of the day.

Upon that cross of Jesus
mine eye at times can see
the very dying form of One
who suffered there for me;
and from my stricken heart, with tears,
two wonders I confess -
the wonders of redeeming love,
and my own worthlessness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow,
for my abiding-place!
I ask no other sunshine than
the sunshine of His face;
content to let the world go by,
to know no gain nor loss -
my sinful self my only shame,
my glory all - the cross.

Prayers of Intercession led by Sue Spencer

As we enter prayer now, let us pause to be still, breathe slowly and centre our scattered senses upon the presence of God. Let us take some time now to speak to the Father honestly from our hearts about what we are feeling and thinking, remembering that He loves us, values our honesty and is never shocked.

Holy Spirit, when we feel alone, we are comforted because you are with us. When we are silenced by suffering, we are grateful that you pray through us. Jesus, when we feel helpless, we are strengthened because you are with the Father, right now praying for us.

Lord in your Mercy: hear our prayer.

Loving God, we remember in this season of Lent the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, the pressures he faced, the choices He had to make, the evil He had to resist, and the path He chose.

We remember that though He was tempted as are we, He did not give way. He could have used his powers for his own ends, instead He used them for us. Help us to remember that Christ loved us so much that He was willing to sacrifice and endure for our sakes.

Forgive us, Lord that there are many times when we forget the sacrifice that Christ made for us. We fail you many times and refuse to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. We have not obeyed your commandments nor loved you as you love us. We are weak in our commitment, careless in our worship, selfish in our attitudes, preferring our ways to yours, and find ourselves wandering away from you. Lord have mercy on us, forgive

us and renew us in heart, mind, and spirit, strengthen our wills and deepen our faith. Help us to use this time of Lent and lockdown to spend more time with you prayerfully; so that at the end of lockdown we will be ready to live and work for you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

God of love and hope, you made the world and care for all creation, but the world feels strange right now. Many of us are worried that we might become ill with Coronavirus, are anxious about our friends and family; be with us we ask and help us to feel peace. We pray for all doctors, nurses, scientists, and front-line workers; we give thanks for all that they do to keep us safe and well. We give thanks to the scientists who have found vaccines for us, all those who are organising the vaccination programme, and those giving the vaccinations, especially those in our own community. Thank you, as even in these anxious times, you are with us. Help us to put our trust in you, and to keep us safe.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer.

Merciful God, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill in mind, body, and spirit. Let them know that whenever danger threatens, your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe. Comfort and heal them and restore them to health and strength. We remember those who have died in our church family, our community, our country, and around the world. Grant to those who are grieving your special blessing. May they know that your hand is upon them and that your heart is reaching out to them.
Let us keep silence for a few moments while we remember them.

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

We pray together the Lord's Prayer Jean sings the Lord's Prayer to words written by Ren Fargher-Smith and set to the Welsh Tune *Dafydd Y Gareg Wen* (David of the White Rock) – music arranged by Adrian.

Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
In earth as in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,
Help us to live by the words Jesus said.
Forgive our sins Lord as we forgive the sins of those
Who hurt us or hate us and call us their foes.
Give us protection and guidance each day,
Our Father in heaven, O hear us we pray.
For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
For ever and ever and ever. **Amen.**

Closing Prayers:

Send us out with your blessing
to be a blessing to others.

Send us out known and named as children of God
to name others as children of God.

Send us out to walk in your footsteps
so that others too may walk the way of the cross.

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**

Organ Postlude - Finale on 'Hyfrydol' (i.e. 'Cheerful') by Henry Coleman

*Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me-
Sing it with the saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea.*

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