

Sunday 7 June 2020

## HYMN: CH4: 248

For my sake and the gospel's go  
And tell redemption's story  
His heralds answer, "Be it so,  
And thine, Lord, all the glory  
They preach his birth, his life, his cross  
The love of his atonement  
From whom they count the world but loss  
His Easter, his enthronement

He comes, whose advent trumpet drowns  
The last of time's evangels  
Immanuel, crowned with many crowns  
The Lord of saints and angels  
O Life, Light, Love, the great I AM  
Triune, who changest never  
The throne of God and of the Lamb  
Is thine, and thine for ever.

Edward Henry Bickersteth (1825-1906)

### Setting the Scene

*Legend has it that St Patrick used a shamrock, with its three leaves on one stem, to explain the mystery of the Trinity. Father, Son & Holy Spirit; Creator, Word & Wisdom; Lover, Beloved and Love... Which image speaks to you? Don't try too hard to understand. Find some clover (3-leaved, not 4!), plait three strands of wool together, or use the Celtic symbol to lead you into the deep mystery of God's being.*

**HYMN (CH4 111):** Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty

### Prayer of approach to God

*If human words could describe God, it would not be God that we were describing. So don't try to find words big enough; simply be in God's presence and allow the mystery to draw you into worship.*

**Bible Reading:** Matthew 28: 16-20 & Luke 24: 36-49

*Read both stories, more than once if you need to. Is there anything that stands out, surprises you, puzzles you or speaks to you today?*

### Reflection:

*In Matthew's gospel, the risen Jesus tells the disciples to go out immediately to 'make disciples'; in Luke he tells them to 'wait until the Spirit comes.' There is a time for acting, and a time for waiting. We have been forced by a virus into stopping most of the activities we thought were so essential. Is God trying to tell us something? How can we use the waiting time well? How will we recognise the Spirit calling us forward? Where will this new adventure lead?*

### Prayers for ourselves and others

*Pray for those who are natural 'doers' and fixers, frustrated by all they cannot do just now; and for those who need to be pushed into action. Pray for the Marthas and Marys that you know, and for yourself. Ask for patience to wait, and wisdom to recognise the 'power from on high' when it comes from God.*

### The Lord's Prayer

**HYMN (CH4 248):** For my sake and the gospel's, go

### Blessing

The guarding of the God of life be on you;  
the guarding of the loving Christ be on you;  
the guarding of the Holy Spirit be on you,  
to aid you and enfold you each day and each night of your lives. Amen

## SCRIPTURE

### Matthew 28: 16-20

Then the eleven disciples went to galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the end of the age.

## SCRIPTURE

### Luke 24: 48-49

You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

## HYMN: CH4: 111

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in thee Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy, all the saints adore thee  
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea  
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee  
God ever living through eternity

Holy, holy, holy, though the darkness hide thee  
Though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see  
Only thou art holy; there is none beside thee  
Perfect in power, in love, and purity

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;  
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!  
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

Sunday 14 June 2020

**HYMN: CH4: 509**

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult  
Of our life's wild restless sea  
Day by day his voice is sounding  
Saying, 'Christian, follow me.'

As, of old, Saint Andrew heard it  
By the Galilean lake  
Turned from home and toil and kindred  
Leaving all for his dear sake

Jesus calls us from our worship  
Of the vain world's golden store  
From each idol that would keep us  
Saying, 'Christian, love me more.'

In our joys and in our sorrows  
Days of toil and hours of ease  
Still he calls, in cares and pleasers  
'Christian, love me more than these.'

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818 –1895)

**Setting the Scene**

*We are called to work for the kingdom, but we cannot do it exactly as the disciples did. As restrictions are eased, and we start making tentative steps back out into the world, what do you need to take with you and what can be left behind?*

**HYMN (CH4 616):** There's a spirit in the air

**Prayer of approach to God**

*Be honest with God about how it feels to be expected to carry on the work of the Kingdom without Jesus here in person. Share your weaknesses and your fears, but also your own special gifts. Ask God for the strength you will need.*

**Bible Reading:** Matthew 10: 1-15 The sending out of the Twelve  
*Read the whole story, more than once if you need to. Is there anything that stands out, surprises you, puzzles you or speaks to you today?*

**Reflection:**

v.2: 'these are the names of the 12' *Reflect on what we know about this unlikely collection of saints. God does not call us for our strength, status or wisdom, but because we need to rely on him (1 Corinthians 1: 26-31)*  
vv. 9-10 'don't carry any money or a beggar's bag.' *Do we need to rethink our attitudes to money & possessions (incl. church buildings) & trust God more?*  
V. 14 'shake the dust off your feet' *Not all our efforts will be 'successful'. Can we accept that, without guilt or blame, and move on?*

**Prayers for ourselves and others**

*Pray for each of the churches in the our area, and for all of us together, as we look not just for new ways, but for God's way of working for the Kingdom in these challenging times. Pray for the Church, and for the Kingdom, remembering that these two may overlap but are not the same.*

**The Lord's Prayer**

**HYMN (CH4 509):** Jesus calls us. O'er the tumult

**Blessing**

May God's blessing be upon us,  
and upon all our work and worship done in his name.  
May he give us light to guide us; courage to support us;  
and love to unite us, now and for evermore. Amen



## SCRIPTURE

Matthew 10: 1-15

### Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

<sup>2</sup> These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup> Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup> Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. <sup>6</sup> Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. <sup>7</sup> As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' <sup>8</sup> Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

<sup>9</sup> "Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— <sup>10</sup> no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. <sup>11</sup> Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. <sup>12</sup> As you enter the home, give it your greeting. <sup>13</sup> If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. <sup>14</sup> If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. <sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

## HYMN: CH4: 661

There's a spirit in the air,  
telling Christians everywhere  
Praise the love that Christ revealed  
Living, working in our world!

Lose your shyness, find your tongue,  
tell the world what God has done,  
God in Christ has come to stay,  
Live tomorrow's life today!

May the Spirit fill our praise  
Guide our thoughts and change our ways  
God in Christ has come to stay  
Live tomorrow's life today!

There's a Spirit in the air  
Calling people everywhere  
Praise the love that Christ revealed  
Living, working, in our world

Brian Wren (b1936)

**HYMN: CH4: 737**

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life  
When the clouds unfurl their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain  
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll  
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move  
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
When the breakers roar and the reef is near?  
While the surges rage, and the wild winds blow  
Shall the angry waves them your bark o'erflow?

Will your eyes behold through the morning light  
The city of gold and the harbour bright?  
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore  
When life's storms are past for evermore?

Priscilla Jane Owens (1829-1907)

**Sunday 21st June 2020**

“Take heart, you seekers after God. For the Lord listens to  
the poor and does not despise his captive people.”

Psalm 69: 32,33

**PRAYER**

O God our defender, when storms rage about us and cause  
us to be afraid; rescue your people from despair, deliver  
your sons and daughters from fear and preserve us from all  
unbelief; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives  
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and  
for ever. Amen

**HYMN: CH4: 737: Will your anchor hold?**

**SCRIPTURE Psalm 116: 1-2**

“I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for  
mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as  
long as I live.”

**SCRIPTURE Romans 5: 2-5**

“We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but  
we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that  
suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character;  
and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us,  
because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the  
Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

## REFLECTION

“We rejoice in our sufferings”

How many of us would readily utter those words with conviction? We might bear whatever cross Christ lays upon our shoulders with a great big heavy sigh but are we really likely to rejoice?

That’s why we need to link these words with what goes before them, namely, “We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” If we truly believe that “things beyond our understanding, beyond our seeing and hearing, have all been prepared for those who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ,” then we can begin to “rejoice” (in other words find hope) in the midst of our suffering. It is not easy.

- ◆ Share with God, how you feel about suffering you are enduring. Speak to God in prayer and express the challenges your suffering brings into your life.
- ◆ Pray for the courage and hope you need to face each day.
- ◆ Ask God to wrap you in the warmth of His compassion and care. Ask God to lift any anxiety or despair your suffering is causing.
- ◆ Thank God for the hope you have in Christ Jesus’ promise to be with you always

## PRAYER

Life can really be difficult, Lord Jesus, but then you know this better than me. You were persecuted, you were criticised, you carried the weight of the world’s faults and failings upon your shoulders.

Did this suffering bring tears to your eyes, Lord?

Yes, Lord, it did, for you wept.

Did this suffering make you want to hide away?

Yes, Lord it did, for you sought refuge in the garden

Did this suffering, cause you to cry out “Why and question what was happening?”

Yes, Lord it did, for you asked God the Father, “If it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me. Yet not my will but Yours be done.”

You understand the weight of suffering, Lord.

You have felt the strain of carrying a heavy load.

Because of this, I know that you do not turn away from me in my suffering. Your hands are stretched out to hold the breadth of my pain and your compassion is deep enough to

Reach me wherever my suffering takes me.

Thank you for the hope this brings to me in my suffering.

**HYMN: CH3: 411**

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness  
I dare not trust my sweetest frame  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name  
    On Christ, the solid rock, I stand  
    All other ground is sinking sand

When darkness seems to veil his face  
I rest on his unchanging grace  
In every high and stormy gale  
My anchor holds within the veil

His oath, his covenant, and blood  
Support me in the whelming flood  
When all around my soul gives way  
He then is all my hope and stay

Edward Mote, 1797-1874

**Sunday 28th June 2020**

“There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, its endurance.”

1 Corinthians 13:7

**PRAYER**

Almighty God, you have taught us through your son that love fulfils the law. Grant us grace to love you with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, all our strength, and to love our neighbours as ourselves; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen

**HYMN : CH3: 411: My hope is built on nothing less**

**SCRIPTURE Psalm 13**

How long, O Lord?

Will you forget me for ever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart. Look on me and answer, O Lord my God. Give light to my eyes.

But I trust in your unfailing love ; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.”

## REFLECTION

How long, O Lord?

Will you forget me for ever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart.

These questions raised a long, long time ago, by the Psalmist, are questions that many people are asking today. Physical (social) distancing, is going on, and will continue to go on, for much longer than some people perhaps imagined. There are many people sitting in their home, alone, or with company, yet feeling forgotten by others and by God! Not seeing familiar faces is taking its toll on many people especially at critical times in family life.

- ◆ It's alright to question God and cry out the questions that are playing on your mind.
- ◆ God is love and love is patient.
- ◆ There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, its endurance.
- ◆ God is strong enough to handle your questions
- ◆ Ask God to bless you with the peace of heart and mind and soul you long for.

## PRAYER

Our times are in your hands, O God

Our needs are known to you

Our cries do not go unheard

You listen and you respond in the way that is right for us.

We need patience, Lord,

We need trust in your unfailing love

We need faith that endures not only in good times but in the difficult times too.

Gracious God,

Let our hope be built on nothing less than Jesus' Christ,

The solid rock on which we stand.

If we feel that no one cares or that no one is there for us, help us to remember that we have a friend in Jesus, and that we can take everything to him in prayer.

In the midst of our own questions, Lord, keep us mindful of our neighbours needs too.

They equally might well be struggling and wrestling with questions that are playing on their minds.

In these challenging times, comfort us, O God, comfort us with your Word and give light to our eyes. Amen