

Traditional Home service Sunday 8th January

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, in the birth of your Son you have poured on us the new light of your incarnate Word, and shown us the fullness of your love: help us to walk in his light and dwell in his love that we may know the fullness of his joy; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

*God our Father,
long-suffering, full of grace and truth,
you create us from nothing and give us life.
You give your faithful people new life in the
water of baptism.
You do not turn your face from us,
nor cast us aside.
We confess that we have sinned
against you and our neighbour.
We have wounded your love and marred
your image in us.
Restore us for the sake of your Son,
and bring us to heavenly joy,
in 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 (*Praise to the Lord*)

READINGS - Isaiah 42.1-9
Acts 10.34-43
Matthew 3.13-17

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.

HYMN 2 (*O worship the King*)

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

1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Come, all who hear; now to his temple draw near,
join me in glad adoration.

2 Praise to the Lord, above all things so wondrously reigning;
sheltering you under his wings, and so gently sustaining!
Have you not seen all that is needful has been
sent by his gracious ordaining?

3 Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
if with his love he befriends you.

4 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him.
Let the Amen sound from his people again;
gladly forever adore him.

1 O worship the King all-glorious above,
O gratefully sing his power and his love:
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise.

2 O tell of his might and sing of his grace,
whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

3 Your bountiful care, what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

4 Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail,
in you do we trust, nor find you to fail.
Your mercies, how tender, how firm to the end,
our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!

5 O measureless Might, unchangeable Love,
whom angels delight to worship above!
Your ransomed creation, with glory ablaze,
in true adoration shall sing to your praise!

Sermon - Adrian Morton

Isaiah 42:1-9 & Matthew 3:13-17
Living secure in Christ...

This Matthew passage is one of those formative passages that I tend to go back to again and again.

And I intentionally do that.
To remind myself of the truths contained here.

I find this passage provides an anchor to who I am.
To what I do...

So its a good passage to start a new year with...

Lets look at it...

Jesus came to John to be baptised.
Who was reluctant to do that...
John had been baptising people for repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus hardly fell into that category.

Yet Jesus insisted. It was to fulfil all righteousness...

So John baptised him.

As Jesus came up out of the water the Holy Spirit descended and remained on Him.
And the Father spoke from heaven:

"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

It's interesting that this happened before Jesus had done anything publicly.

We don't know much about the life of Jesus before this point.

Apart from the birth stories we have one account when he was 12, getting lost during the Feast of the Passover.

He was found in His Father's house, learning the Scriptures.

And it says in that account that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

Before Jesus did anything publicly.
He had the favour of God on his life.

Its a reminder that to be successful in the limelight.
We have to cultivate success in the secret place.

Public victories will only follow private victories.

If we want to live an anointed life, whereby the Holy Spirit remains on us, then the best preparation is what happens behind closed doors.

Away from the limelight...

God is more concerned about cultivating relationship with us in the private place than what we do for Him in the public place.

If we look at the leaders in the OT, it was those who sought God's face.

Who were concerned with His presence...

It was those who were upheld as good leaders.

And we know that only in Him can we ever be fruitful...

John 15 - "Apart from me you can do nothing."

These words that the Father spoke over Jesus are such formative words for us.

We can apply them to our lives because of the theology that goes with them.

The words: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

They echo 2 OT messianic texts:

Psalms 2:7 & Isaiah 42:1

So Ps 2:7 says: "I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father."

Is 42:1 says: "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations."

Both these texts are prophetic messianic texts and would have been understood as such.

So this baptism of Jesus is identifying Jesus as the Messiah.

Now the Messiah is a representative person. Someone sent by God to restore Israel's independence and righteousness. Someone anointed by the Spirit to accomplish the mission he came for.

So Jesus as Messiah was to represent the people .

Being a representative is to be a typical example.

<If you went to see the Bishop as a representative of Bozeat/Wollaston church, the Bishop would see you as a typical specimen/example of Bozeat/Wollaston church.>

And its in that capacity, as a representative that Jesus needed to be baptised.

Because His people following Him would be baptised.

So what is true of Him is true of His people, i.e. this who are 'in Christ'.

And those who are 'in Christ' how the Father looks at Jesus
What the Father says to Jesus is transferred to us!!!

Because He represents us.

That's a long way to say, those words of the Father apply to us.

We need to hear the Father say those words over us:

"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Because they give us our identity, our sense of security and our sense of significance.

<Talk about identity issues today...>

Often in our world we are defined by what we do.

<go to a party and one of the first questions you get asked is 'What do you do?' What job have you got?>

For many their identity, who they are, is tied up with what they do.

I'm a banker, or a teacher, or a doctor or a whatever...

But people's identity can be too closely tied in with what they do.

But if our identity is in what we do it is misplaced and it will skew our Christian life.

In worst case scenario's if our identity is tied up with what we do.

And then if we lose what we do.

Either because of the economic climate or illness.

Then our sense of identity, who we are can get lost.

Our primary identity is that we are a Son of God.

A daughter of God.

There is so much talk about identity in society today...

The whole Gender conversation..

We sometimes get emails from social services who put 'her/she' at the end of the email to identity as a female.

The Scottish government has recently passed the Gender Recognition Bill making it easier to people to identify as a different gender to what is on their birth certificate.

<The CofE first non binary vicar....>

There is much confusion about identity....

We lose 'he made them male and female' at out peril...

For those who are 'in Christ' our identity is primarily a Son of God, a daughter of God.

These words: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

give us a firm foundation in which to live. They give us a security that means we will be better placed to withstand criticism, negativity, spitefulness and other muck that gets thrown at us on occasions.

If we are secure inwardly, we will live better outwardly.

<Talk about upsets within church life...>

Its great to be part of a church community isn't it...!?

Yet so often there seems to be bickering, fallings out, upset.
People feeling they are not thanked enough.
People feeling they are not appreciated.
People taking offence over minor things.
People feeling pushed out or overlooked...
People holding onto jobs and not encouraging others to step out and grow in their gifting.
People who have to sit in the same seats...
People who are grumbling, criticising...
People who are prickly.. who get angry, grumpy, irritable over something minor...

I think I've probably covered everyone in some way...!

<Catastrophe...!>

Look, its good to be thanked, to be appreciated...
But if that is our motivation for serving... something isn't right...
Deep down it probably means you are seeking affirmation in what you do.
Or you are trying to please people...

Eventually you won't be thanked enough or appreciated enough...

I believe much of the reason we experience some of this rubbish is because we are not secure in Christ.

We are not living in the revelation, that we are a child of the Father, whom he loves, and with whom he is well pleased.

<Talk about orphanage in West Kenya – mainly aids orphans...
fear, attention seeking, need but fear physical touch, insecure, sadness, rejection (porcupine spikes...), grief, addictions, lying, deceiving cos' you want affection...>

Maybe we recognise some of those characteristics in the way we act from time to time.

We all act like orphans to the degree we are not acting like sons.

And all of us will in some degree act like an orphan because we are not fully sons.

We'll act like we haven't got the most loving Father ever.
We'll act like we haven't got a Father who will provide for us, who wants the best for us...
A Father who is capable of opening doors for us, and closing them...
A Father who doesn't need us to perform for Him.
A Father who doesn't need us to strive for perfection for Him to be pleased with us.

Back to this passage...

So at this key moment in his life, after 30 years of waiting, Jesus received his sense of identity, his sense of security and his sense of significance.

And it was out of all these that he ministered. And we see that through his ministry.

Just want to give one example of this - John 13 where he washes his disciple's feet.
It's an account that we remember on Maundy Thursday, but it is good to quickly refer to it today because it illustrates how Jesus worked from his sense of identity, security and significance.

It is Jesus last day on earth.
He was sharing a Passover meal with his disciples.
He knew he was going to the Father.

The devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot to betray Him.

And before the meal Jesus got up, put a towel around him and washed the feet of his disciples.

The background to this is that on the road to Jerusalem the disciples had been arguing about who is the greatest.

They knew something significant was happening in their midst and they were jockeying for position.

When they arrived from walking the Palestinian road it was the custom in those days for the lowest, most junior servant to wash the feet of the guests.

It would have been a sensible thing to do in those days.

You ate the meal reclining so your feet would have been in the face of the person next to you.

All kinds of stuff was thrown on the roads so it was a good thing to have your feet washed.

But there was nobody to do it and in light of the disciples jockeying for position one of them wasn't going to offer to be the lowest of lowly servants.

Until of course Jesus does.

But its not the act of washing the feet that I want to highlight, it is how John introduces it.

Jesus knew from v3 that all things had been given him, that he had come from the Father and was returning to the Father.

In other words Jesus knew his identity.
He's secure in the Father's love.
He knew his significance.

What is important is the next word, the first word of verse 4:

'Therefore' 'So' he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing and washed his disciples feet.

What John is saying is that the only reason Jesus can stoop so low and wash his disciples feet, is because he is completely

confident of who he is, he's secure in the father's love and he knows his purpose.

And throughout his ministry Jesus operated from this place of identity, security and significance.

Nothing could shake him nothing could rock him.

As we live the Christian life, as we head into 2023, with all the joys and challenges that this year will offer.

Lets be confident of who we are, of His love for us, and what we are called to do.

Amen.