

Bride Valley Service for Sunday 27th June 2021 Fourth Sunday of Trinity

Please take a moment of silence before we begin, you may wish to light a candle

Psalm 30

Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment; his favour is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Verses 4 and 5

Opening Prayer

Lord, direct our thoughts and teach us to pray. Lift our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn: O Worship the King *sung by St Martin's Voices*

O worship the King all glorious above;

O gratefully sing his power and his love;
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise.

O tell of his might, O sing of his grace,
whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;
his chariots of wrath the deep thunder clouds form,
and dark is his path on the wings of the storm.

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air, it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distils in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust and feeble as frail,
in thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail;
thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end!
our maker, defender, redeemer, and friend.

O measureless might, ineffable love,
while angels delight to hymn thee above,
thy humbler creation, though feeble their lays,
with true adoration shall sing to thy praise.

William Kethe (fl.1559-1594), Robert Grant (1779-1838) (Public Domain)
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Confession

We have not always worshipped God, our creator. Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

We have not always followed Christ, our Saviour. Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

We have not always trusted in the Spirit, our guide. Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Absolution

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be our Saviour forgive us our sins and make us holy to serve him in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Collect

Let us pray: O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal; grant this heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: 2 Corinthians 8.7-15

Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something— now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. As it is written, 'The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.'

Gospel Reading: Mark 5.21-43

When Jesus had crossed again in the boat* to the other side, a great crowd gathered round him; and he was by the lake. Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, 'My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.' So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, for she said, 'If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.' Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, 'Who touched my clothes?' And his disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, "Who touched me?"' He looked all round to see who had done it. But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.'

While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?' But overhearing* what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, 'Do not fear, only believe.' He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. When he had entered, he said to them, 'Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, 'Talitha cum', which means, 'Little girl, get up!' And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Reflection by the Reverend Jane Williams

Today's reading is one of my favourites from Mark's Gospel. Even though Mark is, as ever, compact with his words and descriptions as I read the passage I can feel the heat of the day, hear the noise of the crowd, the jostling of people trying to get close and follow this amazing man who was turning the world, as they knew it, upside down. One story is inserted inside another for impact. Firstly, we hear about a leader of the local synagogue, Jairus, a religious man, a man who followed the Law, he is named in the passage so he must have been very important in the area at the time, such leaders were highly esteemed and often wealthy. Jairus recognises Jesus as a healer and honours him by falling down at his feet and begs him to heal his daughter. But, as we read on, this wealthy man must first wait for the healing of a destitute woman.

This woman who has been suffering with menorrhagia (that is the medical term for prolonged bleeding) for 12 years, 12 years, poor woman! Under the Jewish law a Jewish woman is considered unclean and impure whilst she is bleeding. She would have been an outcast, contaminating anyone she touched, in touching Jesus she is violating both the social rules of modesty and the religious law of purity. These days we can identify with the taboo of touching someone else in a crowd!

The woman does not dare address Jesus directly but instead reaches out to him, hoping to be healed but not noticed. And what happens next is the opposite of what a Jewish audience would expect, as it is Jesus who should have contracted her impurity through physical contact, instead his power is transferred, is this a clue to the social reversals to come?

The bleeding woman, out of her suffering body, tells Jesus 'the whole truth' of how she has spent all her money on doctor's bills, the pain and suffering she has endured, physically, spiritually and emotionally. Jesus, after feeling power had left him, stops walking, and it is as though the whole heaven and earth stops in its tracks until this woman becomes known to him. When she reveals herself to Jesus he says, 'Daughter' and comes into relationship with her, a woman, alone, in the male world of honour and shame. A beautiful act of grace.

Where does this woman's story become your story? When have you been the bleeding one, the broken one, the excluded, the invisible, the marginalised? Perhaps you have experienced a debilitating accident, illness or disability that changed your life in a single instant, the bondage of addiction, your humanity stunted by the cruelty or ignorance of others, or the horror of watching disease drain life from a loved one. Perhaps, as this woman, you have determined to be healed by reaching out to Jesus or otherwise accepting the healing power of the spirit.

Ched Myers in his book 'Say to This Mountain' says, 'Most of us also know times when we have been afraid to seek healing. At other points we may have prayed persistently and passionately for healing of self or others, but felt no healing touch. Perhaps at some point we have been vessels of God's healing power for others. At other times perhaps we have ignored the call to heal.'

So, what is your understanding of what asking for healing is and what healing may mean? Sometimes even our most earnest pleas do not always give us the answer we desire. Sometimes we experience healing as peace and acceptance in the face of disappointment, and as an awareness of the continuing presence of God in our times of despair.

For example, a man was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and he and his wife prayed for healing. His debilitating illness continued but he continued to pray. When asked why his prayers were not answered he replied, '**I have been healed**, not of Parkinson's disease, but I have been healed of the fear of Parkinson's disease.'

God's healing is a very big subject and I am just touching the surface. What does come through in all these stories is that of new life. The women who touched the hem of Jesus' garment was restored to a new life in community with others. The young girl, Jairus' daughter was literally given back her life. We are returning to a life living with Covid, we remain in relationship with each other even though we may be distant from each other. We are shaped and made human in relationship to other people. Our relationships, in the church, in friendships, are not just something extra added onto life for distraction and entertainment, as if we would be complete human beings in individual isolation. Relationship '*touch*' if you will, makes us human and whole.

As the contemporary Scottish philosopher John McMurray once phrased it, "I need 'you' in order to be myself." In order to continue as a church family we need each other, to support each other, to work together as the Body of Christ. **Amen.**

Let us declare our faith in God

**We believe in God the Father,
From whom every family
In heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
Who strengthens us
With power from on high.**

**We believe in God the Son,
Who lives in our hearts through faith,
And fills us with his love.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession: let us pray

We pray for the life of your Church, and we give you thanks that we have the freedom to pray and worship whatever our situation. Strengthen our Bishops and Clergy and especially we pray for our ministry team here in the Bride Valley. Give them courage and guidance, and help us to give them all the support and encouragement that they need. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for your world, broken by war and famine, and at the present time by the pandemic. Give wisdom to all in authority especially in making decisions regarding the present crisis. Help us not to forget those who are persecuted for their faith (or no faith at all), and those who are refugees seeking a place of safety in which to live. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the well-being of our community in the Bride Valley. For our schools, those who teach and those who learn. We give you thanks that they have remained open throughout. We thank you that you have protected them all. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our families and friends especially those who have been separated from us by lockdown. Help us to endure the pain of that separation, to be patient knowing that in your good time it will end. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those in special need. Those who are ill in hospital, nursing home or their own home and for those who care for them. We pray for those who are lonely or depressed ... and for those who are suffering from the loss of a loved one ... Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Look with mercy and love on us, gathered as your people on this Sunday. We each have a part to play in the body of Christ. Help us to grasp the great truth that the world is shot through with your presence, that nothing is foreign to you, that you are always there before us. And in that confidence we offer you again all that we have, all that we are and all that we should be, as agents of your love this week. **Amen.**

Let us pray that we may know life and hope in Jesus Christ as we say:

**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.**

**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.**

In Christ alone my hope is found *sung by St Martin's Voices*

In Christ alone my hope is found,
he is my light, my strength, my song;
this cornerstone, this solid ground,
firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all,
here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! - who took on flesh,
fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
scorned by the ones he came to save:
till on that cross as Jesus died,
the wrath of God was satisfied -
for every sin on him was laid;
here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay,
light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day
up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory,
sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
for I am his and he is mine -
bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
this is the power of Christ in me;
from life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
can ever pluck me from his hand;
till he returns or calls me home,
here in the power of Christ I'll stand!

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Final Prayer

To him who is able to keep us from falling and to present us without blemish
Before the presence of his glory with rejoicing,
To the only God, our saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Be glory, majesty, dominion and authority,
Before all time and now and forever. **Amen.**

The service ends with the Peace

Peace to you from God our Father who hears our cry.
Peace from his Son Jesus Christ, whose death brings healing.
Peace from the Holy Spirit who gives us life and strength.
The peace of the lord be always with you.
And also with you.

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