

Sunday 25th February 2024: Second Sunday in Lent

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



StF 272 MP 162 'From heaven you came, helpless babe' by Graham Kendrick (b 1950)

Opening Prayer

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

Old Testament Reading set for today: Genesis 17 v 1 – 7, 15 – 16

StF 475 H&P 442 'O God of Bethel, by whose hand' by Philip Doddridge (1702 – 1751)

Epistle Reading set for today: Romans 4 v 13 – 25

To think about

Look at how many times the word 'faith' is used in the Romans reading.

Gospel reading set for today: Mark 8 v 31 – 38

Message from a Circuit Friend

Today's readings seem to me to focus on courage and faith. In Genesis 17 we read of God promising to Abram, whom he renamed Abraham, that he would be the father of many nations. This was the old man who had a barren wife and a son by his wife's slave-girl! Abraham needed all his faith to believe what God was telling him, however impossible it seemed, and he needed courage to go where God told him to go, away from home and family.

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, tells them that right from the time that God gave Abraham this promise (not because he obeyed the law but because he believed in God) people had been called to have the faith and the courage that would cause them to be recognised as 'righteous'. It isn't just being good, it's being right with God.

When Jesus realises, yet again, that his disciples still are not grasping what had to happen in the next few weeks he lays down the challenge, not just to Peter, whom he has just rebuked, and not just to his disciples. He calls the crowd to him and tells them that they have to make a decision. If they want to go with him they have to have the courage to forget all that they need or want for themselves, and have the faith to be prepared to take up their own cross and follow him, maybe to death. And the challenge is for us too. We are unlikely, in our part of Norfolk, to be required to face torture or death for our faith, but we are challenged to put God first instead of fretting about the things that concern us in our personal lives. In doing so we shall be fulfilled. In living our daily lives we need not to be good but to be righteous, and to have faith and courage to follow Christ.

Pippa Cook (Local Preacher and member of Stibbard Methodist Church)

StF 662 'Have you heard God's voice?' by Jacqueline G Jones © 2008

Prayers of Intercession

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

Collect for the second Sunday in Lent

Merciful Lord,

grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

StF 287 H&P 180 'When I survey the wondrous cross' by Isaac Watts (1674 – 1748)

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