

DSW Written Service – Sunday 17th October 2021
‘Now the Time has come . . .’ by Revd John Yarrien

Call to Worship

In winter, and springtime. In summer, and harvest, God Speaks to Us.
In struggle, and suffering. In death, and resurrection, God Speaks to Us.
In Word, and action. In prayer, and promise, God Speaks to Us.

Living God, take this service, this day, this Circuit, our lives.
Use them for your purpose and your kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer

Loving God, all-good, all-true, all-powerful, Almighty, we worship you.
Gracious God, all-loving, all-merciful, all-faithful, all-compassionate, we thank you.
Mighty God, always active, always leading, always calling, always knowing, we commit ourselves to you.

Sovereign God, all in all, now and always, we praise you,
We worship you, we lift up our hearts before you. Amen

Prayer of Confession

Lord we come to you,
We're sorry for some of the things we did last week,
Particularly, when things got on top of us, and we did wrong in your eyes.

We're sorry if we walked on by, to block out the needs of the world.

We're sorry if we left you to get on
With what is ours to do.

We're sorry lord, for the things we have done wrong,
Either alone or in company with others,
We're sorry for those things we went ahead and did or things we left when we should have acted.

Confessions of heart and mind to God

There in the silence was all the stuff that weighs us down,
You won't look the other way.
But you take it off our hands, you set us free, and you forgive us.
And so, with hearts released, we ask you to show us how we can be the people you want us to be.
Glory to you, through all you shaped and love. Amen.

Bible Readings

Hebrews 5: 5 – 10: -

⁵ That is why Christ did not honor himself by assuming he could become High Priest. No, he was chosen by God, who said to him,
“You are my Son.

Today I have become your Father.^[a]”

⁶ And in another passage God said to him,

“You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.”^[b]

⁷ While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could rescue him from death. And God heard his prayers because of his deep reverence for God. ⁸ Even though Jesus was God’s Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. ⁹ In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him. ¹⁰ And God designated him to be a High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

John 12: 20 – 33: -

²⁰ Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration ²¹ paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.” ²² Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.

²³ Jesus replied, “Now the time has come for the Son of Man^[a] to enter into his glory. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. ²⁵ Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. ²⁶ Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me. ²⁷ “Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! ²⁸ Father, bring glory to your name.”

Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.” ²⁹ When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰ Then Jesus told them, “The voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. ³² And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate how he was going to die.

Sermon

Every Autumn, when I was a lad, my brother and I would spend a lot of time collecting horse chestnuts, so that we could have conker fights both at home and with our friends at school! I love that moment of finding the prickly green shells, and opening them up, to find the dark, smooth and shiny chestnut inside. We would pierce a hole in the middle of a conker, thread some string through it, with a strong knot on the end. Often Graham would test the strength of his conker either on my arm or my head, and me on his!

It was ‘Winner stays on’, survival of the fittest.

But one year, I found a conker and did what nature intended. Instead of piercing it and cracking it against other conkers or human bone – I decided to plant it. I dug whole in the garden, put some sand in and watered (cos that’s what dad used to do with big shrubs). Then after a year a little sapling appeared. I haven’t been back to Huntington Barracks recently to see if there is a big tree in the back garden of our old quarters, but I imagine it is, and that it produces record breaking conkers of its own.

That essentially is the picture that Jesus is painting in our Gospel Reading from John – that we have to sacrifice the seed, to not do what we want to do, in order that new life can spring. Jesus had to die, that a new covenant, a new creation is put in place between God and his people.

Now the time has come . . .

Are we really ready to see Jesus? Seeing Jesus, means standing with Him at the foot of the cross. So when we declare today, and every day “WE WANT TO SEE JESUS”, this is a powerful declaration, that we want to be part of God’s kingdom. Today, Tomorrow and For Ever.

Time and time again, throughout the gospels, Jesus says “my hour has not yet come” – there is some significant comfort in those words for the disciples – he is still with us – but conversely at the back of their minds they must have feared this moment, when Jesus’s language changes. Jesus now declares, in verse 23 – “the Time has come”.

This is Jesus preparing his disciples for his forthcoming death. To come is his Crucifixion, and of course his glorification – the fulfilment of God’s promise to the world. Not because of what happens – but because it happens – it achieves all things, LOVE overcomes all things, all darkness is dispelled. And the result is declared again in verse 24: “it bears fruit in the believing community”. Just as Jesus’ death is how Jesus can bring life, so following Jesus through faith and sacrifice, the way of love, is how we discover and experience the life God has for us in Jesus Christ.

Now the time has come . . .

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, he is transparent about God’s vision for him and for all the world. God’s vision has been clearly written on his heart. Whilst I don’t think God wants Jesus to suffer – God’s vision includes Jesus’ ministry which tests and challenges the religious norms of his society and culture, it turns tables on political power and that leads to conflict, resentment and plotting to take Jesus out of the game.

But those risky encounters – lead to wholeness, salvation, and redemption for all the world. Which is of course, the definition of bearing fruit for the Kingdom. So, what risky encounters, what laying down do we need to do, in order to bear fruit for the kingdom? How is our story going to mirror, as far as we can, that of Jesus, who emptied himself of all but love, for freedom of all the world?

Now the time has come . . .

John’s point here is to emphasise that Jesus knowingly and willingly lays his life down, for all. He did not need to. This was a deliberate, willing act of sacrifice and love. He chose not to escape the cross, so that LOVE would conquer death. This is the power of love – and that power was released through the cross for us all, for us all here today, and for everyone, everywhere, all of the time. So, we have to wonder how we can share that love, in our communities here in Dorset South & West circuit.

The time has come for us to plant the seeds of the kingdom, to sacrifice ourselves, to plant and build the kingdom of God here in this place. The agenda of love, salvation and hope, the agenda of Christ is the only one that matters. The cross bears all things, love conquers all things. Live in the love of Christ – the time has come. . . For us to live out God’s story, to share God’s story, because God’s story of love and salvation is our story. Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray for the Church of God throughout the world, for . . . and for . . .

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us pray for those who have power and influence and for all who govern the nations, for . . . and for . . .

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us pray for the powerless, for all victims of famine and war, and for all who strive for justice and peace, for . . . and for . . . Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us pray for the afflicted and sorrowful and for all who need our prayers, for . . . and for . . .

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us remember before God those who have passed from this life in faith and obedience, giving thanks for . . . and for . . . Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Eternal God, through the self-offering of your son you have filled our lives with your presence. Help us in our sufferings and trials and strengthen us in our weakness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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 – STF 319 – Christ Triumphant, Ever Reigning

1 Christ triumphant, ever reigning,
Saviour, Master, King!
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,
hear us as we sing:

*Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name!*

2 Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth!
Power and majesty concealing
by your humble birth:

3 Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated,
victim crucified!
Death is through the cross defeated,

sinners justified:
*Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name!*

4 Priestly king, enthroned for ever
high in heaven above!
Sin and death and hell shall never
stifle hymns of love:

5 So, our hearts and voices raising
through the ages long,
ceaselessly upon you gazing,
this shall be our song:

Michael Saward (b. 1932) Words: © Michael
Saward / Jubilate Hymns

Blessing

And may God centre you in truth and steady your spirit. May Christ renew your joy and strengthen your will. And may the Spirit teach you God's hidden wisdom and fill you with songs of rejoicing.

So May the blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Be with you,

With those you Love,
And those you are called to Love,
Now in the Name of Christ. **Amen**

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