

1st Sunday in Lent 2021

Welcome

Welcome as we gather together on this first Sunday in Lent.

Each Sunday during this season of reflection and preparation for Easter, we will focus on key aspects of our faith as Christians.

Today, following on from our Ash Wednesday worship a few days ago, we explore what it means to be ready to face the wilderness. To ask, are we really ready to go through the door into the wilderness with the Lord. Are we ready to listen to God and to discover anew our faith and who we really are?

So we begin today by inviting you to look at and to think about the clothes you are wearing. *(short pause)*

And to help our thinking, we are asked to consider these questions:

- Why did you choose those particular items?
- Are the clothes different from what you wear normally to go to church? Are they different from the clothes you'd wear for shopping? going to a restaurant? going on a walk?

(short pause)

And now, let's think about the clothes other people wear.

- Do we judge people – or make assumptions about them – based on what they are wearing? What do your clothes say about you?

Today we are going to explore how Jesus discovered who he was, what God wanted him to be, and how that helped him to face difficult challenges. And we shall also consider how that helps us to know who we are, and how we might face the challenges in our lives and be the person God calls us to be.

The answers we discover, might encourage us to think about the Christian community we should be in the church we normally attend.

Opening Prayer & Reflection

As we reflect on who we are, we may like to reflect on these questions:

- What do you see and feel when you look in the mirror?
- Who or what helps you to feel affirmed?
- What challenges you about your identity/who you are?

Penitential Rite

As we come to worship in these first days of Lent, we offer our lives afresh to the Lord, who promises to be with us and sustain us by the Spirit through whatever lies ahead. Jesus has defeated every power that opposes God's rule. God loves us unconditionally for who we are and wherever we are.

Beloved Lord Jesus, you stepped from water to wilderness, from God's voice to the taunting voice of the enemy.

In the wilderness of today's world, we face many enemies, many temptations. Forgive us for succumbing to selfishness, greed, lust, anger, power.

Loving Lord, forgive us, we pray.

(short pause)

Sometimes difficult times follow fast on the heels of one another. And it's hard to keep our focus on you.

Forgive us when we wallow in selfish self-centredness, help us to remember your promises and recognise you in those you bring into our lives to strengthen and encourage us.

Loving Lord, forgive us, we pray.

(short pause)

Forgive us when our minds fail to focus on you and your word. Help us to remember that no matter what we're going through, you've been there before us.

Whether we're swimming in the warm waters of your love, or journeying through the arid wilderness, help us not to lose sight of your hand guiding us to eternal glory at rainbow's end.

Loving Lord, forgive us, we pray.

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

The Collect

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father,
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

A reading from the Book of Genesis

(9:8-17)

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Second Reading

A reading from the First Letter of St Peter

(3:18-22)

Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you – not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation

Praise to you, O Christ, **King of eternal glory.**
People do not live on bread alone,
but on every word that comes from the mouth of God,
Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

The Gospel:

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Mark (9:2-9)
Glory to you, O Lord

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

Address/Sermon

Intercessions

Let us pray:

Blessed are you Lord, creator of the universe. You have given us this world to enjoy and so that we may work in harmony with you. You have given us talents and abilities that we may enrich and bless each other.

Lord, you bless your Church with things of great value: through the huge variety gifts and talents you give to each one of us. Help us to use them aright to your glory and for the benefit of all. Show us your ways, O Lord,
and teach us your paths.

We pray that you will guide your Church through these challenging times, that you will help each Christian disciple to hear your call afresh during this season of Lent, and empower us to serve you more faithfully and effectively.
Show us your ways, O Lord,
and teach us your paths.

Gracious God, what a wonderful world you have given us. We ask your blessing on all who work the land and who provide food and all we need. We pray for all who are working in conservation and in caring for people in desolate or spoiled areas.
Show us your ways, O Lord,
and teach us your paths.

We thank you for the comfort of our homes and the gifts you have given to each member of our families and all our loved ones. Help us to be aware of each other's needs and the needs of those who are not as fortunate as we are.
Show us your ways, O Lord,
and teach us your paths.

Lord, you are always ready to help us in our troubles. We bring before you the sorrows and sighing of our world. We remember all who are ill, all who have been injured in accidents or acts of violence, all who are hungry or homeless. We ask your blessing upon each one and on all who care for them.
Show us your ways, O Lord,
and teach us your paths.

We praise you for the gift of eternal life. We pray for all our loved ones who are departed from us and are now rejoicing in the fulness of your kingdom.

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Peace

The Lord Jesus Christ, went from water to wilderness to suffering on the cross. On the cross died for our sins. He did all of this, and more, because of his love for each one of us.

Believing this, we pray:

**Holy God, open our hearts and minds
to know who you made us to be.
Help us to live every day knowing that we are your children.
Open our eyes to see not only others,
but also ourselves,
through the eyes of your love. Amen.**

Short pause for silent prayer

Show me you ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths *(Ps 25:4)*

The peace of the Lord be always with you:
and also with you.

Preparation of the Altar

God of wisdom,
may the light of your eternal Word,
our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
lead us in holiness and guide us to glory;
we ask this in his name. **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good
to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
For in these forty days
you lead us into the desert of repentance
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline
we may grow in grace
and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.
Through study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.
As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast
with joyful hearts and minds
we bless you for your mercy
and join with saints and angels
for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said: Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus:
**Dying you destroyed our death,
rising you restored our life:
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Lord of all life, help us to work for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with *[N and]* all the saints to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As pilgrims in the early days of our Lenten journey, let us pray to the Father, as Jesus has taught us:

**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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ:

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

Agnus Dei

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Holy Communion

God's holy gifts
for God's holy people.

**Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

The body of Christ, which was broken for you.

The blood of Christ, which was shed for you.

**Amen. Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

Those receiving Holy Communion do so now.

At this time Holy Communion is received in one kind only (bread) and is given to each communicant in silence.

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things
and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.

Meditation

Loving, faithful God,
your love is absolute,
your promises irrevocable.
We look up after a shower of rain,
marvelling at the colourful
beauty of your rainbow –
a reminder of your promise
and faithfulness to all generations.
Wherever we happen to be –
wilderness, mountain or valley bottom –
your Holy Spirit is with us.
We adore you, loving, faithful God.

Prayer after Communion

Lord God, you have renewed us
with the living bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope,
and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for him
who is the true and living bread,
and enable us to live by every word
that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**Creator God, you made us in your image
to be your people, wherever we go.
This coming week, whatever we experience,
wherever we find ourselves,
help us to know that you are with us –
guiding, revealing and sustaining – always. Amen.**

The Blessing and Dismissal

May you know that you are blessed by God's the Father's unfailing love,
that you are saved by the Son loving sacrifice on the cross,
and sustained by the Spirit as you travel.
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, + the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

[The Eucharist is ended, our service must now begin.](#)

[Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.](#)

In the name of Christ. Amen.

A Prayer to sustain us

**We thank you, faithful Lord,
for your patience, provision and power;
for your tenderness, trust and triumph;
for your security and strength;
for your compassion and wisdom.
We thank you, Lord, that through your grace and mercy,
the blessings of faith,
and your covenant love,
you equip, teach and guide us
as we traverse today's world,
ever mindful of your steadfast love. Amen.**