

3rd November, 2024

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: 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.**

Hymn:

There is one Gospel on which I stand
For all eternity
It is my story, my Father's plan
The Son has rescued me
Oh what a Gospel, Oh what a peace
My highest joy and my deepest need
Now and forever He is my light
I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

There is one Gospel to which I cling
All else I count as loss
For there, where justice and mercy
meet
He saved me on the cross
No more I boast in what I can bring
No more I carry the weight of sin
For He has brought me from death to
life
I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

There is one Gospel where hope is
found
The empty tomb still speaks
For death could not keep my Saviour
down
He lives and I am free
Now on my Saviour, I fix my eyes
My life is His and His hope is mine!
For He has promised I, too, will rise
I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

And in this Gospel the church is one
We do not walk alone
We have His Spirit as we press on
To lead us safely home
And when in glory still I will sing
Of this old story that rescued me
Praise to my Saviour, the King of life
I stand in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Sermon by Virginia, Youth and Children's Worker.

Read Mark 6:1-13 and Hebrews 11:1-6.

Why recognising who Jesus was, and is important?

Why some missed it? And

What can we learn from these passages?

Firstly, we see in Mark 6:1-6, Jesus is in his hometown, Nazareth, teaching in the synagogue and doing miracles, but people they are amazed because can't figure out the source of his wisdom and miraculous power. They thought they knew who Jesus and his background, as he was from their town.

Because they had this confidence, they have blocked their minds and hearts to understand and get revelation of who Jesus really is. The same was with the Pharisees the teachers of the law, they thought they knew all about the law, God and the Messiah that God would send. They failed to humble themselves to open their minds to understand that their understanding was limited, and God's ways were unlimited and that they need God's revelation to understand his ways.

How about us today, we might think we're not like those people of Nazareth or like the Pharisees who did not recognise Jesus, because we know who Jesus is. But the danger for us today could be to make ourselves complacent about our knowledge of Jesus.

Do we recognize that knowing God is an unending process, the more we know him there is much more to know about him. This is where the reading of the Bible and praying comes. We do that because we want to know more about Jesus to get into deeper and stronger relationship with him. Continual seeking of the Lord is important for our spiritual lives to not become stagnant.

2. Secondly, because those people had blocked their hearts they missed to understand that Jesus was God, about whom they read in Genesis. He spoke and the whole universe came into being, they failed to realise that he is that spoken word of God. (John1:1-3,14)

They waited and talked about the Messiah who would come as a king and the priest. He came as a king born in Bethlehem, descendant of David, all according to the prophecies already mentioned in their scriptures. He preached about his kingdom but, they fail to recognise that. He came as that

high priest who shed his blood on the cross and offered it for their forgiveness and salvation once for all.

He did it all in their presence, he said it all in their presence in public. But they failed to recognise it. That is why Jesus quoted Isaiah in Matthew 13:14-15a, when talking about the unbelieving.

But to his disciples Jesus said, blessed are your eyes for they see, blessed are your ears for they hear (verse 16). Does that mean the disciples understood all they saw and heard? No, but that they had the privilege to come to Jesus to ask him to explain what they didn't understand, including parables, and he was willing to reveal the mysteries to them (Matthew 13:18-23).

Today Jesus is telling you, you have that eyes that see, and ears that hear.

When you spend time in the presence of God, wanting to know more of him. You have the opportunity to ask God to help you understand what you can't understand. And he is willing to help you, he will reveal the mysteries to you.

3. Thirdly, those who recognise who God is and hold on to this revelation about God in faith are called the heroes of faith (Hebrews 11:1-6).

Enoch walked with God (Hebrews 11:5). Walking with God means he saw and acknowledged God in every area of his life. Recognising who God is and having faith in that revelation of God.

If we read further in Hebrews 11, in the list of heroes we read about Abraham. Who is known as the father of faith. God promised Abraham that he would give him children and make his descendants numerous. 25 years passed waiting for this promise. But this didn't make Abraham doubt sovereignty of who God is. He still worshipped his God and had that relationship with him.

All these heroes of faith set a very high standard before us, but do not worry they were just like us. They also had situations where they found difficulty in believing. Abraham did have difficulty in believing the promise of God after waiting for a long period of 25 years, He laughed when God again talked about giving him a son (Genesis 17:17).

But God helped him to overcome his unbelief and blessed him with son Isaac and through Isaac he made his descendants numerous.

Many times, Jesus had to rebuke his disciples for the lack of their faith. Peter when asked to walk on water, had difficulty in constantly fixing his eyes

on Jesus and began to sink. But then he called out to the Lord to help, because still believed in who Jesus was and he could save him.

All these people who believed in Jesus had difficulty to believe according to the situations of their life. But their response to God in those situation of their unbelief was different.

We do go through challenges and circumstances where we find difficult to hold onto to our faith of who God is in everyday of our lives. In those situations, let us not lose the revelation of who God is. Let us call on God for help. God will never fail us.

4th Sunday before Advent: Almighty and eternal God, you have kindled the flame of love in the hearts of the saints: grant to us the same faith and power of love, that, as we rejoice in their triumphs, we may be sustained by their example and fellowship; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: *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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat: November 20th at 2pm in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Bowls: November 20th at 2pm in the Church.
- Coffee and Questions: November 27th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: TBA
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>