

Sunday 28th February 2021 – Bulwell United Reformed Church

The reading for the second Sunday of Lent is Mark 8: 31-38 - Jesus is telling his disciples a difficult truth about what will happen to him in his death and resurrection, but Peter finds it hard to take, and argues with Jesus. Jesus sets out that God's ways are different from human nature: we must forget about our earthly desires and follow Jesus. *A short service for personal communion focusing on confessing Jesus is Lord is included. Please have your bread & wine/juice ready.*

Call to Worship

People of God, on this wilderness journey, what will you eat?

The word of the Lord is our daily bread.

People of God, in this time of temptation, how will you live?

Our faith is in the faithfulness of God.

People of God, at this kingdom crossroad, whom will you serve?

We worship the Lord our God alone.

A prayer of confession

Based on Mark 8.31-38

Gracious, caring God,
you know who, and what, we are –
you know us better than we know ourselves.
When you are faithful, we are faithless,
and when you are patient, we are impatient.
Forgive us.

**Help us to deny ourselves and follow after you
that we may be good and faithful servants:
for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ.
Amen.**



Our Father who art in heaven...

Song You laid aside your majesty

[\(387\) Heart of Worship Band - You Laid Aside Your Majesty \[with lyrics\] - YouTube](#)

Mark 8:31-38

Jesus predicts his death

³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'

The way of the cross

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.'

(NIVUK)

The Way of the Cross – Mark 8: 31-38

Mark has been giving a vivid account of the life and teaching of Jesus. Miracles have astounded the Pharisees and the crowds, people have been healed and taught. Now Mark introduces a more sinister note, foreshadowing the suffering that is to come. Jesus speaks openly and directly about his death, identifying himself as the Son of Man. Jesus encompasses both the glorious and triumphant figure who bears this name in the Book of Daniel and Isaiah's suffering servant who must face opposition, rejection and death.

Alongside the suffering, Jesus brings the hope of eternal life. Death and resurrection are inseparable in the life of Christ. Peter tries to distract Jesus from these thoughts of seeming failure. Jesus reacts strongly. Peter has not been listening. This is the way it has to be. In Jesus' rebuke we hear echoes of the temptations.

Jesus turns to the crowd and spells out the consequences of discipleship. It involves self-denial, being obedient to God's will and being prepared to share the suffering. By sacrificing their lives for Christ and the gospel, the disciples will, paradoxically, save their lives. But ignoring Christ's call will mean that Christ will be ashamed of them when he returns in glory.

The important thing to note here is that to take up the cross is to take up hope. Peter missed the bit about 'after three days rise again.' As disciples we are very privileged people. We are called and chosen by God; Jesus is our Saviour; God is our Father & we are His children; we have been given the gift of eternal life; the Holy Spirit lives within us and nothing can separate us from God's love.

That means we also have considerable responsibilities. Jesus is our Lord and therefore everything in our life of discipleship is to be submitted to the authority of Jesus. We are called to be holy, to be like Jesus. To witness about Jesus – the more fully disciples submit themselves to the Lordship of Jesus, the more Christ-like we become both in character and in actions, and the more we are able to enjoy our privileges. I think this is what Jesus was getting at when he said, 'take up their cross and follow me.'

Jesus ministry is exciting – salvation, healing, compassion, eternal life. Yet there will be a hard part, as disciples we are learners on the way of following Jesus. He says that we will effectively 'lose life' if for example, we wrap it up in materialism, greed, unforgiveness and not standing up for injustice. The way we are called to live may be counter cultural and not

everyone will be for us but we shall still do it because Jesus is our Lord and we shall take up our cross.

Many of us over this past year have taken up our cross as we have met the personal challenges of coping with lockdowns and corporately the church has had to face restrictions in meeting together. Yet out of it all as we have taken up the Cross, I trust that as children of God we have found him near & present when we have gone through hard times. And acknowledging Jesus words about resurrection in the reading, the church has found new and different ways of worshipping, keeping connected and serving our community. Taking up the cross means to press on though and find the new thing that God is doing – and we shall find him near.

Intercessions

We pray for followers of Jesus Christ;
for those who are imprisoned for their faith,
for those who serve as missionaries,
for teachers of the faith...

We pray for those who deny themselves to serve others;
for those who work in hospitals and prisons,
for those who are carers,
for those who serve their communities as volunteers...

We pray for those who carry the weight of a cross;
for the homeless and unemployed,
for those who are ill or bereaved,
for those who struggle with mental health...

We pray for ourselves, as we follow Christ;
for strength to overcome our struggles and failures,
for our fears and worries,
for those we love, and those who love us...

Amen.

Please add your prayers for others you wish to pray for today . . .

Song Jesus, Jesus, Holy and Anointed One – Brian Doerksen

[\(387\) Holy and Anointed One \(with lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

Holy Communion - Second Sunday of Lent

We give you all thanks and praise, O God,
for, in an everlasting covenant, you have promised
to be our God through all generations.



In your Son, Jesus,
you showed your compassion for the afflicted
and taught us that real life is found by those
who lose their life for your sake and for your gospel.
He was rejected by the religious leaders, and killed,
but three days later,
you raised him from the dead as Lord.
Now you justify all
who put their faith in you, through him,
counting it to us as righteousness,
and promising us the full riches of your grace
when Christ comes in glory.



***Therefore, with our hearts lifted high,
we offer you thanks and praise at all times
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.***

The Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Wine

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast.
I Corinthians 5:7

The Sharing of the Bread and the Wine

*Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. Alleluia.*

Take, eat; this is the body of Christ, broken for you. Do this in remembrance of him.

This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ, shed for you and for all, for the forgiveness of sin. Drink of it, all of you, in remembrance of him.

Prayer after Communion

God of a love stronger than death, you have given us new birth into a living hope through the gift of your Son.

God with us, you have fed us with yourself and strengthened us for journeying ahead.

God of truth and power, you take our weakness and our sin and refashion us by grace.

A sending out prayer

In the name of God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,
give us hope, give us love, give us grace,
and give us a voice to spread God's hope, love and grace
to the world around us.

Amen.

