

30th August 2020 – Morning Service

Mirror, Mirror on the wall

Rev Michael Payne

Call to Worship – Psalm 105

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

Song – When I look into your holiness

When I look into Your holiness,	I worship You,
When I gaze into Your loveliness.	I worship You,
When all things that surround	The reason I live is to worship You.
Become shadows in the light of You.	I worship You,
When I've found the joy of reaching Your heart,	I worship You,
When my will becomes enthralled in Your love,	The reason I live is to worship You
When all things that surround	
Become shadows in the light of You.	

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Prayers of Praise, Adoration and Confession

Lord you are the God of all, Creation, Life, Purpose, Love, Grace and much more beside;
We pause in this moment to refocus our thinking on the reality of you our God.

Great and glorious, powerful and meaningful, holy, mighty, majestic and Sovereign; you are God.
We Praise you for the bounty of Creation, the gift of life we receive, and the purpose you give us made fuller in Christ. Each day is a gift for growth in relationship with you and others.

We acknowledge that we have not always used creation wisely, or lived according to your purpose. We have failed to share the Love and Grace you have poured out upon us. Forgive us our sin as we come before you in the name of Jesus, our Saviour and Lord, cleanse us, restore us and enable us by the power of the Holy Spirit to hear your words of grace, “your sins are forgiven”, and live ever more for your glory.

Amen

Reading: Matthew 16:13-28 – Peter declares the Jesus is the Messiah & Jesus predicts his death

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’ And they said, ‘Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.’ He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ And Jesus answered him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.’ Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This must never

happen to you.’ But he turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’

Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?’

‘For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.’

StF 666 – Master speak, thy servant heareth

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| 1) Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for thy gracious word,
Longing for thy voice that cheereth;
Master, let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for thee;
What hast thou to say to me? | 3) Master, speak! Though least and lowest,
Let me not unheard depart;
Master, speak! For O thou knowest
All the yearning of my heart,
Knowest all its truest need;
Speak, and make me blest indeed. |
| 2) Speak to me by name, O Master,
Let me know it is to me;
Speak, that I may follow faster,
With a step more firm and free,
Where the Shepherd leads the flock
In the shadow of the rock. | 4) Master, speak: and make me ready,
When thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady
Still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for thee;
Master, speak! O speak to me! |

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Reading: Romans 12:9-21 – Love in action

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ No, ‘if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Sermon – Mirror, Mirror on the wall

Simon Peter’s declaration about Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Is affirmed by Jesus - Matt 16:17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. This next part is my thought on such an occasion and pure speculation: -

“Ok” thinks Simon Peter and the other disciples, “that being the case we need a plan”. – I have a strange picture now of Blackadder walking up to Jesus and saying, “I have a cunning plan, my Lord.” You could imagine the disciples after the affirmation given to Peter of going away for a couple of hours to plan their

strategy. If Jesus is the King, and if his people are to be like a house built on rock then they must work out how to get rid of the present kings and priests who are ruling – or rather mis-ruling – Israel.

“Ok, let us march on Jerusalem, pick up supporters on the way who will follow us along, choose out moment, say our prayers, fight a surprise battle, take over the Temple and install Jesus as King. QED”. (The initials of the Latin phrase *quod erat demonstrandum*, which translates as "which was to be demonstrated" or quite easily done!) “That is how God’s kingdom will come. That is how the Son of Man will be exalted in his Kingdom – that is my cunning plan, my Lord.” However, Jesus has another way of doing things.

Have you ever watched an animal look in a mirror? A number of years ago there was some research with dolphins and mirrors in which they seemed to have some recognition of themselves. Have you ever watched a young baby/child look in a mirror? It is reckoned that a child will be about two before they understand it is a reflection of themselves that they are looking at (dolphins were in fact younger.) To do things whilst only looking in a mirror can be quite difficult until we get used to doing it. How good are you at writing backwards?

When Lewis Carroll had become famous through his story of Alice in Wonderland he followed it up with a second book, “Through the Looking Glass”. In it, his readers needed to learn how to think inside out. In order to get somewhere in that world you discover it is no good trying to walk towards it; you’ll look up presently and discover you are further away than ever. In order to get somewhere you have to set off in the opposite direction. It takes a sustained mental effort to imagine all ordinary activities of life working in a mirror.

Jesus, in the days following Simon Peter’s confession of faith asks his disciples to think in a similar inside out manner. To begin with they cannot cope and find it completely impossible to believe that the way Jesus suggests can be right at all.

Matt 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Matt 16:22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

The route Jesus suggests does not fit with the ideas of Peter and the disciples and Peter let’s Jesus know. Jesus’ proposal is a “through the looking glass” version of the Peter plan. Yes, we’ll be going to Jerusalem, Yes, the Kingdom is coming. Yes, the Son of man will be exalted as king, dispensing justice to the world, but the route to the Kingdom is the exact opposite road to the one the disciples have in mind. The route of Jesus was the route of suffering and death.

Jesus will indeed confront the rulers and the authorities, the chief priest and legal experts, in Jerusalem, but they, not he will appear to win the battle. He will then be raised from the dead, so Jesus says, but neither Peter nor the other disciples can figure out for the moment what he means by this.

They see him talking nonsense; Peter blunders in with his best feet forward in a two-footed lunge tackle liable to receive a red card. We see him moving from rock to shifting sand and Jesus uses words for Peter he has used for his archenemy.

This passage holds a warning for all of us who are involved in the life of the Kingdom, particularly in leadership roles, that the one to whom so many of the greatest promises and commissions were given earned the sharpest rebuke.

Like Paul in his letters and the prophet Isaiah, Jesus insists that God thinks differently from how we mortals think. God sees everything inside out; or perhaps God sees everything the right way round and we are looking at things back to front, inside out.

1 Cor 13:12 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face.

In Rom 12:20 Paul quotes Psalm 25 "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.

The message is that the Church is called to think God's way not man's way and that is not always easy or comfortable.

Jesus then goes on to talk about following –

Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.

This is not the Peter method of people casually joining in a gentle procession into Jerusalem like the Pied Piper of Hamlyn. But to follow Jesus will cost everything but will give everything as well. There are no half measures in this journey. To truly follow Jesus is a bit like learning to swim - you cannot do it whilst one foot is on the bottom. To follow we must learn to think inside out for what the world counts as foolishness is true wisdom. Cling to your life and you will lose it – let go of your life and truly live.

Song – Have thine own way Lord

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| 1) Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mould me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still. | 3) Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray.
Power, all power, surely is Thine,
Touch me and heal me, Saviour divine. |
| 2) Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Search me and try me, Master, today.
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,
As in Thy presence humbly I bow. | 4) Have Thine own way, Lord,
Have Thine own way;
Hold o'er my being absolute sway.
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me. |

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Prayers of Intercession

We pray for those confused by the ways of the world.

For those living amongst violence rather than love,

For those living with little whilst surrounded by plenty,

For those for whom modern technology is a mystery that limits their ability to partake fully in society.

We pray for those living with illness and dis-ease, in a society where we expect science to cure all ills.

We pray for those living through loss and bereavement where neighbours and friends have moved on to new issues and forgotten the loss of others.

We pray for those who want to return to social interaction unable to do so by circumstances or fear to do so.

We pray for those confused by the ways of Jesus, those in the Church and those outside.

Guide us in the way of doing things Your Kingdom way in a world where the way of yesterday will not be the way of tomorrow.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

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.**

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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are
yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

StF 489 – All I once held dear

1) All I once held dear, built my life upon,
All this world reveres, and wars to own,
All I once thought gain, I have counted loss;
Spent and worthless now, compared to this.

*Ch) Knowing you, Jesus, knowing You
There is no greater thing
You're my all, you're the best,
You're my joy, my righteousness,
And I love you, Lord.*

2) Now my heart's desire is to know You more,
To be found in You and known as Yours.
To possess by faith what I could not earn,
All surpassing gift of righteousness.

3) Oh to know the power of Your risen life,
And to know You in Your sufferings.
To become like You in Your death, my Lord
So with You to live and never die.

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Closing Blessing

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever. **Amen.**