

Morning Worship at Christchurch, Ilkley

Sunday 7th February 2021



Welcome

O God, we zoom in to you after the week just gone – with its successes and disappointments, its joys and its struggles.

By your Holy Spirit, help us to focus on you now, to listen as you speak to our hearts, so that we may be better prepared to serve you in the week to come.

Call to Worship



This picture very much reflects how Christine and I feel first thing in a morning although we use our Amazon Alexa smart speaker as an alarm which means we don't even have to lift an arm from under the covers. Just tell Alexa to snooze and that's another 9 minutes in bed. So in what circumstances do you feel the need to press the snooze button? Dark, cold and wet mornings do it for me. How about you? and how well balanced is your life between action and reflection? – Assuming you do actually get up

This morning, we are looking at a portion of Chapter 1 of Mark's Gospel in which

Jesus shows us **his** priorities – he knows what he must do and demonstrates this by healing and proclaiming the good news. However, Jesus also takes time out to get away from the crowds and be alone in prayer – he knows what he must do to care for himself and stay true to his mission.

A gathering prayer

We gather to sing praises to our God.
How pleasant and fitting to praise him.
Let us sing to the Lord with thanksgiving
and make music to our God.
Let our worship rise high on the wings of praise.

Amen.

And so let us join together now in song:

StF 351 In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!

My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;

For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

A prayer of Adoration

Everlasting God, creator of heaven and earth,
your love causes our hearts to soar.
You know the number of stars in the universe
– just as you know the number of hairs on our head.

Mighty God: We love you.

You call each star by name
– just as you call us each by name.

Mighty God: We love you.

A prayer of confession

People. People. Everywhere! Day in. Day out.
Seeking you, Lord. Hunting you. Following you.
Hungry for your presence. Wanting your attention.
Yet not once did you complain.

We're sorry, Lord, that the weight of life's demands causes us to stumble,
to lose our temper and at times to buckle under the pressure.
Help us to be more like you, Lord.

Assurance of forgiveness

And because of his love,
he heals and sets us free from sin's guilt and power,
we are forgiven.

Amen The Son of God loves us.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

Keith Getty (b1974)/Stuart Townend (b1963)

You supply the earth with rain to make the grass grow;
and provide food for the animals and birds
– just as you provide all we need to sustain us.

Mighty God: We love you.

You care about the details, seeing every tiny part of the bigger picture
– just as you care about the tiniest detail in our lives;
for you know the person you created each of us to be.

Mighty God: We love you Amen.

We're sorry for not getting our priorities right.
Help us to know, as you did,

the importance of spending time with and drawing refreshment from the Father.
We're sorry for allowing other people and things to take over and squeeze out our time with you.

Help us to draw daily on your refreshing strength in order to cope with whatever our day holds.

Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

Jesus Heals Many People ²⁹ Jesus and his disciples, including James and John, left the synagogue and went straight to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever, and as soon as Jesus arrived, he was told about her. ³¹ He went to her, took her by the hand, and helped her up. The fever left her, and she began to wait on them. ³² After the sun had set and evening had come, people brought to Jesus all the sick and those who had demons. ³³ All the people of the town gathered in front of the house. ³⁴ Jesus healed many who were sick with all kinds of diseases and drove out many demons. He would not let the demons say anything, because they knew who he was.

Jesus Preaches in Galilee ³⁵ Very early the next morning, long before daylight, Jesus got up and left the house. He went out of town to a lonely place, where he prayed. ³⁶ But Simon and his companions went out searching for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you." ³⁸ But Jesus answered, "We must go on to the other villages around here. I have to preach in them also, because that is why I came." ³⁹ So he traveled all over Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and driving out demons.

TALK The first 100 days

Well it's not yet 20 days since Joe Biden was inaugurated as the 46th US President. He's got another 80 days to go until he reaches the magic 100 days. A new administration's first 100 days are typically scrutinized for signs of a president's or Prime Minister's governing style and priorities, his manifesto if you like.

When politicians or chief executives begin a new role, they often set out a list of priorities for their first 100 days, giving a sense of the direction of their thinking. Then, we critically evaluate their achievements against their stated hopes and goals. In today's reading we find Jesus is establishing his priorities for his mission. He preaches and heals, he resources his disciples, and he underpins all this with a life of prayer. There is no stated list of aims and objectives. Far more powerfully, people can see from his actions what he wants to achieve.

Where do people wish they could gather in excitement today? Football matches? Black Friday sales? Major concerts and festivals? The feel-good factor is important. The hope of making a difference also attracts people. For example, events around climate change draw increasing numbers. Sadly, it's rare today to find people gathering round the church door. Can we recover some of the excitement and promise of seeing Jesus and experiencing his life-changing power on the home ground of our church? Or would we do better to go where others are gathering, and take with us the joy of being with Jesus?

New incumbents more often than not cause a stir – don't they just. A good leader is someone to be cherished; however, always expect the unexpected. Wow! nobody saw Covid coming and its devastating impact worldwide. Since the dawn of history the world and its peoples have continually faced challenges both natural and person-made. Nonetheless we are blessed with gifted people in all walks of life with science and vaccines prominent currently. As Christians we have prayed fervently for good outcomes and must continue to do so and be guided along the way by Jesus. He was born into a time and place when the people were looking for a strong leader to support them against the occupying power of Rome. In Jesus they saw a possible solution to their problems as they experienced his presence and activity.

As we reflect on our bible reading this morning, we see that Mark Chapter 1 verses 29 – 39, relates in just 11 verses, how we enter a portion of Jesus's 100 days ;– previously he has miraculously healed a man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue as witnessed by many. Public stuff. Then as soon as he leaves the synagogue, he goes to Peter's house and we witness some private stuff – another miracle. One amazing thing after another.

DRAMA Simon's mother-in-law

A reporter from *Judaeen News* wants to know why people are queueing outside Simon's mother-in-law's house

The interviewee is standing near the back of a long queue. The reporter approaches the interviewee.

Reporter: *(to the audience)* Hello, and welcome to Capernaum, where there has been quite the commotion overnight. Excuse me, sir, I'm from *Judean News*. Can I ask what you're doing here?

Sick person: I'm waiting to be healed, innit.

Reporter: Healed? Do you mind if I ask what of?

Sick person: I don't really know. Something-itis. But it's serious. I'm amazed I can stand.

Reporter: Oh dear. But why have you come to this house today – it's not a doctor's, is it?

Sick person: No. But my friend came here yesterday, dragged by his brothers, and this new rabbi cured his fever just like that. He'd been sick for weeks and he came running down our street looking like a new man.

Reporter: So, this is the rabbi's house?

Sick person: No. It's Simon's place. His mother-in-law was really sick but then this rabbi, Jesus, turned up and suddenly she's serving hummus! Word got out and my mate's brothers brought him straight round – along with everyone else who's been suffering.

Reporter: And everyone was cured?

Sick person: That's what my mate said – headaches, fevers, blindness, evil spirits – the lot. All healed.

Reporter: So, when are you hoping to get seen?

Sick person: I don't know. I got here in the early hours, but they'd already shut the door by then. I'm just waiting for them to re-open.

Reporter: *(putting a finger to his ear)* Hold on. I'm just getting a report in. What's that? Right. Apparently, Jesus has left the village. Yes, Jesus has left the village. Do we know where he's gone? Other villages? He said that's why he came? OK, I'll wrap up here and we'll go take a look.

Sick person: So he's not coming back here?

Reporter: Apparently not. I've been told that Jesus says he is going to the other villages. And, I quote, 'This is why I have come'.

Sick person: Oh, right...erm...(pause) Can you give me a lift?

SONG A little bit of Love Graham Kendrick (b 1950)

A little bit of love goes a long, long way
A little love
A little love
A little bit of love and I'm on my way

A little love
A little love

A long way but we'll get there together
A long way but we'll get there soon

Along the way we can lean on each other
A little love goes a long, long way

A little love
A little love

A little bit of love and the sun comes
shining

A little love
A little love
A little bit of kindness and someone's
smiling
A little love
A little love

A long way but we'll get there together
A long way but we'll get there soon
Along the way we can lean on each other
A little love goes a long, long way

A little love
A little love

Little drops of rain can trickle down into a
puddle

Then the puddles get together making
streams that make a river
The rivers fill the valleys with a roaring and
a rushing
Then the little drops of rain have made a
Wide, wide, wide, wide
Wide, wide ocean

A long way but we'll get there together
A long way but we'll get there soon
Along the way we can lean on each other
A little love goes a long, long way

A long way but we'll get there together
A long way but we'll get there soon
Along the way we can lean on each other
A little love goes a long, long way

A little love
A little love
A little love

Graham Kendrick (b 1950)

TALK 2

A man, his wife and his mother-in-law went on vacation to the Holy Land. While they were there, the mother-in-law passed away. The undertaker told them, 'You can have her shipped home for £5,000, or you can bury her here in the Holy Land for £150.' The man thought about it and told him he would just have her shipped home. The undertaker asked, 'Why would you spend £5,000 to ship your mother-in-law home, when it would be wonderful to have her buried here and spend only £150?' The man replied, 'a man died here 2,000 years ago, was buried here, and three days later he rose from the dead. I just can't take that chance.'

That's definitely not the relationship that Simon experienced. He loved his mother-in-law and a little bit of love does go a long long way. Take encouragement and consider this :

a good mother-in-law is not nosy nor biased, she is kind and not jealous. She knows how to go out and when to come in. She is wise as an owl and gentle as a dove. She is a reservoir of strength. She knows that she is a source of strength for her children. Therefore, she is always ready to give positive advice and encouraging words that are building blocks for life's journey. Finally, she knows that her strength does not lie within herself, and is very much aware that her help and her strength comes from the Lord.

A good mother-in-law is a peacemaker. If she senses unrest, she encourages all parties to make peace. Her motto is always 'let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me'. That works for us all I think.

Peter's mother-in-law was so seriously under the weather that she was unable to do her hospitality duties as she was ill in bed. Jesus fixed her so that she recovered and got back to what she did best.

Private stuff but nevertheless the good news of Jesus is spreading like wildfire. Just like our present day world leaders need their personal space, Jesus was tired and wanted time with

God his father. After a time of prayer and reflection – a bit of me time – he is refreshed and off again to continue his first 100 days making a difference for good. Removing one of the o's works I think – making a difference for God.

So what qualities did Jesus display? Authority certainly as he cast out evil spirits and healed. News of His life and lifestyle spread throughout Galilee and it became increasingly clear that someone special had appeared. In these current days of darkness it's good to know Jesus truly is the Son of God. His ministry of preaching, teaching, healing and serving was rooted in and flows out of His personal relationship

with God his father. A little bit of love goes a long long way and with Jesus we are seeing serious love in abundance. We are less than 40 days into 2021 and may we now accept Jesus's challenge to demonstrate our priorities through love in action. Certainly these priorities and actions won't be what we would have predicted pre-Covid but rest assured there will be opportunities to do Jesus stuff in a different way.

"Follow me" Jesus said.

Let's dare to dream what we can be, and can do, through His Love. Amen

INTERCESSIONS

God of love,
you give power to the faint and strength to
the powerless.

Many of us are exhausted,
juggling with school at the kitchen table,
responding to demands of work or family
life
or dealing with isolation, joblessness and
fear.

Help us to hope in you.

We pray for the leaders of our church...
Encourage and strengthen them in their
work,
give us all fresh vision for the future of
church
and renew our Imagination, creativity and
wisdom
as we address financial and ministerial
challenges.

Turn us towards each other in acts of
loving service.
then turn us outwards to carry your gospel
of healing into the world.

Help us to hope in you.

God of all creation, you restore the face of
the earth:
stir us up to action to protect our planet.
May our feet tread lightly on the earth
and our actions and priorities bring healing
to our battered world.

Renew our strength and bind up our
wounds

Help us to hope in you.

God of love,
you restore what is broken and you bring
together what has been split apart.
Today we pray for Myanmar in the
aftermath of a military coup
where there is now a year-long state of
emergency.

We ask for peace in a dangerous and
fragile situation.

Help us to hope in you.

God of love,
you defend the voiceless.
We pray for the UK where society is marred
by vast inequalities
of life chances, opportunities and money,
and where Covid has revealed the vast
wealth owned by some
and the struggles of others just to make
ends meet.

May we hear the cries of the powerless
and by our words, choices and actions
may we be agents of healing in the world.

Help us to hope in you.

God of love,
you heal the broken hearted and you
gather in all who are lost.
We give thanks today for those like Captain
Sir Tom Moore;

and we pray for their families.
We pray for all who are mourning the loss
of family members or friends.
We offer to you all who are suffering in
mind or body...
asking for peace, and for your healing
presence in their need.
Help us to hope in you.

God of love,
your kindness is everlasting.
Surround us with your arms of love;
keep our eyes fixed on you

and make us ready to follow where you
lead,
trusting that you will provide for us – today
and always.
Amen.

Lords Prayer

Songs of Fellowship 429 O Lord the Clouds are gathering

O Lord, the clouds are gathering
The fire of judgement burns
How we have fallen!
O Lord, you stand appalled to see
Your laws of love so scorned
And lives so broken

Have mercy, Lord, (Men)
Have mercy, Lord, (Women)
Forgive us, Lord, (Men)
Forgive us, Lord (Women)
Restore us, Lord (All)
Revive your church again
Let justice flow (Men)
Let justice flow (Women)
Like rivers (Men)
Like rivers (Women)
And righteousness like a never failing
stream (All)

O Lord, over the nations now
Where is the dove of peace?

Her wings are broken
O Lord, while precious children starve
The tools of war increase
Their bread is stolen

O Lord, dark powers are poised to flood
Our streets with hate and fear
We must awaken!
O Lord, let love reclaim the lives
That sin would sweep away
And let your kingdom come

Yet, O Lord, your glorious cross shall tower
Triumphant in this land
Evil confounding
Through the fire your suffering church
display
The glories of her Christ
Praises resounding

Graham Kendrick (b 1950)

Blessing

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