

Sunday Morning Worship
Readings, Prayers & Prayers for 20th October



Isaiah 53.4-12

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.
They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.

When you make his life an offering for sin,

he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.

Out of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,

and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,

and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

This is the word of the Lord.

Hebrews 5.1-10

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honour, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

‘You are my Son,
today I have begotten you’;

as he says also in another place,

‘You are a priest for ever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.’

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

This is the word of the Lord.

Mark 10.35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.' But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' They replied, 'We are able.' Then Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.'

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

Reflection by Margaret Mandrell

A friend told me that when he was in Morogoro with a group from the Diocese, an old lady brought a tiny bag of peanuts to put in the collection plate at church because that was all she had. The peanuts were auctioned at the end of the service and the money put in the basket. I had a similar humbling experience when Sue and I sat on the tiny terrace in front of Rachel's small home. This was in Waterloo, Sierra Leone, and Rachel was a widow, caring for her grandchildren. She had prepared plantain for us, and polythene bags of water, as she was too poor to buy water in plastic bottles. These moments are replicated many times in communities where people have so little, yet want to share what they have with others, and glorify their Heavenly Father. Many of the people we met in Africa were materially very poor, but had great faith, truly believing that God would save, comfort and bless them.

Isaiah delivered God's message to the people of Judah between 740 and 700BC. He was a man with a mission, to confront, exhort, and warn and so was not popular but rather extremely unpopular. He stood up for the truth, warning his people of their headlong rush into disaster. His message also contained words of promise and hope. One day a Messiah would come who would save, comfort and bless His people. This section has the title "The Suffering Servant" which speaks of the Lord's coming salvation. Isaiah prophesied that He would be despised and rejected, wounded and bruised, and know sorrow and heartache. He would be blameless and speak only the truth and yet would be led to prison then on to death for our sins. Elsewhere in Isaiah we are told that the Servant will establish justice. This justice would be not for the few, but for all. Then there is the promise that He will bring deliverance, restoring Israel to become "a light to the Gentiles" and again that He will have God-given wisdom.

These prophecies were known to the New Testament authors. Peace sums up the Servant's ministry of reconciliation, justification, adoption and glorification. We have a reference to Melchizedek who is a mysterious figure who serves as an illustration of Christ. He was a real man, King of

Jerusalem, and a priest of God. He was a king of righteousness and peace from the time of Abraham who served God faithfully. Jesus was called by God to the role of High Priest to mediate between God and man forever. He was both human and divine, but was sinless and obedient and so was able to carry out God's plan for Him. He endured suffering and temptation so that He could truly function as High Priest, understanding our weaknesses and interceding before God for us. His death on the cross was to bring salvation but at great price for Him.

In our gospel reading we have James and John hoping for preferential treatment, to sit either side of Jesus in glory. They are confident that they can do all that is required. The other disciples react angrily. Jesus uses this as an opportunity to reinforce his radical message. Whilst many earthly leaders rule without regard to the welfare of their citizens, and can do whatever they chose, Jesus has the opposite way of behaving. He says that whoever wishes to be first must be a slave of all. He again reminds them that he came to serve, and to give his life for many.

We have numerous examples throughout history of despots and tyrants who have behaved with callous indifference to their subjects, killing millions in their greed and megalomania. Here we have a radically different set of priorities, a way of life which respects the weak, the helpless and the vulnerable in society. Jesus says that he is the good shepherd who cares for his sheep. He lived simply, relying on others for shelter, and he had a ministry of healing and restoration.

This ministry of healing and restoration is practised in some of the poorest communities by Christian Aid, working with local partners. The money raised last week will give hope by providing training in climate-resistant farming methods to those affected most by the climate crisis which is destroying harvests and threatening food security. Droughts and storms are getting more severe. Climate smart agricultural training encourages diversity. Nyari Zirugo from Zimbabwe says "We've seen our livelihoods, diet and farming methods improve greatly. We are better able to sustain ourselves even when droughts hit." "One of the main things we got was

improved knowledge. We learnt how to put in place measures to prepare for unpredictable situations.”

Thank you for your generosity in making such delicious cakes, and for all the donations which will impact many who are struggling. When we hear of the cruelty and inhumanity of those who misuse their power, we can rejoice that we know our Saviour who made himself humble and was willing to serve despite the cost.

Prayers

To the bidding: *Lord, in your mercy*

Please respond: **Hear our prayer**

Today marks the end of the ecumenical [Prisons Week](#), a nationally dedicated week of prayer across our Christian communities. The worshipping congregation of the CofE/Free church Christians of HMP Long Lartin have contributed to these prayers, also being read today in the Cathedral. As we pray for the needs of all those affected by imprisonment, let us begin by praying the national Prisons Week Prayer:

Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for those in prison. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care. Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ, in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day.

Lord, in your mercy **ALL: Hear our prayer**

Lord, we pray for your church throughout the world and for all Christians, particularly those suffering for their faith. We thank you that Jesus showed how much you love us and came not to be served but to serve and we ask that we, too, may follow him in the way we live our lives. We give you thanks particularly for the work of the Prison Chaplaincies, all those drawn to work with people who have committed crime and those involved in the criminal justice system

Lord, in your mercy **ALL: Hear our prayer**

Loving Father; Wondrous Creator; Graceful and Merciful God. We give thanks for the world you have made. All the birds in the sky, the fish in the seas and the animals on the land. We give thanks for the ecosystem that balances and harmonises your world. Most of all we give thanks for love - your love of the world; your love of us. We pray that we can love your world and everything that is in it, especially one another. We pray for world peace and lift up to you all areas of conflict especially Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon and Israel. Be with those who are trying to bring peace in areas

of warfare and terrorism and for the relief agencies trying so hard to bring food and medicine to those suffering.

Lord, in your mercy **ALL: Hear our prayer**

Father, we pray for our own community and for our relationships with our families, friends and neighbours. We remember particularly those children with a parent in prison, estimated to be nearly 193k a year nationally, and the impact this has on them throughout their lives. We pray for our local leaders, for those who work with children and the more vulnerable amongst us, and for the families of those in prison. May we work together to create a united, compassionate and open community that values all who live in it.

Lord, in your mercy **ALL: Hear our prayer**

Father, we pray for the sick, the lonely and the hurting in our community and for those who care for them. We pray in particular for those in our church community: Bill Jones, Leon & Valda Bailey, June Hume, Ken and Joyce Pringle, Ann Hunt, Anuwat Wanggane, Alan Coe, Jack Tubby, Rob & Lucy, Gloria, Roger Jones, Patricia Ash, Ryan Day, Brenda Hulland, David New, and Adrina and Alan Price. Help us to remember that you love each and every one of us and that you stay with those whom others reject.

Lord, in your mercy **ALL: Hear our prayer**

Father, we remember before you all those who have died and thank you for their lives and what you have taught us through them. In particular we remember Joan Tyson and those whose anniversary falls at the time: Yvonne Mousley, Margaret Lawrence, Ray Hughes, Kathleen Bailey and Harold Warren. We pray for all those who mourn, whether their loss is recent or longer term, and ask that you sustain them in their grief. May we not fear death but welcome it as the final fulfilment of all you offer us, and we thank you for the promise of eternal life

Merciful Father,

**ALL: Accept these prayers for the sake of your son,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**