

Sunday 13 March 2022

The Second Sunday of Lent



Sermon © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 Fairest Lord Jesus

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion, and confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

It is usual to omit the Gloria during Lent.

The Collect for the Second Sunday of Lent

Almighty God,
you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,
that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted
 into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things
 that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

First reading

A reading from the First Book of Moses called Genesis

The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.'

Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Then he said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess.' But he said, 'O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?' He said to him, 'Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.' He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him.

When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.' *Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Philippians

I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are

set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. *Philippians 3:14—4:1*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 I am the great sun (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Oh, Lord you're beautiful (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

Some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem." Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you.

'And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord".' *Luke 13:31-35*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

We have three readings about journeying: Abram abandons his birthplace and heads into the unknown. He may be a refugee. Everything changes, even his name. God tells him to change it from 'Abram' to 'Abraham'. His birth name means 'exalted father' and his new name means 'father of a multitude.' He becomes bigger in both a genealogical sense but, more importantly, he becomes vastly bigger in a spiritual sense. In the second reading, St Paul talks in terms of a different journey saying, 'Press on toward the goal.' It may be the same metaphor for participating in a race that he uses elsewhere, for example in Corinthians. And in today's Gospel

Jesus is heading in a different direction, toward certain death in Jerusalem. He's understandably emotional and, other versions in other Gospels, he even weeps.

Taken together, then, these are three stories of moving from A to B. Each journey is undertaken to achieve something. They have much in common—they share an eerie sense of uncertainty and a gut-wrenchingly strong sense of emotion and pain. No one wants to leave their past for an uncertain future—think of Ukrainian refugees at the moment. But the flight of the alone to the unknown in today's readings each achieves that which God demands. Placed in their shoes, we might want to argue with God, saying something like, 'It might be what You want, Lord, but is there a different way, a more certain way, a path that does not involve so much suffering?' We may want to go further and, like Abraham bartering with God before the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah or Jesus shouting at God in Gethsemane.

We're in the season of Lent. Traditionally, Lent is a time of reflection. We think about our Christian lives—past, now present, with the aim of accessing a future worth living for. It's therefore entirely appropriate to kick-start Lent with thoughts of journeying. We know where we started from (it's a different place for all of us in terms of geography, emotion, and spirituality); and we all know where we want to head—a spiritual destination that Christians traditionally call 'Heaven'. All of us are human. All of us are responding to our past and so, in some measure, we're broken and in need of change.

To recap: all of us are on spiritual journey from our own customised past toward Heaven. In John's Gospel, Jesus said 'I am the gate.' By that statement he means that we pass through him if we want to reach God. I like the analogy of light passing through a stained-glass window. It acquires its colour as it passes through the glass. So if we pass through Jesus we must inevitably look like him. We acquire his aspect.

It's beginning to look very much as though our own spiritual journey involves a path that leads us toward Jesus. Our Lenten journey involves Jesus. We look for Jesus. We must therefore learn what he looks like so we can recognise him. At this point there comes a warning (it comes from Archbishop Rowan Williams): 'Looking at Jesus seriously changes things; if we do not want to be changed, it is better not to look too hard or too long.' We look for Jesus in order to follow him. To do so, we must really want to become like Jesus. We come up against the all-too-obvious statement, 'We must aim to become truly Christlike if we want to reach Heaven. All who wish to enter heaven must therefore change.'

The problems then begin. Today's Gospel shows a great many of Jesus' trademark traits: he is a prophet, which means listening to God and doing what God says. He speaks truth to power. He cares and comforts and protects: think of the lovely

image he invokes of a mother hen. He shows grit and determination. These are the traits he wants of us as we follow our own customised pilgrimages, growing in faith.

This Lent, then, we are called to change so we become more like Jesus. To that end, we must assess and adjust. Most of us will struggle, which is why God has called us together as Church. That way, we can better help each other. Actually, that offering and accepting of mutual help is part of the change we each need to accommodate. And, in most circumstances, that giving and receiving of help looks very much like love. Scripture assures us that God *is* love so our growth in love is perhaps a safe litmus test for how far we're advancing on this journey into Christ.

Our journey this Lent is a journey toward and into Christlikeness. And, it seems, it's a journey toward love. That conclusion should come as no surprise whatsoever because the Easter at the end of Lent is also all about Jesus and also all about love.

So my prayer, as we get to grips with Lent, is that we embrace the idea of change and welcome the opportunity to grow into Christlikeness. To those ends, I pray that we will grow in love, and that the Church will also grow so that we can change together, support each other, and grow in love together. Amen.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

We pray to the Lord for courage to give up other things and to give ourselves to him this Lent.

Give your Church the courage to give up her preoccupation with herself and to give more time to your mission in the world.

[We pray for ...]

May the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus bring forgiveness to your people and help us to face the cost of proclaiming salvation.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

All Give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give your world the courage to give up war, bitterness and hatred, and to seek peace. [We pray for ...]

May the shoulders of the risen Jesus, once scourged by soldiers, bear the burden of political and military conflict in our world.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

All Give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give us the courage to give up quarrels, strife and jealousy in our families, neighbourhoods and communities.

[We pray for ...]

May the presence of the risen Jesus, his body once broken and now made whole, bring peace and direction as we live with one another.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

All Give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give us the courage to give up our selfishness as we live for others, and to give time, care and comfort to the sick.

[We pray for ...]

May the wounded hands of Jesus bring his healing touch, and the light of his presence fill their rooms.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

All Give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give us the courage to give up our fear of death
and to rejoice with those who have died in faith.

[Especially we hold ... in our minds.]

May the feet of the risen Lord Jesus, once nailed to the cross,
walk alongside the dying and bereaved in their agony,
and walk with us and all your Church
through death to the gate of glory.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**All give us strength and hear our prayer,
here and in eternity. Amen.**

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The peace

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Come thou long expected Jesus (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 I heard the voice of Jesus say (click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Almighty God,
you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:
keep us both outwardly in our bodies,
and inwardly in our souls;
that we may be defended from all adversities
which may happen to the body,
and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.