

15th Sept., 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.**

Song:

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our
eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the
Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name
we praise.

To all life thou givest, to both great
and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of
all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves
on the tree,
and wither and perish but naught
changeth thee.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as
light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou
rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high
soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of
goodness and love.

Great Father of glory, pure Father
of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling
their sight;
all praise we would render, O help
us to see
'tis only the splendour of light
hideth thee.

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read Hebrews 1:8-14 and Mark 1:40 - 2:12 – Being God.

We continue our series through Mark. Mark is recording evidence for us to see that Jesus is both the Lord and the Saviour of the World. And challenging us, in this revelation, to think – ‘so what?’ In other words, who are we to be, and what are we to do.

These two stories today teach us about Jesus, and ourselves.

Firstly, three things about Jesus – in reverse of the story order:

One – Jesus is God.

That Jesus forgives sins – most of us familiar with church are familiar with this. But who can forgive sins? If I accidentally bump into you, you’d expect me to apologise to you – I’ve ‘wronged/sinned’ against you. And I’d hope you respond with ‘no worries’, you’d forgive me.

But Jesus’ is forgiving this man’s sins – which were surely not against him but we don’t know that Jesus had ever met this man, this man’s sins were against others, how can Jesus forgive on another’s behalf?

Let’s try and understand. If I accidentally bumped into your toddler, I’d probably, check the child was OK and say sorry to them, and to you. It’s your child, I’ve wronged your child, and therefore you. We are all God’s possessions, we belong to him, so an offence against, or causing damage to anyone or anything in creation, including ourselves, is an offence, against God as our creator, our owner, our Heavenly Father – and we need his forgiveness.

Only God can forgive. Jesus can forgive only because he is God! It’s a dramatic and direct claim, and a demonstration of Jesus, that he is God himself among us.

Two – Jesus makes us clean

We can be immediately clean! Jesus makes the leper clean – so clean that Jesus is prepared to touch him. And God continues to heal today – pray, and ask for prayer.

However, we see that healing the sick, the blind, the lame and all others afflicted, is what Jesus does, but it's not his prime purpose – we see that in the second story. Jesus has come for the forgiveness of sins. Leprosy cuts us off from others, but sin, even more so, and most tragically, from God.

Jesus recognised the paralysed man's greater need and forgave his sin, before healing his body. We can be clean, because the cross – read Isaiah 53:4-6.

And, Three – Jesus is willing

Jesus was 'indignant' – filled with compassion. God loves us so much he gives us Jesus (see John 3:16) and read Psalm 103:1-5 & 8-12.

Be clean! Jesus touches the man – like a doctor working without gloves or mask. Such is his compassion. And such is Jesus' holiness that he is not sullied by us! Receive his healing, receive his forgiveness – he is willing.

Secondly, three things about our response – again in reverse story order.

One – The scribes – teachers of the law. They knew the logic of Jesus forgiving sins was that he is God, but they can't accept it. They want Jesus to fit to their thinking, and their ways, they're not prepared to make the change. Are we willing to accept Jesus is Lord, and Lord of all? Or do we want Caesar as Lord, whether Caesar is someone else, some ambition, possessions, or ourselves.

Two – The people. They came for the excitement, the entertainment, like tuning into a radio station's thought for the day – they were happy to hear the idea and respond, 'that's interesting' and then get on with life. They're amazed but unchanged. Are we willing to change?

Three – The leprous man, and the paralysed man's friends. They believed in Jesus, and their belief and action went hand in hand. They came with confidence and were persistent, even bringing their friend.

Come to Jesus, know him as Lord and Saviour. He is willing to receive us and desires to forgive us, heal us, and use us to lead others to know him too.

16th Sunday after Trinity: O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; 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: September 18th at 2pm in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Bowls: September 18th at 2pm in the Church.
- Coffee and Questions: September 25th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: 3pm Sunday, October 6th
- 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>