

West Kirk Presbyterian

**Sunday Worship
5th April 2020**

online video of this service at
westkirk.co.uk



West Kirk Presbyterian, Shankill Road Belfast
Sunday 5th April 2020
Reflection - Love Shines at Calvary

*Christ was all anguish that I might be all joy,
cast off that I might be brought in,
trodden down as an enemy
that I might be welcomed as a friend,
surrendered to hell's worst
that I might attain heaven's best,
stripped that I might be clothed,
wounded that I might be healed,
athirst that I might drink,
tormented that I might be comforted,
made a shame that I might inherit glory,
entered darkness that I might have eternal light.
My Saviour wept that all tears might be wiped
from my eyes,
groaned that I might have endless song,
endured all pain that I might have unfading health,
bore a thorny crown that I might have
a glory-diadem,
bowed his head that I might uplift mine,
experienced reproach that I might receive
welcome,
closed his eyes in death that I might gaze
on unclouded brightness,
expired that I might for ever live.*

*From The Valley of Vision - A Puritan Prayerbook
© Banner of Truth*

Call To Worship - Zechariah 9:9-10

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Hymn - The Lord is My Salvation

The grace of God has reached
for me
And pulled me from the raging
sea
And I am safe on this solid
ground
The Lord is my salvation

I will not fear when darkness
falls
His strength will help me scale
these walls
I'll see the dawn of the rising
sun
The Lord is my salvation

Who is like the Lord our God?
Strong to save, faithful in love
My debt is paid and the
victory won
The Lord is my salvation

My hope is hidden in the Lord
He flowers each promise of His
Word
When winter fades I know spring
will come
The Lord is my salvation

In times of waiting, times of need
When I know loss, when I am
weak
I know His grace will renew these
days
The Lord is my salvation

And when I reach my final day
He will not leave me in the grave
But I will rise,
He will call me home
The Lord is my salvation

based on Psalm 27 - © 2016 K
Getty

Prayer of Adoration and Praise -

Lord you are our light and our salvation. You alone are a mighty stronghold. In the midst of fear, in the heat of the battle, whilst hearts are full of anxiety and worry we have no need to fear, for you are with us and will protect us, you will bring us through. We will dwell in your house forever, that is our sure and certain hope. It is made sure and certain because Jesus has died and rose again. He promises that this is the hope for all who trust in Him. Lord, In the midst of our fears and trials, through the power of your Holy Spirit may we fix our gaze upon you. May we know in the days of trouble that you are a safe dwelling place, may we know even in the depths of despair that you a shelter. May our hearts and lives be places of calm and rest. Teach us your ways O Lord, lead us in straight paths. In days of uncertainty, may we become all the more confident in YOU! May we learn to take heart in and daily wait upon you. Our Father we lament in these days when we cannot meet together, assure us in these days where we keep our distance from one another that you do not withdraw from us, assure us in these days that you are building your church, and nothing can stop that, in Christ's name, Amen.

Hymn - Take The World, But Give Me Jesus

All my hope on God is founded,
all my trust he shall renew;
he, my guide through changing
order,
only good and only true:
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

Pride of man and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
all that human toil can fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

Day by day our mighty giver
grants to us his gifts of love;
in his will our souls find pleasure,
leading to our home above:
love shall stand at his hand,
joy shall wait for his command.

Still from Earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done;
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son:
hear Christ's call, one and all –
we who follow shall not fall.

*Joachim Neander (1650-1680)
Robert Bridges (1844-1930)*

We Confess our Sins To God

A Call To Confession - Psalm 139:23-24

*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!*

Prayers of Confession

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Holy God, in the daily round from sunrise to sunset, remind us again of your holy presence hovering near us and in us. Free us from shame and self-doubt. Help us to see you in the moment-by-moment possibilities to live honestly, to act courageously, and to speak from our wisdom.

O my Savior, help me. I am slow to learn, prone to forget, and weak to climb; I am in the foothills when I should be on the heights; I am pained by my graceless heart, my prayerless days, my poverty of love, my sloth in the heavenly race, my sullied conscience, my wasted hours, my unspent opportunities. I am blind while the light shines around me: take the scales from my eyes, grind to dust my heart of unbelief. Make it my highest joy to study you, meditate on you, gaze on you, sit like Mary at your feet, lean like John on your breast, appeal like Peter to your love, count like Paul all things but rubbish. I believe, help my unbelief. Amen

A Word of Encouragement - Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

We Hear God Speak

Scripture - Mark 11:1-11

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus[a] sent two of his disciples 2 and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. 3 If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” 4 And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. 5 And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” 6 And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. 8 And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. 9 And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” 11 And he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Sermon - An Unusual King

Introduction - The Triumphant Entrance

In ancient Rome if a commander of the army won a great victory he was given a parade in Rome known as a Triumph. By the time Jesus was born Caesar Augustus, the Emperor, had had at least one of these parades. During the Triumph the commander of the army or the Emperor would ride into Rome in a four horse chariot. His whole army would follow him. The army and the crowd in Rome would sing his praises.

When we read Mark 11:1-11 we see Jesus had something a bit like a Triumph. Jesus came as the Christ (we thought about this last week with Dave). Part of what it meant to be the Christ was to be a king from the line of king David. Jesus hinted he was a king when he announced the kingdom of God was near (Mark 1:15). But, in his Triumph we see that Jesus is an unusual king. While Roman Emperors entered their city with armies and strength, Jesus comes with a crowd of ordinary people who don't understand who he is. As we look at this passage we see three things; Jesus the unusual king is in control, he is humble and (most importantly) he saves.

At the moment some of us are very used to being sent to do messages for people. That's how this passage starts. Two disciples are sent to get a donkey for Jesus. As we look at these disciples getting the donkey we see:

1. Jesus is In Control

As a kid do you remember being sent to the shop by your mum? Sometimes she'd give detailed instructions. "Make sure that you get the full fat, not the semi-skimmed milk". Jesus gives his disciples detailed instructions about how to get the donkey. When they find a young donkey tidied up they're to take it. When people ask what they're doing, they're to say that the Lord needs it. They'll be allowed to take it. Had Jesus prearranged this with the donkey's owner? Or, could Jesus simply tell what was going to happen because he's God? We don't know. But, what we see is Jesus is in control. He's controlling this whole situation. He's working out his plan.

Jesus is making his way to Jerusalem, knowing he'll die. This is all part of the plan (Mark 10). He is going to die and rise again to save his people. He's in control of the situation. He very deliberately makes sure the disciples get him a young donkey. Why? He is controlling the situation so he can fulfil Old Testament prophecy. In Zechariah 9:9 it's prophesied that the Christ will come to Jerusalem riding a young donkey to establish his kingdom of peace. Jesus knows this. The people of his day know this. Jesus is controlling the situation so that all who saw him would have known that he was claiming to be the Christ. He wants the people to know that he's the Christ and he's going to Jerusalem to establish his kingdom. Although, it will not be in the way anyone is expecting. He's never out of control. All Jesus does is deliberate.

Jesus is still in control. He's still working out his plan. His plan is that all who are his will hear of him and come into his kingdom. He is always working out that plan. He is always acting deliberately. He is always in control. That is reassuring all the time especially, at the moment.

Humanly speaking things look out of control. Jesus is the king who is in control. It's been said a lot recently but it is true, the virus may have taken the whole world by surprise but it hasn't surprised Jesus. He's still in control working out his plan.

So, the two disciples come back with the donkey. They meet Jesus outside Jerusalem. Some of the disciples take their coats and throw them on the donkey. Jesus starts toward Jerusalem. As he gets closer the crowd grows. The people are cheering and singing. They're throwing coats and branches on the ground. They're making a carpet for Jesus to ride on. But, remember he's on a donkey.

Jesus on a donkey brings us to our next point...

2. Jesus Is Humble

When Roman commanders or Emperors had their Triumph they came into Rome in a chariot pulled by four horses. It was to demonstrate how powerful they were. In fact before they were allowed to enter the city they had to give the Senate (the Roman parliament) a list of their achievements and why they deserved to enter the city in such a way. Basically, they had to boast about how amazing they were.

Compare this to Jesus. He doesn't have a chariot or a horse. He's got a borrowed donkey. This is a picture of humility. Even in his kingship Jesus is humble. Humility characterises Jesus' life. He leaves the glory of heaven for earth; he humbles himself. He lives humbly with no riches. He serves his disciples. He goes to the cross and dies as a criminal not for any crime he has committed but to take the punishment that sin deserves. Jesus is humble.

Jesus is our example as well as our saviour. We're to be humble. Our lives are not about us. We're not to be interested in receiving praise ourselves but in seeing God praised. As we're more online these days let's be careful what we post. Let's make sure whatever we post isn't seeking to get praise for ourselves but that it's pointing people to Jesus.

We're thinking about how Jesus is an unusual king. He's in total control. He's humble. Finally, we see:

3. Jesus Saves

Jesus is riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. The people around him are treating him like a king. They're singing, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord". They've not made up a new song. They're singing from Psalm 118. Psalms 118-130 are closely associated with the Passover, the time of year all this is happening. They were, if you like, on the radio at the time. Now the crowd applies this song to Jesus.

What's important is they're using the word "hosanna", it means "save us". The people are expecting the Christ to save them. They're expecting to be saved from the Roman forces of occupation. This is what they think Jesus is about to do. Here is their king. Yes, an unusual king but their king. He's making his way to Jerusalem, the royal city, to establish his kingdom and overthrow the Romans; at least that's what they think. But, that's not what happens. Jesus makes it right to the temple, the very heart of Jerusalem. He looks around. He leaves. What an anticlimax.

Do you ever watch a film and when it gets to the end you look at the person beside you and say, “is that it?” The end is an anticlimax. That’s what the crowd gets. They’re expecting Jesus to immediately establish his kingdom, overthrow the Romans and save them. Instead he goes back to Bethany. What the people don’t know is Jesus, the unusual king, is going to save in a far better way. He’s going to save people from sin and eternal punishment. He overthrows the greatest enemy, sin and death, by going to the cross and dying. He takes the punishment that all who believe in him deserve. He rises again giving eternal life in his kingdom to all who follow him. He’s the unusual king who saves. He saves in a far greater way than anyone had imagined.

This was good news 2000 years ago. It remains good news today. We want to be saved from the difficult things in life. Maybe in this time of crisis some of us who never really think about God find ourselves turning to him and asking him to save us. But, the rescue God offers through Jesus is greater than rescue from illness. He offers rescue from eternal punishment. He offers life with him forever. That’s good news. That’s why Jesus the unusual king came; to save sinners. Have you been saved?

Prayer

Lord God, Open our eyes that we might see Jesus as King, Lord and Saviour. May our restless hearts find peace in him, Amen

Hymn - Jesus is King

Jesus is king and I will extol him
Give Him the glory, and honour His name
He reigns on high, enthroned in the heavens
Word of the Father, exalted for us

*We have a hope that is steadfast and certain
Gone through the curtain and touching the throne
We have a Priest who is there interceding
Pouring His grace on our lives day by day*

*We come to Him, our Priest and Apostle
Clothed in His glory and bearing His name
Laying our lives with gladness before Him
Filled with His Spirit we worship the King*

We Respond In Thanks Love and Service

Pastoral Prayers for Others

God of all Comfort and Counsel, we pray for those who are grieving, reeling from the sudden loss of loved ones. May they find your fellowship in their suffering, your comfort in their loss, and your hope in their despair. (name before God those known to you who are vulnerable and scared - the frail, the sick and the elderly.) God of all Comfort, you are powerful and merciful; may this be our prayer – **“He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us.”** (2 Corinthians 1:10)

Lord of Peace, we remember those living in coronavirus hotspots and those currently in isolation. May they know your presence in their isolation, your peace in their turmoil and your patience in their waiting. Prince of Peace, you are powerful and merciful; let this be their prayer – **“May your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need. Help us, God our Saviour, for the glory of your name.”** (Psalm 79:8)

God who heals, we pray for all medical professionals dealing daily with the intense pressures of this crisis. Grant them resilience in weariness, discernment in diagnosis, and compassion upon compassion as they care. We thank you for the army of researchers working steadily and quietly towards a cure - give them clarity, serendipity and unexpected breakthrough today. Would you rise above this present darkness as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in your rays. May this be our prayer – **“Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.”** (Jeremiah 32:17)

God of all Wisdom, we pray for our leaders: the World Health Organisation, national governments, and local leaders too - heads of schools, hospitals and other institutions. Since you have positioned these people in public service for this hour, we ask you to grant them wisdom beyond their own wisdom to contain this virus, faith beyond their own faith to fight this fear, and strength beyond their own strength to sustain vital institutions through this time of turmoil. God of all Wisdom and Counsel, you are powerful and merciful; may this be our prayer – **“God is our refuge and strength, an ever- present help in trouble. Therefore we will not (Ps 46:1-2)**

Lord Jesus Christ, we ask you to protect us from the spread of the coronavirus. You are powerful and merciful; let this be our prayer **“Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.”** (Psalm 57:1)

Hymn - Glorious Things

Glorious things of thee are spoken,
Zion, city of our God;
he whose word cannot be broken
formed thee for his own abode;
on the Rock of Ages founded,
what can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,
thou may smile at all thy foes.

See the streams of living waters,
springing from eternal love,
well supply thy sons and daughters,
and all fear of want remove;
who can faint while such a river
ever flows their thirst t'assuage?
Grace, which like the Lord, the giver,
never fails from age to age

Round each habitation hovering,
see the cloud and fire appear
for a glory and a covering ,
showing that the Lord is near;
thus deriving from their banner
light by night and shade by day,
safe they feed upon the manna
which he gives them when they pray.

Savior, if of Zion's city
I, through grace, a member am,
let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in thy name;
fading is the worldling's pleasure,
all his boasted pomp and show;
solid joys and lasting treasure
none but Zion's children know.

John Newton 1779

Benediction - from 1 Corinthians 3:11

May you know that you are equipped by His Grace, Surrounded by Salvation's Walls. Let nothing shake your sure repose, For no man has laid such a firm foundation, Other than the One, which is laid, which is Christ Jesus the Lord.

Announcements

Here To Help

- There are so many people who have said "We are here to help, if anyone needs anything let me know" Please get in touch if you are in need of anything. Shopping, Medicine, etc. There are people waiting to help you! Feel free to phone David

Good Morning West Kirk

- It's good to see one another at Worship on Sunday. We are all going to miss that, so we are encouraging people to reach out over the phone. Maybe someone who wouldn't normally call you. If you would like someone to phone you pass on your number to David. Don't be surprised if you get a call.

Please be patient with church elders as we work this out as we go along! These are trying times, we really want to serve the Lord and His people in West Kirk.

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Let your friends and family know they can join us online www.westkirk.co.uk or if they want a paper copy delivered let us know.

Pastoral Visitation

- Over these weeks it will be safer if the pastoral team are not visiting. They will be 'visiting' people on the phone. If you need them please get in touch.

Family Worship & Kids

- Over the weeks we want to help Kids and Families worship God and learn. The Ministry team will be working on this. Please keep an eye on westkirk.co.uk and Facebook.

Church Envelopes and Giving

- People have asked how they might continue to give their tithes and offerings during this period. You can keep putting away your envelope and bring them when this is all over, you can send a cheque to Joe or Dave, or if you are online you can set up a standing order online, ring David if you want to arrange this.