



Morning Prayer 7th November 2021

3rd Sunday before Advent.

Preparation

O Lord, open our lips

All and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Your faithful servants bless you.

All They make known the glory of your kingdom.

Blessed are you, Sovereign God,
ruler and judge of all,
to you be praise and glory for ever.

In the darkness of this age that is passing away
may the light of your presence which the saints enjoy
surround our steps as we journey on.

May we reflect your glory this day
and so be made ready to see your face
in the heavenly city where night shall be no more.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All Blessed be God for ever.

HYMN

1. 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.

2. 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 every sin on him was laid:
here in the death of Christ I live.

3. 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.

4. No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

Confession

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'
So let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing
our sins in penitence and faith. *cf Matthew 4.17*

**All Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing
and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

cf Psalm 51

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse *us* from *our* sins,
and restore *us* in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Word of God

The Psalm for today is Psalm 62:5 – end.

⁵ Wait on God alone in stillness, O my soul;
for in him is my hope.

⁶ He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.

⁷ In God is my strength and my glory;
God is my strong rock; in him is my refuge.

⁸ Put your trust in him always, my people;
pour out your hearts before him, for God is our refuge.

⁹ The peoples are but a breath,
the whole human race a deceit;
on the scales they are altogether lighter than air.

¹⁰ Put no trust in oppression; in robbery take no empty pride;
though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.

¹¹ God spoke once, and twice have I heard the same,
that power belongs to God.

¹² Steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord,
for you repay everyone according to their deeds.

In our meditation, let us concentrate firstly on verse 7, how do we experience the love of God in this way? Secondly, taking the example of verse 8, how do we share our personal knowledge of the living God with others?

O God, teach us to seek security,
not in money or theft,
not in human ambition or malice,
not in our own ability or power,
but in you, the only God,
our rock and our salvation.

All Amen.

The Old Testament reading is taken from Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Conversion of Nineveh

¹The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, ²‘Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.’ ³So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of

the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. ⁴Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, 'Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' ⁵And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

¹⁰When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

The Gospel reading is taken from Mark 1:14-20

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁶As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen.

¹⁷And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' ¹⁸And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Sermon

The Ven. Alex Hughes

As you may know, in the Church of England, like many other churches, we follow a set pattern of readings that runs over a three-year period; and in each of the three years most of the Sunday Gospel readings

come from either Matthew or Mark or Luke. At the moment we are in year B, which is the year for Mark's Gospel. In a couple of weeks' time, on Advent Sunday, we'll change to year C, and all our Sunday Gospels will be from Luke. Passages from John's Gospel get sprinkled across all three years.

Anyway, the reason I tell you this is partly because it might be interesting for you to know how the Sunday readings come about, but mainly because, if you have been following the story from Mark since last Advent, you might be wondering why, at nearly the end of the year, we've suddenly jumped back to Chapter 1, and very earliest days of Jesus' ministry. To be honest, I don't really know why we go back to the beginning again just before the end; but let me try to make some sense of it.

In today's reading we find Jesus wandering along the shore of lake Galilee. He doesn't have any followers yet, and no reputation. He's just starting out. At this stage, neither he, nor anyone else knows exactly what will happen over the coming few years. Unlike us, who have already read to the end of the story, they are all still at the beginning. So it may be that the people who put together our pattern of readings don't want us to forget how it all started.

The wisdom of tradition says that we mustn't be tempted to think that we've got to the end of the story, and have no need to start all over again. I think it is quite important to say this loud and clear. One of the most helpful talks on prayer I have ever been to was many years ago, when I heard Stephen Cottrell, now Archbishop of York, say that he had never got any further than being an "experienced beginner". It's encouraging to hear this from someone high up in the church, I think; and it resonates with my general experience that the Christian life

involves a series of new starts, and the best we can ever say is that we are “experienced beginners”.

It may be a very long time ago that we first heard the call to follow Jesus; but how often do we need to hear it again; to be re-called, when he have gone off track? Because let's be honest, it's hard to focus only on *one* voice, the voice of Jesus, amongst all the other voices that clamour for our attention. So many people want to make a claim on our time, our energy, our money and so on; there are so many demands to meet; and quite often it seems as if these voices are nearer and more insistent than the call of God. People will notice very quickly if we stop attending to our families, our colleagues, our friends, our emails; but they won't know if we forget to say our prayers each day, and listen for the word of God. At least, that's how it can seem; and before you know it, another year has gone by, and the call of God seems like a distant memory.

So thank God for the tradition, which intrudes upon the year's end with a reminder of how it all started out ... with the promise that, not matter how far we've strayed, the journey is there to begin again. For Christ is always to be found, walking along the shoreline of our busy, hectic lives, and calling us to be with him. His presence is constant: it is we who slip away and find ourselves adrift yet again, and sometimes in deep water. In this we are no different from the first disciples, who left their nets immediately and followed Jesus, but who also abandoned him in his hour of need. There was hope for them, and there is hope for us too.

Let us be experienced beginners, joyful in the knowledge that Christ's call to us remains constant, no matter how far we have wandered away from our first intentions or how long we have tuned our ears and turned our lives to other things.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus,

guide us by your Spirit to discover your call upon our lives.

Grant us humility to listen to your voice

courage to act when you call

faithfulness to follow where you lead

and a selfless abandonment to do your will. Amen.

Apostle's Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for the world, the church, our community, and we thank God for his goodness. The prayers will be led by Deborah Spencer.

The Collect

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son was revealed
to destroy the works of the devil
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:
grant that we, having this hope,
may purify ourselves even as he is pure;
that when he shall appear in power and great glory
we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;
where he is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**All 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.**

HYMN

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth,
at Bethlehem I had my birth.

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.*

- 2 I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
but they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me.
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John -
they came with me and the Dance went on.

Chorus

- 3 I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
the holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me on high,
and they left me there on a Cross to die.

Chorus

- 4 I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black -
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the Dance, and I still go on.

Chorus

- 5 They cut me down and I leapt up high;
I am the life that'll never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me -
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.

Chorus

Closing words

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; give honour to all;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

All **Amen.**

cf I Thessalonians 5.13-22

May Christ, who has opened the kingdom of heaven,
bring us to reign with him in glory.

All **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**