



Heacham Parish Church



## **Sunday Service 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021 - 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent**

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

Welcome to our Service of Worship for Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March. The beginning of Passiontide. Although we join this service at various times and from various places we come together as one body, the Church of Jesus Christ.

We come from scattered lives to meet with God.  
Let us recognise his presence with us.

*Silence is kept.*

As God's people we have gathered:  
**let us worship him together.**

The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.  
**Let us rejoice and shout for joy,  
giving God the glory.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
**as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Faithful one, whose word is life:  
come with saving power  
to free our praise,  
inspire our prayer  
and shape our lives  
for the kingdom of your Son,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

*Song:* **I, the Lord of sea and sky**

Sung and played by Sue, Judith, Richard G, Richard C, Colin, Rosie,  
Lynda, Hilary, Lesley, and Colin

I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard My people cry;  
all who dwell in dark and sin  
My hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bear My light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord.  
Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night.  
I will go, Lord,  
if You lead me;  
I will hold Your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne My people's pain;  
I have wept for love of them -  
they turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
give them hearts for love alone;  
I will speak My word to them.  
Whom shall I send?  
*Here I am, Lord . . .*

I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame.  
I will set a feast for them -  
My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide  
till their hearts are satisfied;  
I will give My life to them.  
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord . . .*

## Prayers of penitence

The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.

Let us come to him, in sorrow for our sins, seeking healing and salvation.

God of mercy,

we acknowledge that we are all sinners.

We turn from the wrong that we have thought and said and done, and are mindful of all that we have failed to do.

For the sake of Jesus, who died for us,

forgive us for all that is past,

and help us to live each day

in the light of Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

May God our Father forgive us our sins,

and bring us to the eternal joy of his kingdom

where dust and ashes have no dominion.

**Amen.**

Bible reading: John 12: 20-33 read by Margaret

**A reflection** by Peter Murray

The quest of the Greeks

In the movie "A Few Good Men", a young military lawyer, Daniel Kaffee, (played by Tom Cruise) prosecutes in a case where the orders, which were given by a veteran colonel, Nathan Jessup (played by Jack Nicholson) are fiercely challenged. It was alleged that false testimony had been given regarding the death of a marine named Santiago. The American courtroom quickly becomes the scene of a shouting match, the young lawyer demanding, "I want the truth!" The colonel responds, in the most memorable line of the movie, "You want the truth? You can't handle the truth!"

Among the crowds at the Passover feast in Jerusalem there were some Greeks, who were attracted by Judaism but not fully committed. They

express a desire to see Jesus. We don't know their names or whether or not their desire was fulfilled, and we hear nothing more about them beyond verse 22 of our reading for today. Like many Gentiles they valued the higher moral emphasis of Judaism compared with paganism. It's possible they knew, one of the disciples, Philip which is why they approached him first.

Whatever their reasons for wanting to see Jesus, they certainly wouldn't have expected him to respond to them in the way he did. His immediate reference to his impending death and his extending of it into a principle which applies to his followers would no doubt have made a huge impact on them. Could it be said of them, "You can't handle the truth?" (notice the word "truth" is mentioned in verse 24) Whether the challenge provoked a positive or negative response is not recorded.

In every seed there is the potential for new life. You get some idea of what that might look like from the lovely picture on the seed packet. Growth only happens when the seed is buried in moist soil. To produce grain, it has to fall into the ground and die. It would be ineffective and unfruitful if it is kept safe. Jesus is emphasising the principle of life through death by using the illustration in verse 24. He is saying to the Greeks, 'If you want to see me, be prepared to follow me and become like me' (verse 25 and 26).

In Romans 6:11 we are called as believers to live in constant awareness that we are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ. We are also called to bear fruit for him, to share the good news of his love and grace with others. (see John 15:16)

During this season of Lent, it would be beneficial to examine ourselves to see how well we are handling the truth both individually and as a Christian community. What is it about our lives (attitudes, ways of thinking, etc) that are helping or hindering others from seeing Jesus more clearly?

What is there in us that needs to die in order for us to be more fruitful?

Dying and rising again is a spiritual principle that applies to each one of us. In this way we grow closer to Christ, so that through our lives people may be drawn to him.

May it never be said of us, "You can't handle the truth!"

*Affirmation of faith*

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,  
he did not cling to equality with God,  
but made himself nothing.  
Taking the form of a slave,  
he was born in human likeness.  
He humbled himself  
and was obedient to death,  
even the death of the cross.  
Therefore God has raised him on high,  
and given him the name above every name:  
that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bow,  
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.**

*Song: Father, we love You (Glorify your name)*

sung by Terry and Karen, accompanied by Hilary and Lesley

Father, we love You, *We worship and adore You;*  
*Glorify Your name in all the earth.*  
*Glorify Your name, Glorify Your name*  
*Glorify Your name in all the earth.*

Jesus, we love You, *We worship .....*

Spirit, we love You, *We worship....*

Prayers of Intercession, led by Veronica Welham

Based on meditation of the Lord's Prayer by Patrick Sookhdeo published in Barnabas Aid Spring 21. Patrick has written this to highlight the problems where he lives; I have included points about our current situation and our tithe charities.

*Patrick's words are in italics; mine in plain type.*

Let us pray

*Our Father in heaven*

*Who alone knows our brokenness and pain*

*Who honours us by making us your children*

*Equal members of your family*

*And gives us a new identity as your beloved chosen people*

*Hallowed be Your name*

*For you are pure and sinless*

*You are the great I AM before whom we stand in awe*

*God of truth and righteousness; God of mercy and justice*

We praise you Father for all that You are and all that You do, in us and for us.

*Your kingdom come*

*Let your glorious rule cover the earth*

*And banish all injustice, cast out all corruption and right all wrongs.*

Father, we pray for the family and friends of Sarah Everard. We pray for safety on our streets and we pray for our police force that they will serve with honour and courage.

*Set your people free from oppression and let your reign begin in us.*

We pray for the future of our church; that people will have confidence to come back to worship as we reopen; that those who have begun to follow services online will come to know you for themselves.

We pray for our PCC and the decisions they have to make; we pray for more people to come and join the team and use the skills and talents you have given them in your service.

*Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven  
Help us to accept your purposes, your good and perfect plan for our lives  
As one day all creation will submit and bow before You  
In whom is perfect peace and freedom.*

As we journey through Lent, prepare our hearts and minds Lord. Help us, that we can fully understand and accept that Jesus died on the cross for each one of us and what this means in our lives.

*Give us today our daily bread, for we are poor and needy and we depend on You.*

*Father provide our food and water, our clothing and shelter.*

*Day by day our eyes look to You.*

Lord we pray for all the charities we support individually and as a church. We pray for our tithe charities this year; that they get what they need and for all those who work in them: for the Goodman family in Thailand; for Tansen hospital in Nepal; for the King's Lynn Night Shelter; for Nelson's Journey; for Transaid; and for CAP.

*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors*

*Father forgive our many sins through the shed blood of Your Son*

*Who died for us and rose again.*

*Father make us generous and merciful.*

*And lead us not into temptation.*

*Father give us faith to overcome our fears, doubts and worries.*

*Father do not test us more than we can bear.*

Oh Lord our God, we give you thanks that we can look towards the end of the pandemic in our country, and life opening up again; we give you thanks for staff at the NHS, those in vaccination hubs; and everyone who has kept essential services running during this past year. We pray that other countries will accept the vaccines available; that those in poorer countries will soon have access to vaccine; and that the whole world can move forward.

*Give us the strength to endure patiently, the grace to accept and persevere.*

Father we pray for those we know who are suffering from illness, despair, loneliness and anxiety. We bring them before you now.....

We thank you Lord that Prince Philip is well enough to leave hospital and return home to continue his recovery.

*But deliver us from the evil one.*

*Father rescue us from Satan's wiles, free us from bondage, snatch us from calamity and the injustice of evil men.*

*For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory.*

*Father establish your sovereign rule.*

*Glorify your name and keep us safe for now and eternity*

*Amen*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread**

**And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory**

**For ever and ever Amen**

*Collect for today*

Most merciful God,

who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world:

grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross

we may triumph in the power of his victory;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

**Amen**

Closing prayers

The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

**We dwell in him and he in us.**

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name,  
**make known his deeds among the peoples.**

Sing to him, sing praises to him,  
**and speak of all his marvellous works.**

Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God almighty,  
**who was and is and is to come.**

**Amen.**

This is love, not that we loved God,  
**but that he loved us and sent his Son.**

He is the sacrifice for our sins,  
**that we might live through him.**

If God loves us so much  
**we ought to love one another.**

If we love one another  
**God lives in us.**

The Lord God almighty is our Father:  
**he loves us and tenderly cares for us.**

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour:  
**he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end.**

The Lord, the Holy Spirit, is among us:  
**he will lead us in God's holy way.**

**To God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be praise and glory today and for ever.**

**Amen.**

*Shona plays 'When I survey the wondrous cross'*

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