

St Andrew's Church

Lent 2

Newsletter for 28th February 2021

10.00am Mass on Zoom

Celebrant; Fr Hugh Houghton

Collect

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Reading

Genesis 17 1-7, 15-16

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous."

Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you."

God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

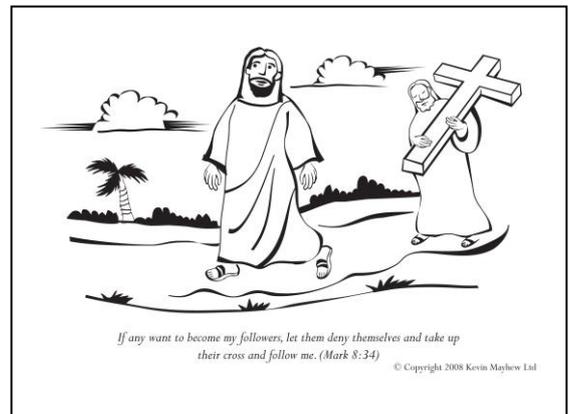
Gospel

Mark 8;31-end

Then Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly.

And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."



Post Communion Prayer

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please pray for people who are sick or in need of prayer: Gloria Boothe, Nancy Johnson, the Clarke family, Beverly Mitchell, Barney and Layanne Thorne, Adi Thorne.

For those who have recently died:

Anniversary of death: Sybil Darke

Birthdays: Lucas

Saints' Days this week

March 1st; St David, Patron of Wales

March 2nd; St Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, Missionary

Who was Chad? Chad was bishop of Mercia, based in Lichfield, in the seventh century. He lived in a small house there near the church of St Mary, which later became part of Lichfield Cathedral. Chad was responsible for much missionary work in Mercia, once the kingdom of Penda, a pagan king and warrior. The area Chad worked was vast, stretching from the Welsh border to Easy Anglia. So it is thanks to Chad that people in this area first became Christians fourteen centuries ago. Until the early twentieth century and the formation of the diocese of Birmingham, Handsworth was part of the Lichfield diocese. Chad's relics are now enshrined in the Roman Cathedral which bears his name in Birmingham. A Solemn Outdoor Procession of the relics is held every year on the Saturday nearest to the anniversary of his death.

Notices

- Are you shopping on line? Who isn't? Remember to look for a retailer that offers easyfundraising, and sign up to donate to St Andrew's church.
- Midweek services – Evening Prayer Wednesday at 7pm, Morning prayer Friday at 10am. Thursday at 7 the Lent Course – materials for next week see below.

Prayer

Blessed are you, Lord God. You have called us into life, to love and serve you. You have promised that you are with us always and that you are our Helper and our Guide. We give thanks for all who hear and obey your call: for men and women who willingly sacrifice and deprive themselves for the good of others. We remember all who have spent their lives in your service. We ask you to give strength to all who are quietly seeking to give you their love and their lives. We remember today all who suffer rejection, pain or distress for following you. Lord, as you have called us, hear us when we call upon you. Amen.

David Adam

Session 3: Jesus was in the transformation business.

Thursday 4th March 2021 – 7.00pm

Featured Bible Passages

- Mark 5:1-20
- 1 Thessalonians 2:5-8
- 1 John 1:1-3

Summary

This session explores the transformational power of stories. Jesus was, and is, in the transformation business. As a result, we have powerful stories of what Jesus has done to share with others. The session aims to embolden you and give you the tools you need to tell your story. It also features a video interview.

This session is based around Chapter 3 of Hannah Steel's book *Living His Story*. A featured passage is below, but you are encouraged to read the whole chapter as the questions often reference the book.

Featured Passage

One of the most remarkable stories of instant transformation is in Jesus' dealings with the demoniac in Mark 5. Jesus travels by boat to an area called the land of the Gerasene's. It is one of the first encounters that we see Jesus having in Gentile territory. In this remote place, Jesus encounters a man who is possessed by multiple demons. The initial description that Mark gives us of this man is distressing: wild and unkempt, ostracized from the local community, even his own family, wailing out loud and a danger to himself. We can only presume that this troubled man had no prior knowledge of Jesus, yet he is drawn to him and falls down on his knees before him. It becomes clear that the man is entirely riddled with demons and that only the all-powerful word of Jesus can break his chains. Jesus instantly sets the man free, although it does not turn out so well for the herd of pigs nearby. Mark is keen to report that by the time the crowd had heard of this story they were faced with an entirely different picture of the man, who now sat clothed, calm, and able to communicate articulately. The transformation undergone by this man was complete: from chaos to peace, from danger to security.

This miracle is one of many instances in the Gospels when encounter with Jesus brings complete and utter transformation and freedom. You might think that this story of transformation would be met with great relief by the town who no longer have to listen to the terrifying screams of the man wandering around the tombs. However, their fear now turns away from this man and focuses on Jesus instead. They are unsure what to make of his power and were possibly also concerned about the impact on the local farming community. The town turns out and begs Jesus to leave. This is so different from the many occasions where people beg Jesus to stay. Here his presence is not welcome. It is therefore not surprising that the freed man now wants to follow the one who has set him free. Why stay in the town that has exiled him? The man tries to climb in the boat with Jesus when he goes to leave, but Jesus says these words to him: 'Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you' (Mark 5.19).

It is surprising that Jesus doesn't take the man with him, isn't it? Only a few chapters ago he had been recruiting followers for his newly formed band of disciples. Surely this man would be the perfect new apprentice with a miraculous story to share? Jesus knows the home crowd are hostile. Why not save the man the hardship and take him on board? However, Jesus resists the man's desire to follow him and instead sends him back as a witness to his own community, the very community that had been so fearful of him. What is also striking is that this man has very little experience of Jesus other than this one exchange. He hasn't listened to the hours of teaching that the other disciples had. However, Jesus sends him back, simply to tell 'how much the Lord has done' for him. This man was called to witness to the story of God's work in his life, to speak of his utter transformation and his present

experience of freedom and peace. And we soon read that 'every-one was amazed' in the surrounding towns (Mark 5.20). Where Jesus had caused initial confusion and fear, this man's story of his encounter with Jesus in turn began to transform the lives around him. I love this story from Mark's Gospel because it is a powerful illustration of the influence of personal story. Jesus leaves the man in his hometown, untrained but full of his own personal encounter. And the results speak for themselves. This way of witnessing is one of the first and easiest ways we can start to share our faith with people and can be one of the simplest ways to get started on imaginative evangelism.

Video

For this session, there will be a video interview. This video will be available from **8th February 2021**.

Discussion Questions

1. Think of a story of encountering God that you have shared with others or others have shared with you. What did you learn from the experience?
2. In what practical ways might you express God's love to a neighbour this week?
3. At this point in your Lenten journey, be still for a while and imagine Jesus gazing into your eyes in love. How do you find yourself responding?