



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 15th September 2024

compiled by Rev. Chris Jackson

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come to praise and honour God
in word, in thought and in action.

We come to give God our full attention,
to worship and to offer our lives.

HYMN

Abba Father, let me be

Yours and Yours alone.

May my will forever be

Ever more Your own.

Never let my heart grow cold,

Never let me go.

Abba Father, let me be

Yours and Yours alone. Dave Bilbrough (b. 1955)

PRAYER

O God, may our lips proclaim your praise
and testify to the good news you bring.

You are our great and awesome God,
whose word does great and awesome things –
we are privileged to be part of your story,
to be recipients of your love and grace.

We praise you, God of heaven and earth,
we give you all the glory. **AMEN**

LET US JOIN IN THE LORD'S PRAYER TOGETHER

READING Mark 8:27 - 38 (NRSV)

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah."

And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again.

He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "If any wish to come after me, 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, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.

For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?

Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?

Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

HYMN

1] Blessèd be Your name

In the land that is plentiful,

Where Your streams of abundance flow,

Blessèd be Your name.

2] And blessèd be Your name

When I'm found in the desert place,

Though I walk through the wilderness,

Blessèd be Your name.

Every blessing You pour out I'll

Turn back to praise.

When the darkness closes in, Lord,

Still I will say:

Blessèd be the name of the Lord,

Blessèd be Your name.

Blessèd be the name of the Lord,

Blessèd be Your glorious name.

3] Blessèd be Your name

When the sun's shining down on me,

When the world's 'all as it should be',

Blessèd be Your name.

4] Blessèd be Your name

On the road marked with suffering,

Though there's pain in the offering,

Blessèd be Your name.

You give and take away,

You give and take away.

My heart will choose to say:

Lord, blessèd be Your name. *Matt Redman (b. 1974)*

REFLECTION

Who are you?

How do we introduce ourselves when we meet someone new?

Are we defined by our role? A shop assistant, a student, a farmer, a mother, a father, a child...how do we see ourselves, perhaps how we answer is how we would like others to see us?

Identity matters. It informs our lifestyle outwardly and inwardly. I am Chris, I'm a Christian and a Methodist Minister. They inform my identity. They are not fashion trends that will be changed when something better comes along. I love God and God loves me, I choose to follow Jesus. It is my identity. It is who I am.

We are now going to look at Jesus. Who is he? What is his identity? And who do people think he is?

These are the same questions I am sure the disciples asked themselves all those years ago, in today's reading.

Mark 8 is the pivotal moment in the structure of Mark's Gospel. It is the point where everything changes. The point where the author stops teasing us with questions about who Jesus is and firmly answers the question to which the Gospel had been leading up to at this point.

The first verse of the Gospel says: *The Beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, The Son of God*...it's almost like a title, but until this point, exactly half way through the gospel, the fact stated in the beginning has not been referred to, until now!!!

The author of Mark is rather clever in the way the Gospel is structured. Jesus goes around the countryside performing miracles, healing people and generally doing amazing things, and occasionally asking his followers, "Do you still not understand what's going on?"...the penny just wasn't dropping. There is also the distinct use of the healing of a blind man...placed in the Gospel just before today's reading. The man who was blind could now see things clearly...a prelude to Peter's declaration of Jesus as the Messiah...the "Oh I see, I've got it now" - the light bulb moment.

But like the blind man that Jesus had just healed, at first he could only see partially, Peter understood Jesus as the Messiah, but the type of Messiah that was traditionally looked for by any good Jewish person of the day. A Messiah that would rid the country of their oppressors and restore their kingdom to glory ruled over by God alone. But this was not the plan. Jesus's interpretation of Messiah was not the same as Peter's.

Jesus told the disciples that he would suffer, be rejected and be killed...and be raised to life three days later! But I think Peter simply heard suffering and death. These were surely not the words of the long awaited Messiah, and so Peter took Jesus aside in order to correct him...I don't blame Peter, I'd have done the same thing, Peter had been taught all his life what to expect as far as the Messiah was concerned, this was sound doctrine and teaching...Jesus was simply wrong...wasn't he ?

No, of course Jesus was not wrong, it was Peter that needed to catch up. Jesus was on a journey to death and resurrection for the salvation of all people. Peter would catch up eventually, and do astonishing things in the name of Jesus in the future.

We are still called to be witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ the GOOD news to all people. The good news that brings salvation to the world...now that is something we identify with. AMEN

PRAYERS

Let us stop, be silent and focus our hearts on God.

Holy God, we thank you for your love and care for the world,
As we look around us and read our newspapers

and watch and listen to the news across the world we are often troubled.

We witness war, riots, suffering and individual hurt.

We ask for your intervention and guidance.

We also ask you to move us to help

Through our prayers and through our actions.

SPEND TIME IN THE SILENCE TO BRING BEFORE GOD THOSE SITUATIONS IN THE WORLD THAT TROUBLE US

Comforting God, we now bring before you our friends, neighbours and family that need comfort and care at the moment.

For those suffering from illness, loneliness and loss.

Bless them with your Holy presence and deep peace.

Finally we pray for ourselves.

Enable us to be witnesses to your Good News, let us witness to people through our words and our actions so that others may see you through the work of your church and your people.

We ask all this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN

HYMN

1] There is a Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One.

*Thank You, O my Father,
For giving us Your Son,
And leaving Your Spirit—
Till the work on earth is done.*

2] Jesus my Redeemer,
Name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
O for sinners slain.

3] When I stand in glory
I will see His face,
And there I'll serve my King forever
In that holy place.

Melody Green (b. 1946)

BLESSING

God, may we go with your praise on our lips,
and your love in our hearts.

May we be prepared to give our whole lives to you,
whatever that means, wherever it leads.

Help us to follow you, Jesus. **Amen**