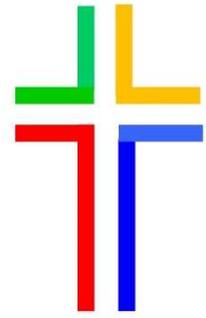


# Week St Mary Methodist Church – Sunday 22 March Passion Sunday



Dear Friends,

Just two weeks ago I was able to share morning worship with you at the Rendezvous Café Church, and in the afternoon was commissioned as pastoral and community worker in the Circuit. Now we find the world a disparate place, however, we can look forward to working out what following Jesus looks like now, in the time of social distancing, and beyond. *For now may we find peace in the one who is the same yesterday and today and forever. Hebrews 13:8.*

Sophie

## PRAYER

You are the creator of human life and You made people to relate to You. You give people skills and abilities and call them to use their gifts to serve You. You sent Jesus to live the perfect life. He always used the gifts that He had to please You. He knew that life was Your gift.

And He gave up His life, so that we might be forgiven, and make a new start. Gracious God, life giver, we bring You our thanks and praise. You are the one who makes new life possible. You raised Jesus from the dead, and now He is alive for ever. **Amen.**

## READING FOR TODAY

Matthew 20:17-18 & 29-31 (The Message translation)

<sup>17-19</sup> Jesus, now well on the way up to Jerusalem, took the Twelve off to the side of the road and said, "Listen to me carefully. We are on our way up to Jerusalem. When we get there, the Son of Man will be betrayed to the religious leaders and scholars. They will sentence him to death. They will then hand him over to the Romans for mockery and torture and crucifixion. On the third day he will be raised up alive." .....

<sup>20</sup> Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favour of him.

<sup>21</sup> 'What is it you want?' he asked. She said, 'Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.'

<sup>22</sup> 'You don't know what you are asking,'

Jesus said to them. 'Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?'

'We can,' they answered.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.'

<sup>24</sup> When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.

<sup>25</sup> Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – <sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

## REFLECTION

A vexed question which has absorbed the church in times past is that of the nature of Christ. He is held to be truly human and yet truly divine. It's a very difficult notion to hold in tension. Some passages - for example, the first chapter of John's gospel - very much stress the cosmic

Christ, whereas other sections, notably parts of Mark's gospel, draw us much more towards his humanity. Here, however, both sides of Christ are shown. His humanity is stressed as he reminds his followers that he must suffer and die.

We are reminded of his divinity as the disciples distastefully argue about who will sit next to him in glory. We can all be tempted to stress one side of Christ's nature at the expense of the other. Maybe we find our imaginations captured by the picture of Christ in glory; or maybe we are more naturally drawn to the image of a Jesus who is human, just like ourselves. In its most extreme form, this tendency sets heavenly worship against social action, as if these were two opposing views. The truth is that they are in fact two sides of the same coin, and we need both. Otherwise, the church will become on the one hand so heavenly minded that it is no earthly good, or on the other, a group of social workers without any sense of the divine.

### **PRAYER FOR OTHERS**

We pray for places where life seems very dark because there is war and fighting. People living in those situations where it is hard to be hopeful.

Be with those who are working amongst them.

We pray for those whose world is dark because they have got into difficulties. We think of those who are in prison for whatever reason. We think of those who are addicted to something that harms them. We think of those who are in debt. Be with those who are trying to help them.

We pray for those whose world seems dark because they are very unhappy. We think of those who are in pain, particularly those who cannot sleep. We think of those who have lost loved ones. Bring them the comfort and the help that they need.

We pray for our church and for ourselves. Fill us with Your light and Your life, so that we may show the difference that knowing You can make.

We pray in the name of Jesus, the way, the truth, the life and the light. **Amen.**

### **HYMN**

Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity

In perfect harmony the Man who is God  
Lord of eternity dwells in humanity  
Kneels in humility and washes our feet

Chorus: O what a mystery meekness and majesty

Bow down and worship for this is your God

This is your God

Father's pure radiance perfect in innocence

Yet learns obedience to death on a cross

Suffering to give us life

Conquering through sacrifice

And as they crucify prays Father forgive

Wisdom unsearchable God the invisible

Love indestructible in frailty appears

Lord of infinity stooping so tenderly

Lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne.

*Graham Kendrick STF 362*

### **GIVING**

Although we are not meeting, please kindly save up your weekly offerings for a grand reopening or give to Len earlier.

### **BLESSING**

May the love of the Father fill our hearts;  
And may the grace of the Holy Spirit bind us together in love in our families and communities.

And may the blessing of God be with you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **ON A LIGHTER NOTE.....**

*Question: why can't skeletons play music at church?*

*Answer: they have no organs.*