



**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 21 March 2021
The Fifth Sunday of Lent: Passion Sunday**

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

O Lord, open our lips
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Let your ways be known upon earth,
your saving power among the nations.

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief
your only Son was lifted up
that he might draw the whole world to himself.
May we walk this day in the way of the cross
and always be ready to share its weight,
declaring your love for all the world.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

Prayers of Penitence

God shows his love for us
in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Let us then show our love for him
by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the God of love
Bring us back to himself,
Forgive us our sins
And assure us of his eternal love
In Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading: **Jeremiah 31: 31-34**

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those

days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the LORD," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

Second Reading: Hebrews 5: 5-10

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 forever,
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

Thanks be to God.

Reflection from Janice

I was revisiting a commentary the other day, one from several years ago, and it was called “Living in interesting times”. Well, nothing new there then! The saying “May you live in interesting times” is said to be a Chinese curse but this is unlikely. Whatever the origins, it is clear that Jeremiah lived in interesting times.

He confronted people with their sins: kings, false prophets, those at the temple and those at the gates but a lack of response made him wonder if he was doing any good at all. Sometimes, today, a person can be described as a Jeremiah “a person who is pessimistic about the present and foresees a calamitous future”. However, the book isn’t all about gloom and the passage we look at today brings hope of restoration. I am told that it is the only specific Old Testament reference to the new covenant, a new beginning, a new relationship, a new life.

So, what’s different? If the people couldn’t keep the old, will they be able to keep the new? In one way, God’s law doesn’t change. His word remains constant. It’s the way the people receive and relate to the word that’s going to be different and it’s going to be the exact same people who had so frequently broken their relationship with God. The new covenant will not be on mere tablets of stone but there will also be an inner motivation of the mind and heart. Even when God’s people are faithless he will remain faithful. God will not only forgive but he will restore.

In Jeremiah we meet the God whose door is always open, the God who is always more ready to forgive than to punish, the God who is always ready to offer a better future to those who choose him again. In Jesus we have a permanent priest but one who suffered and shares our weaknesses and trials. The author of the passage in

Hebrews is no doubt thinking of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane facing crucifixion. I find it difficult to compare the struggles that Jesus encountered there with our own but, when in the midst of our own trials and temptations, we need to recall that Jesus too had his own weaknesses and struggles.

As we approach Holy Week, let us look to the Cross and call out in faith, offering our own failings to God in the sure and certain hope of that resurrection glory.

Affirmation of faith

Let us affirm our faith
**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.
We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercessions by Robert Priestley

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise for everything you have done and continue to do for us. We thank you for the life of your son Jesus Christ, whom you sent to live amongst us, to teach us, to love us and to set us a wonderful example of life. Help us to learn more about you and work out how we can serve you better.

Lord God, this morning we bring to you our concerns in prayer. We pray for the world-wide church and especially for Christians in countries where they face discrimination and oppression. May they

feel the strength and comfort of your loving arms .Thank you Lord for helping and supporting us all through this pandemic inspiring us to find new ways of worship, despite not being able to meet up traditionally in our church buildings. We look forward to returning to those places to meet together once more in your name but also keeping in mind the new ways of worship that we have become used to over the last twelve months.

We thank you Lord, for our local church leaders and our ministry team here who have offered us new ideas , new ways of keeping in touch, and continued the caring work inspired by you.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for our world leaders, for those who hold authority and affect the lives of so many others. There are countless places around the world but we especially think about Yemen, Myanmar, China and Hong Kong where unrest continues. We pray for all governments, Prime Ministers, Heads of State and CEO's who have the heavy burdens of making huge decisions that affect the future and lives of so many people. Help them to make good and wise decisions so that they might take their countries and organisations forward at this very difficult time.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

We remember also , the places in which we live, work and see our family and friends in this period when we are still restricted in our face to face social interaction, and we ask your blessing on our efforts to care for all in need. We thank you Lord, for the public bodies and charity organisations who continue to lead the way in all our localities. Strengthen their resolve Lord, so that they might carry on their amazing efforts, even though they may be fatigued by the last year of difficulties.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, we remember in our prayers all those who have been directly affected by the Covid pandemic. We offer prayers for all those who have tragically passed away, leaving people to mourn the deaths of family members, relatives and friends. We think about those who are in poor physical and mental health but we give thanks to all the people who look after them and care for them.

And Lord, with the amazing progress being made with the vaccination programme, we pray for people who are having doubts about whether to accept it or not. Please be with them, Lord, and help them to have the confidence to come forward and protect themselves and all who live around them.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

And finally Lord we pray for ourselves. Whatever lies ahead, we know that you walk with us, and your support gives us loving hearts to carry on and do your work to the very best of our abilities.

Merciful Father. Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us,
lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

May Christ, who bore our sins on the cross,
set us free to serve him with joy. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Blessing

May the Father
who so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
bring us by faith to his eternal life.

May Christ,
who accepted the cup of sacrifice
in obedience to his Father's will,
keep us steadfast as we walk with him the way of the cross.

May the Spirit
who strengthens us to suffer with Christ
that we may share his glory,
set our minds on life and peace.

And the blessing of God almighty
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be amongst us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Sending Out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

