

DORSET SOUTH AND WEST CIRCUIT

WRITTEN SERVICE 6/2/22 prepared by Chris Warren

A warm welcome to this service. If you know the tunes please enjoy singing the hymns. If not just read the words.

*Opening:* Trinity God, may we experience the unity of your presence.

Hymn: 608 All praise to our redeeming Lord, who joins us by his grace and bids us each to each restored, together seek his face.

He bids us build each other up; and gathered into one, to our high calling's glorious hope we hand in hand go on.

The gifts which he on one bestows, we all delight to prove; the grace through every vessel flows, in purest streams of love.

And if our fellowship below in Jesus be so sweet, what heights of rapture shall we know when round his throne we meet.

*Prayers:* Lord God, as we meet together in worship, come close to us and may we know the fellowship you bring. Enrich us with the joy of your presence.

As we experience you Lord we are conscious of our failings to follow Jesus. We have thought too often of ourselves and too little of others and their needs. Forgive us for the way we have not followed in the footsteps of Jesus. May we experience your forgiveness and renewal. May we experience afresh the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Thank you for all your gifts to us; for your care and love. We rejoice in who you are and for the wonders of you power and work. May we be sensitive to your leading. AMEN

*Hymn:* 78 Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One; give thanks because he's given Jesus Christ, his Son. (Repeat). And now let the weak say 'I am strong', let the poor say, 'I am rich', because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks.

*Introduction:* Today we look at two passages. First Isaiah is challenged by encountering the awesome presence of God. Then we journey with Jesus and see Peter when he realises the wonder of Jesus. So today is about encounter, challenge and forgiveness. We will then look at the relationship between our need for forgiveness and God's love for everyone. How do we hold together our message of repentance and love?

*Readings:* Isaiah 6 vs. 1-8. In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings; with two they covered their faces and with two that covered their feet and with two they flew. One called to another and said, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of

hosts the whole earth is full of his glory.' The pivots on the thresholds shock at the voices of those who called and the house filled with smoke. I said, 'Woe to me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts! Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said, 'Now that this has touched your lips your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out. Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send and who will go for us?' I said, 'Here I am Lord; send me!'

Luke 5 vs. 1-11: Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had got out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon and asked to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch'. Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' When they had done this they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell at Jesus' knees saying, 'Get away from me Lord for I am a sinful man!' For he and all who were with him were amazed and the catch of fish they had taken, and so also were James and John the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid: from now on you will be catching people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

*Hymn: 250* Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult of our life's wild restless sea, day by day his voice is sounding, saying 'Christian, follow me.'

As of old apostles heard it by the Galilean Lake turned from home and toil and kindred, leaving all for his dear sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship of the vain world's golden store, from each idol that would keep us, saying, 'Christian, love me more'.

Jesus calls us! By your mercies, Saviour may we hear your call, give our hearts to your obedience, serve and love you best of all.

*Talk 1:* The Old Testament reading is the pivotal event of the calling of the prophet Isaiah. Was he the High Priest, going into the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement to sacrifice on behalf of the people for their sins (and his own)? This inner sanctum of the Temple was where God was believed to dwell among his people. Isaiah realises that God will not fit into the temple and is far greater! Even the robe fills the Temple. So, faced with this awesome God he is acutely aware of his own failings. Could he really see God and live? The answer is emphatically YES. This event is his calling as a prophet. His sin is expunged symbolically by a live coal on his lips and he is assured of forgiveness. Then follows his call.

In the New Testament Peter is similarly challenged. The event begins with teaching a crowd from Peter's boat. Then he calls on Peter to take the boat further out on the lake and fish.

Peter, as an experienced fisherman, knows that the time to catch fish is at night. He finds out that Jesus knows more about creation and its workings than Peter! Peter is challenged and is acutely aware of his sin. Jesus' response is 'Do not be afraid'. In the awesome presence of God's Son fear is not the right response. It is to acknowledge the need of forgiveness, accept it and listen to the call.

*Hymn: 443* Come let us sing of a wonderful love, tender and true; out of the heart of the Father above, streaming to me and to you; wonderful love dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet; why do they roam? Love only waits to forgive and forget; home weary wanderer, home! Wonderful love dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love, come and abide, lifting my life till it rises above, envy and falsehood and pride; seeking to be, lowly and humble a learner of thee.

*Talk 2:* These two passages are very important. Note the similarity. First the encounter is with the awesome presence and power of the living God. Then the reaction of unworthiness and failure. However the response is one of forgiveness and call. So we see that God wants each person, imperfect as we are, to experience the Presence, acknowledge our failings, accept forgiveness and listen to what we are called to do. This call, of course, is unique and special to each one of us. Covid has been a kind of break to us of the things we have been doing in life. This has given a real opportunity to reflect. We can test whether we continue with some things and perhaps sense a call to the new. We are called to offer as we are able. For some that will be very active for some a ministry of prayer. All are equally important in God's eyes.

Recently I have been facing the question of our message. Clearly we offer forgiveness in Jesus' Name to all. However our message is about God's love to each and all. Mental health has been more of an issue for many people during covid and with lockdowns. So we face the challenge of whether talking about failings and forgiveness for wrongs is more difficult to receive. Should we be concentrating on God's love? Clearly the gospel is about both. Perhaps initially we should see that our approach is with *God's love. Our call is to help people to see the awesome and amazing presence of God and that will be God's direct witness and challenge to acknowledge failings and help others to experience the forgiveness that we ourselves have experienced.* If we just major on God's love though then we seem to be saying that all are forgiven anyway.

Let us share the love of God in Jesus, the awesome presence and forgiveness leading to the wholeness of inner peace.

*Prayers:* Lord in the quietness renew a sense of your awesome presence, and your words, 'Do not be afraid'. May we respond to your call afresh. TIME OF QUIET.

Lord we rejoice in the fellowship of our church. Renew us together as we seek your ways forward as covid eases. Lead us as a fellowship as we share your love and grace.

We pray for our community and those who are called to witness and care for others.

*Lord's Prayer*

*Prayer for giving:* Receive all that is given, money, talent and time. Bless and use to your glory and the Kingdom.

*Hymn:* 655 We cannot measure how you heal or answer every sufferer's prayer, yet we believe your grace responds where faith and doubt unite to care. Your hands though blooded on the cross, survive to hold and heal and warn, to carry all through death to life and cradle children yet unborn.

The pain that will not go away, the guilt that clings from things long past, the fear of what the future holds, are present as if meant to last. But present too is love which tends the hurt we never hoped to find, the private agonies inside, the memories that haunt the mind.

So some have come who need your help and some have come to make amends as hands which shaped and saved the world are present in the touch of friends. Lord, let the Spirit meet us here to mend the body, mind, and soul, to disentangle peace from pain and make your broken people whole.

*Close:* Heavenly Father, as you continue with us in Jesus Christ may we sense your awesome presence. When we fear you because of our failings assure us with your assurance in the words, 'Do not be afraid'. Bring us your forgiveness, filling with the Holy Spirit and continue your presence and leading. AMEN