



Heacham Parish Church



Sunday Service 14th February 2021 - Transfiguration

As we gather - Jean sings selected words from Charles Wesley's most famous hymn: Love divine, all loves excelling. The first 4 lines remind us (on St. Valentine's Day) that whatever the depth of our human love, it is but a faint shadow of the love that God has for all of us. "Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav'n to earth come down, Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All thy faithful mercies crown."

Then the final 4 lines surely reflect Mark 9v3 in today's reading. "Changed from glory into glory, Till in heaven we take our place, Till we cast our crowns before Thee, Lost in wonder, love, and praise."

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, the God who is the same, today, yesterday, and tomorrow; the God who is with us today, during this pandemic, this lockdown and always, the God who loves us.

People of God, raise your expectations of what it means to encounter God in this place, wherever that may be.

Be open to God revealing something of His divine nature to us, and changing the way we see the world.

Prayers of confession

Lord, whereas it is part of our faith-walk to seek and be open to life-changing moments, forgive us when we just plod through life and get despondent with the mundane.

We are sorry, Lord.

Shine on us, we pray.

On the other hand, we can at times be fixated on the spiritual mountain-tops and so miss out on what's happening below in the everyday. When things are going well for us, we can get wrapped up in the moment and be forgetful of others.

We are sorry, Lord.

Shine on us, we pray.

There are many voices tuned into today's world telling us how to live and what is best. But you, Lord, are our authority in life.

Forgive us when we fail to test things against Your Word.

We are sorry, Lord.

Shine on us, we pray.

Amen.

Prayer of assurance of forgiveness

Jesus' divine nature was confirmed on the mountain –
He is God's beloved Son.

He went on to suffer.

He died and rose again for us, conquering sin and death.

Now He sits at God's right hand, glorified in heaven

– and thanks to Him, we are completely forgiven.

Amen.

Song: At the name of Jesus

sung & played by Judith, Sue, Richard C, Richard G, Colin, and Hilary

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess Him King of Glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure, we should call Him Lord,
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

Mighty and mysterious in the highest height,
God from everlasting, very Light of light.
In the Father's bosom, with the spirits blest,
Love, in love eternal; rest, in perfect rest.

Humbled for a season, to receive a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom He came;
faithfully He bore it spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious when from death He passed.

Bore it up triumphant with its human light,
through all ranks of creatures to the central height;
to the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast,
filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.

In your hearts enthrone Him; there let Him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not true;
crown Him as your captain in temptation's hour,
let His will enfold you in its light and power.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus shall return again,
With His Father's glory, with His angel-train;
for all wreaths of empire meet upon His brow,
and our hearts confess Him King of Glory now.

Bible Reading: Mark 9: 2-9 read by Pam Lee

A Reflection, by John Whitbread

I have to wonder do we sometimes stop and look around and ask,
"Is this all there is?"

We stop and look at our lives and wonder what else is there in this world we live in? There has to be something more and what is it? Often these thoughts quickly pass by, but every now and then we stop and there is a restlessness, a searching, a longing for something else, something more. Now this view of seeking the future in our own lives sometimes causes us to make the wrong decisions. Some decide to change jobs, buy a new car, or enter a new relationship. We might take up a new hobby, go on a trip, or work extra hours. In the end, not much that is externally significant changes. These changes are not about the situation, but they are all about us.

I wonder if you let the Holy Spirit mould you, conform you, and transform you into the image of Jesus?

We do not need to see new pictures and new things.
We need to see the world with new eyes.
We do not need to hear a different voice.
We need to hear the unchanging voice of God with different ears.
We do not need to escape the circumstances of our life.
We need to be more fully present in those circumstances.
And when we allow this to happen, life is no longer lived at the surface.
Why? Because this yearning, this longing is not really about the
circumstances of life.

This now brings us to the second part of our thoughts. This is where we move from the milk to the meat of our Christian lives. Here we see Jesus taking Peter, James, and John up a mountain to discover that God is beyond their understanding. Here in this place there is a 'window' where they can see God's love and his light.

It is where they see Jesus transform. He becomes "transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them".
Moses and Elijah appear in their midst and Peter says, "We need to put shelters up." Peter wants to frame this image; he wants to take a picture. But pictures of a scene are static, you only capture that moment.

Then the voice of God spoke, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" This was not a new miracle. It was a continuation of the miracle of Jesus coming into our world not to proclaim his own glory but to teach the glory of God. The voice of God that the disciples heard from the cloud was not new. It was the voice that has never ceased speaking from the beginning of time. The transfiguration is as much about the disciples ... as it is Jesus.

Jesus, Peter, James, and John came down the mountain. They could not stay there but neither did they totally leave the mountain. They took this experience with them. As we look forward in our own lives circumstances or events do not change but we change. Every event, every picture, every encounter can become a transfigured moment.

Go deep! Be immersed in the presence of God.

This earth, this island in the universe is not all that life has in store for you. This is not all there is.

Every circumstance of life, every picture of life, every event in life, can become an open window. You and I are a transfigured people.

Open your eyes and see a transfigured world.

Open your ears and hear the transfigured voice of God.

Be mature in the Faith.

Open your heart and live a grace-filled transfigured life.

And if you do - Our Lord promises to take you from Glory to Glory.

And all God's people said ... **Amen**

Song: **Open the eyes of my heart Lord**

sung & played by Hilary, Lesley, Lynda, Terry, and Karen

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,

Open the eyes of my heart,

I want to see You, I want to see You;

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord

Open the eyes of my heart,

I want to see You, I want to see You.

To see You high and lifted up,

Shining in the light of Your glory

Pour out Your power and love

As we sing holy, holy, holy.

Open ...

To see ...

Holy, holy, holy

We cry holy, holy, holy

You are holy, holy, holy

I want to see you.

Prayers of Intercession, led by Ren Fargher-Smith

Loving and gracious Father, through Jesus you have enabled us to come to you without fear or hesitation and we come now, bringing our intercessions.

Overwhelmed by the needs of the world we pray for those whose situations we do not comprehend but who, like us, bring their concerns to you for their own situations, countries, and people. Grant them courage in their fears, steadfastness in their faithfulness, and power in their praying.

Father, we pray for our nation with all its complexities. Grant to our leaders compassion and wisdom. Help them to make the right decisions as far as possible, the decisions that you have in mind for us, and, where no decision would seem to be right, may your hand on them guide them in the right direction.

We lift to you Father, all those in pain and suffering. Those who are gripped with fear for their loved ones and themselves. And we ask you to nurture and protect every person at risk because of the work they are doing. Grant those in hugely stressful situations strength, courage, an awareness of their self-worth and value, safety, and energy.

Father, please comfort and support all who are ill at this time. Those with COVID-19 and any other illness, disability or disease which leads to suffering and vulnerability.

We bring to you, our loving Father, the children of the world. You know their needs in places where we do not. And for our own children, the young people of our United Kingdom, we pray with deep concern. Give extraordinary wisdom to those who make decisions about their futures; and the gifts of patience, understanding, and sacrificial love to every parent.

Our wonderful Father, each one of us, right now in this moment, holds someone or some particular situation in our hearts and minds. We each bring that person or situation to you now. As we hold them in our thoughts, picturing them in our minds we ask for your blessing on them.... *A silence is held....*

We know that you will meet their needs and answer our prayers in the way that is best, and we thank you with grateful hearts for the situations where we have seen your power at work in our community during this difficult time.

In your mercy Lord, hear our prayers. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer led by Val Fisher

Closing prayers:

We close our eyes and imagine.

We open our eyes and see.

We close our eyes and see visions.

We open our eyes and find others.

We close our eyes and dream dreams.

We open our eyes and look for Jesus.

Eyes closed. Eyes opened.

Lord Jesus, may we always see you.

Amen.

Lord Jesus, raise our expectations of what it means to encounter God, not just in this place but in every place, in all the places we shall be in the days ahead.

Help us every day to discover something new about God's ways, about what God wants of us – and change the way we see the world, and the way we act.

Amen.

Closing music - Adrian plays J S Bach: part of the Fantasia from Fantasia and Fugue in G minor BWV 542 (The Great G minor). This piece is suggested for Transfiguration - as some say it reflects the Temporal and Eternal; and contrasts the awe and trembling of the disciples with God's eternal plan. However fantastic our own personal 'mountain' numinous experience may be, the time comes when we have to come down from the mountain and re-join our everyday life....but changed.

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