

Sunday 4th February 2024: Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or other suitable time.



StF 32 H&P 501 'Meet and right it is to sing' by Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

Opening Prayer

Think of the past week and say both 'thank you' and 'sorry' to our loving God.

Psalm set for today: Psalm 147 v 1 – 11, 20

Gospel reading set for today: Mark 1 v 29 – 39

To think about

How many people are mentioned in the Gospel reading? What jobs/tasks do they do between them? What does Jesus say is his main task?

StF 655 'We cannot measure how you heal' by John Bell (b 1949) & Graham Maule (1958 – 2019)

Epistle reading set for today: 1 Corinthians 9 v 16 – 23

Message from a Circuit Friend

Paul wrote first Corinthians in response to things he had heard about the church since he left Corinth and to answer questions the church had asked. For example, could surplus meat from sacrificed animals be eaten or bought by Christians? Paul's answer in chapters 8-11 is fundamentally yes – BUT. Whilst this is not a relevant issue to us, his answer is. If others could misunderstand our motives or be put in a position of temptation, and succumb, then our love for those 'weaker' than ourselves is more important than our freedom. For example, have you seen the wall-to-wall gambling adverts on TV or the damage it can cause? Today individual freedom is often considered a basic human right. How many situations can you think of though, where perhaps this should take second place to the good of others? In today's passage, Paul talks of his freedom as a Christian but also how he has put this to one side. To him the most important thing is spreading the Good News. He is obligated to God and his reward and joy is knowing he is doing what God requires of him and seeing others come to faith in Jesus. Whilst there are some things that are always wrong, in matters of food and culture Paul was prepared to fit in to develop relationships with those around him, and not offend them. In this case Jews, Gentiles and weaker/newer Christians.

Have you been in the same situation as I was in Africa? As a guest presented me proudly with a meal which to me looked awful? Smile sweetly and eat is the only answer! As an older Christian, I sometimes find the culture surrounding me increasingly alien. It is easier to stay within our church community, but Paul's message to the Corinthians is clear. Show others by our words and actions that we are different because of our faith in Jesus. We cannot do that however unless we mix with others whose lifestyle, values and culture may often be different to our own. Paul became 'all things to all people' for the sake of the gospel and perhaps there is a lesson there for me to 'get out a bit more'!

Glyn Constantine (Local Preacher and member of The Pilgrim Methodist Church)

StF 418 H&P 465 'We have a gospel to proclaim' by Edward Burns (b 1938)

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for our world... for the church... for our communities... for our families & friends...

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

StF 548 H&P 668 'Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine' by Fanny Crosby (1820 – 1915)

May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.

Circuit News: Lent begins this year on 14th February. Many churches have acts of worship on Ash Wednesday or Lent courses and/or other activities. Find out what your local church is doing from the stewards or from the Minister.