



Morning Worship

23 August 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Morning Worship here at the Parish churches of Coxley with Godney, Henton, and Wookey. Although we are currently apart due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) it is hoped that following this liturgy knowing that others in the benefice will be doing so at the same time might help provide a spiritual connection between us.

It is suggested that alongside this liturgy you have a means to listen to the suggested hymns which have links to videos with lyrics within this document. There is a mixture of traditional hymns and contemporary worship songs. If you do not know the tune then why not listen to the hymn/song and worship through reading the words alone.

The service is designed to be used easily by one person. If there is more than one person participating, either one can lead with others joining in with the responses in **bold** OR everyone present may join in with all the words.

The sections in *red italics* are rubrics: these explain what needs to happen at various points.

Materials in this booklet are drawn from *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* which is copyright © The Archbishop's Council of the Church of England 2006; *New Patterns for Worship* copyright © The Archbishop's Council of the Church of England 2002. All Bible quotations are from the English Standard Version.

MORNING WORSHIP

GREETING

Praise God! For even though we are apart the Lord is in our midst!
Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The Lord is here!
His Spirit is with us!

Though we find ourselves isolated
in homes, apartments, and residential places,
**we look out our windows and remember,
the heavens declare the glory of God,
all creation rejoices in our creator.**

Psalms 19:1

Though we cannot be present with our church community,
**we rejoice that Christ is in our midst,
he is with us always, until the end of the age!**

Matthew 28:20

Though we have to stand at a safe distance from others,
giving space to those who pass us by,
**we recall we are all made in the image of God,
connected to one another,
connected to God.**

Genesis 1:27

HYMN: IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, GOD ONLY WISE

[Listen here](#)

CONFESSION AND WORDS OF COMFORT

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world
and knows our every word and deed.
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord
and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

**Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.
We are not worthy to be called your children.
We turn to you again.
Have mercy on us,
bring us back to yourself as those who once were dead
but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

A period of silent reflection follows

Hear the words of comfort, our Saviour Christ says to all who truly
turn to him:

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,
that whoever believes in him should not perish
but have eternal life.*

John 3:16

COLLECT

Let us pray.

A period of silent prayer is kept.

God, you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace,
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;
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.

HYMN: BLESSED ASSURANCE

[Listen here](#)

THE WORD OF GOD

Hear what God is saying to his people according to the gospel of Matthew.

16¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell[b] shall not prevail against it.¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”²⁰ Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

A REFLECTION

By Revd Guy

As an identical twin I have often found myself caught in a case of mistaken identity. We look incredibly similar, and our voices are so alike that I've thought an answerphone message I left on my parents phone was from my brother. Thankfully there are some differences, I wear glasses - he doesn't, and I am right handed whereas he is left handed. But if I had a pound for every time someone has mistaken me for my brother I would be driving a nicer car and going on more exotic holidays.

Identical twins aside, it is still very easy to make mistakes about people's identities because as human beings we make assumptions based on our own experiences to fill in the gaps we don't know about others. For example when we see someone crying we naturally think they're sad, but they could be shedding tears of joy; or if we see someone with their eyes closed in church - we could assume it's because the preacher is dull and they've fallen asleep, or that they've been up all night looking after a sick relative and are exhausted, or that they are simply praying - it is our knowledge of that person and our own experiences that will decide for us we think is most likely. Until we get the full picture, we are always going to be susceptible to making assumptions about who someone is.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

It is no different today as it was back in the time of Jesus people always make assumptions about the identity of others. The passage we have heard today starts with Jesus wanting to know "Who do the people say the Son of Man is?" or more simply put, "Who do the people say I am?" This is understandable, as a man who has been getting a lot of attention because of his teachings and miracles he wants to know what people are saying about him, do they know the truth of who he is? You see at the time of Jesus there were lots of competing ideas about who the messiah would be and what kind of messiah would come. So it is no surprise to hear that the disciples return multiple answers to Jesus' question. The responses of the

people, although varied, all miss the mark. Some were taken in by the words of King Herod who believed Jesus to be the resurrected John the Baptist which Matthew reports earlier in his gospel (Matthew 14:2); others looked to their history and mistook Jesus for another prophet who would herald the Messiah saying he was Elijah, or Jeremiah, or another one of the prophets. It was almost as if for each person the disciples met had a different opinion on who Jesus was. And the situation is not so different today. There are those who think that Jesus never existed, that he is a fictional character; there are those who think he was a good teacher of morality and nothing more; there are even those who think that Jesus was a madman who had delusions of grandeur. Jesus is so often mistaken for something he is not, he is now and he was then.

THE TRUTH REVEALED

So who really is Jesus? Well if anyone was to know it was the disciples who had spent a good time travelling with Jesus, talking with him, getting to know him, they would be able to answer the question “Who do you say I am” correctly, right?! Well, although the disciples are often depicted as not being the sharpest individuals here they do not disappoint. Peter steps forward and declares “You are the Christ, the son of the living God.” Peter, in saying that Jesus is the Christ, declares him to be the messiah; not a prophet, not someone who would herald the coming messiah like John the Baptist, but the messiah himself, the one who would come to bring salvation. In spite of all the contradicting positions and the clamour of different opinions on who Jesus was the disciples see the truth. But this is no feat of intellect, no, Peter only sees who Jesus is because of a revelation from God the Father “flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven” is how Matthew describes it in verse 17. It is because of God’s revelation that Peter knows Jesus’ identity.

THE MIRACLE OF FAITH

Those who follow Christ have been blessed with the revelation of who Jesus is, just as Peter was. for as Jesus says earlier in Matthew “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father

except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.” (Mt. 11:27) We cannot come to faith in God or know our salvation in Christ through reason, or logic, or convincing arguments, for it is only by the grace of God that we can know these things and come to faith. In this way faith is a miracle. It is a miracle of God that we are all here today in this church. It is a miracle of God that there are millions of Christians around the world today. Faith is a miracle. As those who are miracles of God, we have been blessed with such grace. We have done nothing to deserve such faith yet God invites us to know him and to know our salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in whom we have the promise of eternal life.

THE NEED TO WITNESS

However, this revelation from God did not happen instantaneously, it is not like Peter suddenly plucked this answer out of thin air. Peter's confession of faith came through journeying with Jesus, being a part of his ministry, witnessing the effect that Jesus had on the lives of others, and discussing who Jesus might be with the other disciples. Then, when we read a little further in chapter 16, we see that although Peter knows the truth of who Jesus is, he doesn't quite fully understand it for three verses after the end of this morning's reading Peter is rebuked for his misunderstanding and is told "Get behind me Satan!" Peter has faith, he knows the truth, but he is on a journey of faith and continues that journey with Jesus getting to know him better.

This is the role of all Christians - to declare the truth of who Jesus is and to accompany others in their faith. We are those who know who Jesus is, in fact we are in a more privileged position than Peter and the disciples because we know of Jesus' death and resurrection, we know the type of messiah that Jesus is. Not the conquering war hero but a suffering servant. That is why at the end of our passage today Jesus told the disciples "to tell no one he was the Messiah" because the people would misunderstand the type of saviour Jesus was. We do not have any such hindrance! We have the whole picture! Too long has the church been guilty of following Jesus' words in Matthew 16:20 and keeping his true identity secret when there is no need to

anymore. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, in the tearing of the temple curtain in two, the truth of who the Messiah was, who Jesus was, was revealed for all to see and so we must go and share that truth! When Jesus says to Peter, on this rock will I build my church he says this because Peter has declared the truth of who Jesus is. It is this witness and confession of Jesus Christ that is the foundation of the church and so our foundation as Christians, and our primary calling as part of the church of Jesus Christ is the declaration of Jesus Christ as the risen messiah.

It is all well and good to be those who show the love of God through our actions, through generosity and kindness, but unless we are declaring to others that Jesus Christ is the messiah we are not living up to our identity as followers of Christ. Imagine if this was an election and you were a big supporter of your local MP and you went out and did lots of good, and loving, things for others, standing up for the oppressed, fighting injustice, and so on. How would anyone know you were doing those things because they were values that your local MP stood for unless you actually told people about your MP!

I started this morning by talking about cases of mistaken identity and how Jesus's identity was mistaken then and still is today. Do not let his identity be mistaken any longer, rather go out and tell others that Jesus Christ died so that we might live, that he came to fix our broken world, and that he is the Messiah.

Aside: If you find the prospect of telling others about Jesus scary or do not know where to start then may I suggest reading a book called Stay Salt by Rebecca Pippert which will help equip ordinary Christians like you and me to share Jesus through our ordinary day-to-day conversations. [It's currently on sale on Amazon for £6.99 or save 3p by buying the e-book for £6.96.](#)

HYMN: GO FORTH AND TELL!

[Listen here](#)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us declare our faith in God.

**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.**

INTERCESSIONS

Use the silence to bring before God your own concerns around that topic.

Jesus, our exalted Lord, has been given all authority.

Let us seek his intercession that our prayers may be perfected
by his prayer.

Jesus Christ, great high priest,
living for ever to intercede for us,
pray for the Church and its leaders, your broken body in the world...

Silence is kept.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, King of righteousness,
enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high,
pray for the world and its leaders, and make it subject to your gentle rule...

Silence is kept.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, Son of Man,
drawing humanity into the life of God,
pray for your sisters and brothers in need, distress, or sorrow...

Silence is kept.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus, pioneer of our salvation,
bringing us to glory through your death and resurrection,
surround with your saints and angels
those who have died trusting your promises...

Silence is kept.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, Lord over all things,
ascended far above the heavens and filling the universe,
pray for us who receive the gifts you give us for work in your service...

Silence is kept.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ,
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit
and in the bond of peace,
and bring the whole created order to worship at your feet;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

HYMN: GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

[Listen here](#)

DISMISSAL

God the Father,
who first loved us and made us accepted in the beloved Son,
bless you.

God the Son,
who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood,
bless you.

God the Holy Spirit,
who sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts,
bless you.

The blessing of the one true God,
to whom be all love and all glory for time and for eternity,
come down upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.