



## Worship at Home – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent – 21<sup>st</sup> February

Father God help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

**Amen**

### Hymn 190: Forty days and forty nights

#### Welcome

The Lord be with you,  
**and also with you**

#### Prayer of Preparation

**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**

#### Prayer of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen**

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy**

Christ have mercy

## **Christ have mercy**

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal through Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen**

## **Collect**

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; 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**

## **Old Testament Reading: Genesis 9:8-17**

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth."

So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

## **New Testament Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22**

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits—to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

## **Hymn 657: There is a green hill**

## **Gospel Reading: Mark 1:9-15**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**Glory to you, O Lord**

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ**

### **Sermon: Revd John Pinder**

Why does today's gospel start with the baptism of Jesus? There's a practical reason - if we just had the wilderness bit in Mark's gospel, we would be reduced to 2 verses. (No wonder scholars used to dismiss Mark's gospel... Now we realise that Mark's was the first gospel to be written and therefore nearest in time to Jesus himself, so we have to take it more seriously)

With characteristic brevity, Mark gives us 4 facts

1. After his baptism, Jesus was 'Immediately driven into the wilderness' by the Spirit – what does that mean? The spirit has just descended on Jesus at his baptism. Is Jesus now to be abandoned by the Spirit into the wilderness? Commentators are uncertain what Mark means, but it is clear that Jesus did not end up in the wilderness by accident. It was part of Jewish popular belief that the Messiah, when he came, would end up in a head on confrontation with Satan and all the powers of evil. That confrontation for Jesus was not just confined to the wilderness, but was to continue throughout his ministry until the ultimate confrontation on the cross.

2. We are told Jesus was there for 40 days. The desert in Jewish belief was rich in symbolism. Above all there was the 40 years wilderness experience after the Israelites came out of Egypt. For them it was a formative time of testing and endurance.

There is no mention in Mark of the 3 specific temptations recorded by Luke and Matthew. We are simply told that Jesus was tempted by Satan, he was with the wild beasts & angels waited on him. That word 'tempted', is much stronger than the English suggests. It crops up several times in the NT and means more like 'tested to the utmost'. As I've said, Mark does not dwell on the nature of the temptations, but it's clearly a critical point in the life of Jesus as he thinks about his future ministry, which Mark will describe very much as a struggle with the demons and powers of evil.

3. Jesus is tempted **by Satan**. This is not some wishy washy agonising on the part of Jesus as to the nature of evil. There was some publicity a year or two back, about the General Synod debate on the wording of the new alternative baptism rite with headlines in some of the papers, 'synod rejects the devil by a show of hands.' In the Common Worship baptism service, there is strong language in the questions for the parents and godparents. Eg 'Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God? Some people feel that this sort of language is hard to stomach especially for non church going baptism families, so the new alternative rite waters down the questions. But we have a bit of a cultural problem here. The Bible is full of language which personifies evil in the form of the devil or satan. Contemporary language shies away from that rather stark

personification and tends to talk rather about 'forces of evil'. I must confess that I am in two minds on this issue, but I think it worthy of debate.

4. In the gospel reading there is also mention of wild beasts and angels. I would put Satan and the wild beasts together, though later Christian traditions are ambivalent about wild beasts. eg St. Jerome in the desert had a tame lion, but St. Antony in the desert was surrounded by demons and wild beasts. Did Jesus tame the wild beasts or do they represent the demonic forces in the world, to be overcome? The picture I come away with is Jesus being confronted by demonic powers, but Mark emphasises that he was not alone. He tells us that angels ministered to Jesus. There was a titanic struggle going on between the forces of good and the forces of evil, perhaps with the prize of Jesus himself.

In our struggle here on earth with the forces of evil, we are all too aware of the tide that threatens to swamp us, but let us not forget God's angels are never far away, which is just as well. Otherwise we wouldn't stand a chance. The epistle for this morning links the story of the flood with baptism. In the Genesis story the flood has just destroyed most of God's creation but the rainbow signifies a second chance, a new covenant between God and Noah. Linking the flood with baptism reminds us of the ambivalent nature of the water of baptism. For Paul and 1 Peter, baptism symbolises drowning as well as cleansing. So are we 'waving or drowning'? (to quote Stevie Smith) We are drowning to sin but we are also waving because of our cleansing from sin. Amen

## Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## Prayers

### The Peace

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

## Hymn 572: Praise to the Holiest

### 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 for ever.  
Amen.**

### Remembering the Lord's Supper

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

## Hymn 590: Seek ye first

### Closing Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

**In the name of Christ. Amen**

If you have any prayer or pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact  
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