

1 Worship for 7th June 2020

Prayer

Lord God,
Send you Holy Spirit amongst us.
Make your home in our hearts, that filled with
your Spirit we may do your will and sing your
praise.

May we know today that we are freed from sin,
that everything that we have done in the past
for which we are sorry is forgiven in Christ and
that in him we are made new.

Send your Spirit to bring light to you word, to
inspire our listening and thinking, our singing
and praying, that as we leave this place we may
take your word and your light out into your
world.

In Christ's name
Amen

Hymn Amazing Grace

Amazing grace – how sweet the sound –
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.

3 Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

4 When we've been there ten thousand years
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we've first begun.

Reading John 16 v 5 – 15

The Work of the Holy Spirit

I was with you at the first, and so I didn't tell you
these things. ⁵ But now I am going back to the
Father who sent me, and none of you asks me
where I am going. ⁶ You are very sad from
hearing all of this. ⁷ But I tell you that I am going
to do what is best for you. That is why I am going
away. The Holy Spirit cannot come to help ^[a] you
until I leave. But after I am gone, I will send the
Spirit to you.

⁸ The Spirit will come and show the people of
this world the truth about sin and God's justice
and the judgment. ⁹ The Spirit will show them
that they are wrong about sin, because they
didn't have faith in me. ¹⁰ They are wrong about
God's justice, because I am going to the Father,
and you won't see me again. ¹¹ And they are
wrong about the judgment, because God has
already judged the ruler of this world.

¹² I have much more to say to you, but right now
it would be more than you could
understand. ¹³ The Spirit shows what is true and
will come and guide you into the full truth. The
Spirit doesn't speak on his own. He will tell you
only what he has heard from me, and he will let
you know what is going to happen. ¹⁴ The Spirit
will bring glory to me by taking my message and
telling it to you. ¹⁵ Everything that the Father has
is mine. That is why I have said that the Spirit
takes my message and tells it to you.

Prayers of Praise and Confession

Our great and mighty God, Father, Son, and Holy
Spirit: when we consider your majesty and the
works of your hand, how insignificant we are;

And yet you have given us the capacity to know
that you are our creator and our Saviour, that in
you we live and move and have our being. We
cannot comprehend these mysteries, but we
know that as we worship and adore you our lives
are enriched and our desire for communion with
you is quickened. Accept, great God, our prayer
of adoration, to the glory of your holy Name.

Father, we confess that we do not think enough
of your mighty act of creation; of the life, death
and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; of your
gift of the Holy Spirit. We take so much for
granted until things go wrong; even then, we are
often reluctant to come to you, sometimes
because of our lack of trust in you, or because
we believe we ought to be able to sort ourselves
out. We forget that you are more ready to give
than we are to ask, and that your offer of pardon
is always available to those who are truly sorry.

Help us, through your grace, to know true
repentance and the joy of your forgiveness;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Amen.

2 Worship for 7th June 2020

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in Heaven,
hallowed be Your Name.
Your will be done on earth as in Heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Do not bring us to the time of trial,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are Yours now and
forever. Amen.

Reading Matt 28 v 16 – 20

What Jesus' Followers Must Do

¹⁶ Jesus' eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had told them to meet him. ¹⁷ They saw him and worshiped him, but some of them doubted.

¹⁸ Jesus came to them and said:

I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! ¹⁹ Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world.

Sermon

Last Sunday was Pentecost - when we celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit to the church. We recalled the story of that amazing day nearly 2000 years ago, when a group of sad, frightened followers of Jesus, were energised and enthused and filled with power and life.

It was an amazing transformation that happened that day - but what was it for, why did it happen.

Well the answer, in part at least is to be found in the reading we heard earlier from Matthew 28.

Let me remind you of what it says there :

Jesus says All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

If you asked me Pentecost was necessary, why the transformation in the lives of the disciples

was so important then the answer is here - in these words - go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. That is what it is all about. The thing is Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit, isn't just about history - it is not just about something that happened in the past, and that was the end of it. Pentecost is about the coming of the Holy Spirit to the church and to Christians for all time.

And the commission that Jesus gave to his disciples - to go and preach to all nations, wasn't just for them, it was for all Christians, of all times - even us today.

We have the Holy Spirit - that is Jesus's promise to us - and with that Holy Spirit we are to fulfil the commission, the task that Jesus has given. So today, in this period after Pentecost when we are thinking about the task that Jesus has assigned to us, the body of Christ, I want to offer you three challenges that come from that commission in Matt 28 :

The first is to proclaim and live a full gospel, a full message.

We live in a pick and mix society. A society where there are very few constants, very few definites, very little that is unchanging or incontrovertible.

We live in a pick and mix society, where you choose your own morality, you choose your own beliefs, you choose your own values, according to what feels comfortable, according to what suits your personality, your inclinations. Uncomfortable with the ten commandments - that's OK - just pick the seven or eight that you like - forget the rest.

You like the eco credentials of this faith, but you don't like its morality - that's fine - just choose the bits that you want and ditch what's left over - and create your own religion, your own belief system, your own morality just made up of the things you like.

A pick and mix religion - and of course when you approach faith and morality that way, you only choose the bits that are easy to swallow - the

3 Worship for 7th June 2020

bits that don't challenge, the bits that are an easy fit.

A bit like me at the pick and mix in Tesco's - I love Jelly Babies - but hate the green ones - so I try my best not to get any green jelly babies in my bag.

Ours is a pick and mix society, with a pick and mix religion that is easy to swallow, that doesn't challenge, that doesn't make demands. But we are called to preach, to proclaim a full gospel, a full message - go said Jesus go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you - everything. Ours cannot be pick and mix message - we cannot take Christ at his word today, and ignore him tomorrow, we cannot accept his word in this matter, but reject it in that. We must preach a full gospel, a full message, unafraid to tackle the issues and the teaching that some may find hard, the issues and the teaching, that will make people think, even though maybe - just maybe - some will actually find it too hard to bear. Jesus said teach everything I have commanded.

Proclaim a full gospel, a full message. And secondly I want to challenge you to proclaim a life changing message.

Jesus said go and make disciples - that is what we are about - and frankly as Churches it is what we are pretty bad at - go and make disciples. Go and make disciples - preach a message that is life changing, that brings life and hope and meaning to the aimless, the impoverished, the down trodden, the faint and the weary. A message that makes a difference in people's lives.

A radical, life changing message.

A number of years back, I was at the Christians Resources Exhibition at Sandown racecourse and attended a presentation by Adrian Plas - the Christian humourist.

Now I like Adrian Plas, but I'll be honest I wasn't very impressed with the seminar itself - the whole thing felt like a heavy sales pitch for the charity that sponsored them - however there was one thing Adrian Plas said that hit home - so

much so that I can picture it today - there was a picture of a child on the screen - and he said simply - this is the most important person in the world - this is the most important person in the world - because even if this was the only person ever to have lived, God still would have thought it worthwhile to send his Son to the cross to die for them.

And I thought yes - that's it, isn't it. This is the life changing message - that recognises that each one of us are so important to God, so valuable to him - that even if we were the only person ever to have lived on earth, he still would have died to save us.

This week the number of known deaths from Coronavirus in our country has passed 40,000 - the real figure may be many more. And when we get to numbers like that we can't really understand what it means. The daily death rate has gone down from nearly 1,000 to perhaps 200 and we rejoice this is great - only 200 or so people died from Coronavirus in the UK yesterday.

But it's not great is it?

Every single one of those people was important to someone. There are 200 more families today grieving the loss of a loved one.

These are just numbers to us, but not to God. We have to proclaim a life changing message, a message that establishes the reality of the love of God, a message that proclaims the importance of every single person to the father, a message that tells of the lengths the father will go to win back even one lost soul.

We must proclaim a life changing message because it is only in that message that we will make disciples as Christ has commanded. Yes we may attract people by the kind of people we are, yes we may make people welcome within our fellowship, yes we may love them with a self giving love that utterly drains us in ministering to the hurts in their lives, but we are called to proclaim a life changing message - it is only that message that makes disciples.

We must proclaim a life changing message. And we must proclaim a message for all people.

4 Worship for 7th June 2020

Jesus said Go and make disciples of all nations. And he might have added of all classes, all sexes, all ages, all abilities - I'm sounding like an advert for the Open University.

Proclaim a message for all people. Trouble is so often the church preaches to itself. OK sometimes that is what is needed - sometimes we need to encourage and enthuse ourselves, sometimes we need to challenge ourselves and to wake ourselves up from sleep - but the real mission field is not here at all - it is out there.

Even our most successful churches - even THE most successful churches - the Holy Trinity, Bromptons and the Kensington temples of this world - they are barely scratching the surface - for every person in church or associated with a church on Sunday - there are perhaps 15 who are not - that's the bottom line - and we are called to reach out to them.

We need to proclaim our Message - out there, to the people who know nothing of Christ and who, if you asked them, would have barely the faintest idea of why you are watching this DVD or YouTube.

And that means meeting them on their territory, that means speaking their language, using their media, relating in ways that are familiar to them. I believe too much - way too much of our preaching and teaching looks back to some imagined glorious past of the church - rather than to the world we actually live in. So much of our worship panders to the tastes and the prejudices of sections of our congregations - the church preaching to itself - rather than making disciples of all nations.

If I were to do a survey of the church members I'm sure I would find an overwhelming majority - that favour traditional, straight down the line worship - and yet ask in the street whether that worship meets the needs of the average person - well you don't have, they are voting overwhelmingly with their feet.

We are called to proclaim a message for all people - a message that reaches them, that speaks their language, that touches their lives and brings them to Christ - there is no higher calling laid upon us.

The Holy Spirit came to the church at Pentecost - that was nearly 2,000 years ago - but the Holy Spirit is with us still enabling us to fulfil the task that Jesus has given us to go and make it disciples of all nations.

It is a challenging task and a demanding task and if ever that task seems too much to bear - as so often it will - then remember Christ's final words to his disciples in Matthew's Gospel - his promise to them, which is just as much a promise to you and to all of us. Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. We do not go alone - we go in the power and the strength of Christ, enfolded in the love of the Father and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Go then to play your part in the work Christ has laid upon us : go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

AMEN

Prayer

Lord God, as you gave your Spirit to Christ's disciples long ago and empowered them to proclaim the gospel to all nations, so we would pray that you would fill your Church today with your Spirit that we may declare the gospel of Christ to the people of our community and bring them to life changing faith in him, Amen

Hymn Seek ye first the kingdom of God

Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you.
Allelu, alleluia.
Seek ye first . . .

2 Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of God.
Allelu, alleluia.
Man shall not . . .

3 Ask and it shall be given unto you,
seek and ye shall find;
knock and the door shall be opened up to you.
Allelu, alleluia.
Ask and it shall . . .

5 Worship for 7th June 2020

Family News

NHS folk - Chris, Linda, Marcia, Marina, Melanie, Pete, Rachel, Yvonne. Marcia – should have been going back to work but has been signed off for a further two weeks.

Michael Storr has had a nasty fall in Astley Park. He has to see a plastic surgeon about damage to his fingers.

We remember our older folk on a rota basis. This week we remember Gwen Rigg and May Clements

Jill Bank's has celebrated her 50th birthday. Marjory Arrowsmith will be 90 this week.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, we pray for ourselves and for all people that the poverty of our lives may be transformed by the riches of your grace.

For we know that much of the poverty of our world springs from what is lacking in the hearts of humankind.

Lord, we are poor in wisdom, in understanding and vision.

We cannot discern how it would be if the world were ordered according to your design. We see justice and compassion as the ideal ways of ruling in an ideal world and not as the true ways, the right ways, the pragmatic ways that they are, because they fulfil your purposes and your destiny for humankind.

Lord, we are poor in understanding.

We pray that you will graciously enrich us with your true wisdom.

Lord, we are poor in love.

All our relationships are impoverished by our selfishness.

The whole world is impoverished by our greed. We long for a love that is totally satisfying, that draws us on and makes us whole, yet the demands such love would make, frighten us deeply: In a world of such need what might we not be asked? So we fence ourselves in, create an illusion of safety, deny our own poverty, turn our backs on you.

Lord, we are poor in love.

We pray that you will graciously forgive us and enrich us with your never-ending love.

Lord, we are poor in faith.

Our lack of trust in you and our lack of courage mean that we deny ourselves the riches of real life in you; mean that we deny this hope to other people.

We pray for the faithful who continue to speak out in word and action to a shifting society: people may listen or they may not, but the words resound to your glory.

Lord, we are poor in faith.

We pray that you will so graciously enrich us that we may live by faith in you.

Lord, we are poor in gratitude.

We belong to you.

We believe that you are a suffering, self-giving God who will go to any lengths to gain our love and give us life.

We live in a society where the necessities for physical life can always be obtained.

Yet the attitude of thankfulness is foreign to many of us.

We perceive ourselves as poor, when we are very rich, and our faulty perception stints our generosity with money, with time, with our lives.

Lord, we are poor in gratitude.

We ask that you will graciously impress us with the abundance of your gifts to us, that our hearts may be glad and thankful.

Lord, we are poor in spirit, and though we sometimes pretend we can make it on our own, we need you.

We need you to surround us with your love.

We need you with us, giving us peace.

We need you beside us to lift us when we fall.

We need you ahead of us to guide us.

We need you behind us, pushing us on.

Lord, we are poor in spirit.

We are blessed, for we know our need of you.

We pray that the riches of your grace may be poured out upon us and that we may live in you.

In the name of him who was rich, but for our sakes became poor, our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Communion

At the Last Supper Jesus, sharing bread and wine, invited the disciples to share his journey. Like many grains of wheat becoming one loaf of bread, the disciples were invited to become one body with him.

6 Worship for 7th June 2020

Here today (tonight), through bread and wine, we renew our journey with Jesus and his disciples.

Here, through bread and wine, we renew our unity with one another, and with all those who have gone before us in this place.

Through bread and wine, we renew our communion with the earth and our interwovenness with the broken ones of the world

So come, taste of this bread and wine, gifts of the earth, work of human hands, food both of earth and of heaven.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, at your invitation we come to this table where your sacrifice and triumph have been remembered through all the Christian generations.

As we share the bread and wine, we will demonstrate the unity of all who put their hope in you, the unity which calls us together to praise one God and to proclaim one hope to all the world.

Lord meet us here in the power of your Spirit and send us out as you sent the apostles, to tell the great things God has done, so that all our lives may honour you and glorify our God and Father, now and forever
Amen

The Story of the Last Supper

Among friends, gathered round a table, Jesus took bread, and, having blessed it, He broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you

In the same way he took wine, and, having given thanks for it, He poured it out and gave the cup to his disciples, saying, 'This cup is the new relationship with God, sealed with my blood. Take this and share it. I shall drink wine with you next in the coming kingdom of God'.

So now, following Jesus' example, we take this bread and this wine; The ordinary things of the world through which God will bless us. And, as Jesus offered thanks for the gifts of the earth, let us also celebrate God's goodness.

Prayer

For this time and this place and those around us, thank you, God

For our freedom to worship and name you, thank you, God.

For us you were born, for us you healed, preached, taught and showed the way to heaven; for us you were crucified, and for us, after death, you rose again.

Lord Jesus Christ, present with us now, for all that you have done and all that you have promised, what have we to offer?

Our hands are empty, our hearts are sometimes full of wrong things. We are not fit to gather the crumbs from under your table. But with you is mercy and the power to change us.

So as we do in this place what you did an upstairs room, sent down your holy spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine that they may become for us your body, healing, forgiving and make us whole; and that we may become, for you, your body, loving and caring in the world until your kingdom comes. Amen

Fraction

Gathered as we are, friends round a table in an Upper Room, Jesus took bread, and broke it, and said, "This is my body -- broken for you."
(Break the bread and eat)

Later he took a cup of wine and said, "This is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Take it, all of you, to remember me"
(Drink the wine)

Prayer

Now Lord we will go where you are going: into the world with all its strife and turmoil, all its stress and tension.

Give us all we need to follow to the end.

Fill us with your Spirit until our joy and praise burst out in powerful words, generous love and creative work, to the honour of your name.

AMEN

7 Worship for 7th June 2020

Commemoration

As of yesterday 40,465 people have died from Covid 19. It is a grim milestone and one that should not go unmarked.

40,465 people have died.

These are figures we cannot really comprehend, but let's not get dazzled by the numbers – every one of those deaths was significant.

Every one represents someone's father or mother, grandfather or grandmother, son or daughter, brother or sister.

40,465 deaths is 40,465 families that have lost a love one. Today 200,000 people probably more are today grieving for the loss of a member of their family.

I wonder how big is the town or village where you are watching this – maybe that helps give us a context.

We can't imagine 40,465 people – so here are just 40 – 40 who have died from Covid 19. 40 people and each one will have to represent more than a thousand others.

I would like to invite you now to stand if you are able and spend a minute reflecting on those 40,465 people.

If it helps, focus on just one of these people – pray for their families and let them stand for all the others.

So let's stand in silent prayer.

(One minute's silence)

Gracious God, through your Son you have taught us that nothing in life or in death is able to separate us from your love.

Look in mercy on all to whom great sorrow has come through Covid 19.

Sustain those who are in hospital, support those who are dying. Strengthen the members of the NHS and other support services and all who bring relief and comfort. Console and protect those who have lost loved ones.

Give your light in darkness to all who are near to despair, and assure them that you hold all souls in life;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord.
Amen.

Hymn All my hope on God is founded

All my hope on God is founded,
all my trust He shall renew;
He, my guide through changing order,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
He alone
calls my heart to be His own.

2 Pride of man and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray His trust;
all that human toil can fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3 Day by day our mighty giver
grants to us His gifts of love;
in His will our souls find pleasure,
leading to our home above.
Love shall stand
at His hand,
joy shall wait for His command.

4 Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ His Son.
Hear Christ's call
one and all:
we who follow shall not fall.

Blessing

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
And the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Will be with us all, evermore.
Amen