



St. Mary's Church SAWSTON

Sunday 25th October: Bible Sunday

WELCOME AND NOTICES

In the beginning was the Word
who was, and who is, and who is to come.

Word of God, God of all peoples and nations
we come to worship you.

God of men and women, young and old
we come to worship you.

God of story, God of song, God of beauty
we come to worship you.

WE SAY SORRY

For the small things that hurt others and ourselves
Lord, forgive us and heal us.

For the great things that damage the earth and all living things
Lord, forgive us and heal us.

For the times we turn away from your Word and go our own way
Lord, forgive us and heal us

PERUVIAN GLORIA

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to the Father. x3

To God be glory forever x 3

Alleluia Amen. x 3

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to Christ Jesus.

Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to the Spirit.

COLLECT

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

READING: Psalm 119. 9–16

How shall young people cleanse their way
to keep themselves according to your word?
With my whole heart have I sought you;
O let me not go astray from your commandments.
Your words have I hidden within my heart,
that I should not sin against you.
Blessed are you, O Lord;
O teach me your statutes.
With my lips have I been telling
of all the judgements of your mouth.
I have taken greater delight in the way of your testimonies
than in all manner of riches.
I will meditate on your commandments
and contemplate your ways.
My delight shall be in your statutes
and I will not forget your word.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

GOSPEL: Matthew 24.32–35

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory to you, O Lord.

‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

This is the gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ.

TALK: Becca Herrick (as an interview)

Hey Becca, what are you up to?

Reading.

Reading what?

Reading the Bible.

The Bible? What's that?

What's that? You don't know what the Bible is? Only the greatest book ever written? You must have heard of it? Perhaps you know it from Desert Island Discs – one of the two books you're allowed for free alongside Shakespeare?

Hmmmm sounds familiar... So what's it about?

The Bible is a book, made up of 66 other books, written by a variety of authors. It tells the story from the beginning until the end of time of God's plan for the world, his great plan to save the world through his son Jesus. It tells us all about Jesus, who he is, what he did and how knowing him can change our lives. Some people call it God's love story, others God's instruction manual for life, others His-story, the story of our world. It is the book that Christians refer to as God's word.

Sounds like a gripping tale. Is it a true?

Oh yes, it's real. Many of the people, places, events, really existed. The Bible begins with the creation of the world and the story of God's people, the Israelites, following their journey until the time of Jesus, God's son coming into the world. Then after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension, (that is when he returned to heaven to be with God, his father) the Bible speaks of the first followers of Jesus, of how they lived their lives as the first Christians.

So it's a history book then...

No, no, much more than that. It's God's living word.

It's alive? How can a book about dead people be alive?

When God created us, he didn't just abandon us to get on with it by ourselves. Instead he gave us his word, that we might know how to live our lives to the full and honour Him. He also left us with his Holy Spirit living in us to help us understand his word. When we read the bible we are hearing God's voice in the words we read and that can change and transform our lives now. It's not just a book about the past, but about the present and the future.

How on earth does a book transform our lives?

The more we read God's word and dwell in it, the more it transforms us. Reading the Bible challenges us, to be the people God created us to be; it encourages us, to keep going when life is hard; it comforts us, when life is difficult; it brings us hope, when all around seems hopeless; it brings us joy, when we see our hearts reflected in the things we read; it helps us to understand the almighty, all-powerful God who made us and to grow in our relationship with Him, to live a life pleasing to him. I love reading the bible, as often as I can, because almost every time I see something new, even in passages I have read time and time again. I see something new about God, the world or me and that can be truly life transforming!

Wow! Maybe I should give it a try? How do I get hold of one?

In this country we are hugely privileged to have bibles available in all different shapes and sizes, free to access and read. There are a selection displayed around the church today. From toddler, childrens' and teenagers' bibles. To those written in modern language, like The Message, to versions that have been around for hundreds of years, like the King James Version. There are Bible Apps for reading God's word on your phone, iPad or other technology. For those who prefer to listen, there are audio versions too. And we aren't expected to just understand everything the Bible says by ourselves. There are countless different study notes, guides and commentaries to help, as well as opportunities to look at the Bible together, with each other.

So does that mean that other countries don't have so many different Bibles?

In other parts of the world, the Bible is not so accessible. 1 in 5 people in the world, are still waiting for a Bible to be produced in their own language. For many Christians in the world, reading the Bible is not allowed, it is illegal, and they risk hefty fines or other punishment if they are caught with them. Today, we celebrate Bible Sunday. An opportunity to celebrate the gift that is God's word, but also an opportunity to pray for our brothers and sisters across the globe, who don't have bibles for whatever reason. If the Bible transforms lives, it is so important that it is accessible to everyone, no matter what.

HYMN: We have a Gospel to proclaim

We have a gospel to proclaim
Good news for men in all the earth;
The gospel of a Saviour's name:
We sing His glory, tell His worth.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn:
Empty the tomb, for He was free.
He broke the power of death and hell
That we might share His victory.

Tell of His birth at Bethlehem,
Not in a royal house or hall
But in a stable dark and dim:
The Word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of His reign at God's right hand,
By all creation glorified;
He sends His Spirit on His Church
To live for Him, the Lamb who died.

Tell of His death at Calvary,
Hated by those He came to save;
In lonely suffering on the cross
For all He loved, His life He gave.

Now we rejoice to name Him King:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
This gospel message we proclaim:
We sing His glory, tell His worth.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.
We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

PRAYERS: *Ending with 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.**

THE PEACE

Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God. We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you

SONG: Speak O Lord

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of your holy word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
All Your purposes, for Your glory.

Teach us Lord full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.
Cause our faith to rise
Cause our eyes to see,
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of power that can never fail;
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us.
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time,
That will echo down through eternity.

And by grace we'll stand on Your promises;
 And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
 Speak, O Lord, 'til your church is built
 And the earth is filled with Your glory.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look kindly on you and give you his peace. **Amen**

COMMUNION

Generous God, creator, redeemer, sustainer, at your table we present these gifts, symbol of the work you have given us to do; use it, use us, in the service of your world to the glory of your 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.

The prayer continues ...
 ...that we may join with the angels
 singing your praise:

**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.**

The prayer continues ...
 ...in the strength of the Spirit,
 today and for ever. **Amen.**

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)

**Jesus, Lamb of God
have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace**

The Giving of Communion

Prayer after Communion

God of all grace,
your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry
with the bread of his life
and the word of his kingdom:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your true and living bread;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Lord, we have broken your bread and received your life.
By the power of your spirit keep us always in your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

The Blessing and Dismissal

Go in peace to love and to serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.