

## Traditional Home service Sunday 28th February

### OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you hate nothing that you have made  
and forgive the sins of all those who are  
penitent: create and make in us new and  
contrite hearts that we, worthily  
lamenting our sins and acknowledging  
our wretchedness, may receive from you,  
the God of all mercy, perfect remission  
and forgiveness; 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.

### PRAYER OF PENITENCE

God our Father, we come to you in  
sorrow for our sins.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you;  
we have done evil in your sight.  
We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your  
love. Wash away our wrongdoing and  
cleanse us from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore us to the joy of your  
salvation, through Jesus Christ our  
Lord. Amen.**

### PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the  
name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to  
God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms,  
hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.  
Open our lips, Lord:  
**and we shall praise your name.**

HYMN 1 (*Be Thou my vision*)

READINGS - Genesis 17.1-7,15,16  
Romans 4.13-25  
Mark 8.31-38

### TALK

### CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth. I believe in  
Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who  
was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of  
the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius  
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was  
buried; he descended to the dead. On  
the third day he rose again; he ascended  
into heaven, he is seated at the right  
hand of the Father, and he will come to  
judge the living and the dead. I believe in  
the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness  
of sins, the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Spend some time praying for our nation,  
our community and our families.*

### 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 for  
ever. Amen.

### HOLY COMMUNION

HYMN 2 (*Tell out my soul*)

### CONCLUSION

The love of the Lord Jesus  
draw you to himself,  
the power of the Lord Jesus  
strengthen you in his service,  
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you  
always.  
Amen

## HYMNS TO USE

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart  
Naught be all else to me, save that  
thou art  
Thou my best thought, by day or by  
night  
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my  
light

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true  
word  
I ever with thee and thou with me,  
Lord  
Thou my great Father, and I thy true  
son  
Thou in me dwelling and I with thee  
one

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty  
praise  
Thou mine inheritance, now and  
always  
Thou and thou only first in my heart  
High King of heaven, my treasure thou  
art

High King of heaven, my victory won  
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright  
heaven's sun  
Heart of my own heart, whatever  
befall  
Still be my vision, O ruler of all  
Heart of my own heart, whatever  
befall  
Still be my vision, O ruler of all

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the  
Lord!  
Unnumbered blessings give my spirit  
voice;  
Tender to me the promise of his word;  
In God my Saviour shall my heart  
rejoice

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his  
Name!  
Make known his might, the deeds his  
arm has done;  
His mercy sure, from age to age to  
same;  
His holy Name--the Lord, the Mighty  
One

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his  
might!  
Powers and dominions lay their glory  
by  
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are  
put to flight  
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his  
word!  
Firm is his promise, and his mercy  
sure  
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the  
Lord  
To children's children and for  
evermore!

*Timothy Dudley-Smith*

Sermon for 28th February 2021  
Revd Adrian Morton  
Mark 8:31-38 Costly discipleship

I want to speak on this Mark 8:31-38 passage this morning.

Jesus has just told his disciples that he will suffer many things.  
Be killed and then rise again.

Peter was not happy about that and it earned him a severe rebuke.

And then Jesus called the crowd and said,

*“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and the gospel will save it.”*

Which is a real call to a radical, non-compromising following of Jesus.

And Jesus says at the end,

*“If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in His Father’s glory.”*

So this is about being associated with Jesus.

Proclaiming Him. Standing up for Him.  
Aligning our lives with Him.  
Being obedient to Him.

And Jesus is saying, are we ready for the costs that will inevitably involve that kind of uncompromising following.

Now for those Christians who live in countries around the world where simply being a Christian is a cause for persecution, then this passage is so very relevant.

This must be a passage that brings much comfort to the persecuted church.

Of which there are many across the world.

This passage is a recognition that suffering in this way is part of the deal to being a Christian.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer left the safety of exile in America to return to his native Germany and try to overthrow Hitler. He was eventually caught and executed. He’d written a few years earlier in his book, “The Cost of discipleship” these words:

*‘Suffering is the badge of true discipleship. The disciple is not above his master.. That is why Luther reckoned suffering among the marks of the true church... if we refuse to take up our cross and submit to suffering and rejection at the hands of men, we forfeit our fellowship with Christ and have ceased to follow him. But if we lose our lives in his service and carry our cross, we shall find our lives again in the fellowship of the cross with Christ.’*

Now we may not be part of the persecuted church here in the West. In truth, we are fairly comfortable. We have freedom to worship. We are relatively well off.

So what relevance has this passage for us?

Well, firstly, we are not immune to suffering for Christ. If we stand up for Christ we will face mild persecution. I’m sure most of us have experienced mild ridicule, or contempt, or rejection.

For being known to be a Christian.

For being known to go to church.

In our society, Christians are increasingly being marginalised.

Particularly if we are standing up for what we believe to be Biblical truth.

I think increasingly Christians are being seen as intolerant, bigoted even, narrow minded...

If any of our young people have got this far through the online service, then you will know that the school environment is an increasingly difficult one to be known as a Christian.

Yet Jesus is saying suffering in this way is part of following Him.

Are we going to be ready for that?

How else is this passage relevant for us today?

Well, as the chap in the youth video said this morning, I think this is also about priorities.

Why was Peter rebuked so severely?

In the NRSV version, Jesus says to Peter, "you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

When we become a follower of Jesus it needs to be all consuming.

We need to be all in.

And whilst many of us have a comparatively comfortable lifestyle. Many of us have nice homes, possessions we enjoy...

And it really is Ok to enjoy them and be thankful to God for these things...

I think this passage is saying, don't set your minds on them.

Don't let those things become more important than the kingdom of God in your life.

Those of you who have joined the Sunday morning Zoom coffee time will know that I'm applying this to my self!

I like my cars and motorbikes...

The nice lifestyle, the grown up 'toys' we have can all be enjoyed, even as a gift of God.

But they all need to be held onto lightly.

Even our jobs, where we live... all those things need to be held onto lightly.

Because following the Lord may mean he wants us to move house, move jobs, give up certain parts of our lifestyle, because His kingdom will be better served if we do that.

And are we ready for the cost.

We will be more ready if we haven't set our minds on those things.

A study was done about the relationship between time and regrets.

Essentially, we tend to regret our actions in the short term.

Whereas in the long term we regret our inactions.

So, for example, in the short term a person might regret getting drunk last night and saying what they did; but more profoundly, in the long term they regret not reconciling with their father before he died.

So we tend to regret our actions in the short term.

Whereas in the long term we regret our inactions.

It means, because many of us are so risk-averse, we might reach the end of our lives having made only a few mistakes, but with huge regrets at the risks we didn't take.

And living a life of faith is about taking risks.

See, I don't want to get to the end of my life thinking, "Oh, I wish I had done that."

"Why didn't I follow my hunch to move there, to do that...?"

Don Herold wrote the following late in life: *"If I had my life again, I'd try to make more mistakes next time. I would relax, I would limber up, I would be sillier than I have been this trip. I would make more trips. I would be crazier. I would climb more mountains, swim more rivers, and watch more sunsets. I would eat more ice cream and less beans. If I had to do it over again I would go places, do things, and travel light."*

Following Jesus is supposed to be an adventure.

Its supposed to be about taking risks.

But there are costs involved.

We will suffer persecution for associating with Him.

For being known as one of His followers.

We will have to give up things.

Maybe even things we have loved to hold on to.

And lets not forget its about relationship.

Those of us who have children will know that we will do almost anything for our children.

We would sacrifice much for our children's well being.

Why, because we love them dearly.

Love is the supreme motivator.

If we have experienced the love of Christ, and we love Him back.

There is isn't much we won't sacrifice.

It's why Jesus at the end of John's Gospel asked Peter three times, Do you love me?

Because he knew if he had Peter's heart, he could build his church upon him.

If God has our hearts.

If our minds are set on 'divine things'... that is on Him and His kingdom.

We will bear the cost of following Him.

This passage is a good Lent passages.. Its a good season to ask our selves:

What are our minds set upon?

What are we holding onto too tightly?

What wouldn't we be prepared to give up for the sake of Jesus and the kingdom?

Is it our possessions, an aspect of

lifestyle, our jobs even, where we live?

Whatever it is.. he's worth the cost!

Why don't you take a few minutes

thinking about these question...