



Worship at Home : 21st February 2021

LENT

Let us pray.

Lord, we come to worship you as we are, to become what you meant us to be. We come as we are, broken, afraid and full of disappointment, to be made whole and set free. We come as we are, with all our plans and our dreams, our joys and our sorrows, to be touched by your grace and held in your love. We come as we are; there is no other way we can come. We come as we are to praise you, the one who is worthy and the one who is Lord. Amen.



When Jesus came to Jordan
to be baptised by John,
he did not come for pardon,
but as his Father's Son.
He came to share repentance
with all who mourn their sins,
to speak the vital sentence
with which good news begins.

He came to share temptation,
our utmost woe and loss,
for us and our salvation
to die upon the cross.
So when the Dove descended
on him, the Son of Man,
the hidden years had ended,
the age of grace began.

Come, Holy Spirit, aid us
to keep the vows we make;
this very day invade us,
and every bondage break.
Come, give our lives direction,
the gift we covet most:
to share the resurrection
that leads to Pentecost.

Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000) CCL 215980

Mark 1:9-15

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

Reflection

At the beginning of Lent we are reminded of the baptism of Jesus. His baptism did many things, it declared that Jesus was God's son, with whom God was pleased. The Holy Spirit descended and rested



Worship at Home : 21st February 2021

upon him and sent him into the wilderness for forty days to be tempted by Satan and waited on by angels.

Before we get carried away with the forty days and forty nights of Lent, it is worth reflecting on the baptism of Jesus. The other gospel accounts tell us that John thought it should have been the other way around: Jesus baptising John. However, Jesus seemed to know instinctively what he had to do. There is a great symbolism in being washed clean, and in doing so being dedicated to God and to the service of God.

Today, in a lot of churches we baptise children who cannot answer for themselves and there is good reason for doing this. However, Jesus was not a child when he was baptised and I wonder therefore if this gives us an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of our baptism.

What is it that is declared in the baptism service?

“For you Jesus Christ came into the world;
for you he lived and showed God’s love;
for you he suffered death on the Cross;
for you he triumphed over death, rising to
newness of life;
for you he prays at God’s right hand:
all this for you, before you could know
anything of it.

In your Baptism the word of scripture is fulfilled: ‘We love because God first loved us.’”

All of this for us.

This is what was said at our baptism, at the start of our journey of faith in God, a journey that takes a lifetime to glimpse

the truth of all that is said in that service, before we could know anything of it.

If baptism symbolises a start to our journey of faith, then what an adventure we embark on! Jesus was baptised, the Holy Spirit of God rested on him and he was sent out, out into the wilderness. What did Jesus learn in that wilderness, in those forty days?

In Matthew’s gospel we learn that Jesus already knew the scriptures, because that is how he countered each temptation that Satan put before him. This wilderness time was not to learn the scriptures, for that had already been done, but perhaps it was to have faith in them, to rely upon them and the promises of God. To rely upon God when there was nothing else. No house, no family or friends or work or anything to distract. But simply to rely on God.

And perhaps this is really the point of Lent. A dedicated period of time to draw close to God, remembering that God did not abandon Jesus in these forty days. The Holy Spirit was still with Jesus, the angels waited upon Jesus, and Jesus demonstrated that he placed everything he had in the hands of his heavenly Father.

Jesus did all those things our baptism service says, because first of all he trusted in God.

The Methodist Church in Singapore has this as part of its ordination service:

We are not ordaining you to ministry; that happened at your baptism.

What difference would it make to God’s



Worship at Home : 21st February 2021

church if we all understood that we have a calling to a ministry? That our ministry is active and alive and started from our baptism and will never end. Yes, our ministry may change, but it will continue.

What difference would it make to God's world if our baptism into the family of God influenced every thought and action of our lives?

We love because God first loved us.



How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss –
The Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.
Behold the man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders;
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life –
I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything,
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer;
But this I know with all my heart –
His wounds have paid my ransom.

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Let us pray.

Loving God, we thank you that you call each of us by name, that we are yours. We thank you too that you call us to share with you a ministry using the gifts you so generously pour out on us.

We thank you for the story and symbolism of baptism, that we rise from the waters of baptism with the Holy Spirit descending and resting on each of us.

Loving God, may your Holy Spirit continue to fill us, renew us and lead us in the ministries to which you call us.

As we pray this for ourselves, so we pray it for your global church. May we be the instruments by which your love, care and compassion are known. Let us pray for those agencies that seek to support others. Let us pray for 'All We Can', 'Christian Aid', 'Tearfund', and 'Action for Children'.

Let us pray too that we might recognise the opportunities we have to speak of you to those we love and also to those we find difficult to love.

Let us give thanks for those who took the risk of talking to us of you. Because of them, we have come to follow the example of Jesus, learn about you through the scriptures, and experience our own encounter with the living Lord Jesus Christ. Grant to us, we pray, similar courage as we learn this Lent to draw closer to you and be guided by your Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we bring these and all our prayers together as we pray the family prayer:



Worship at Home : 21st February 2021

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.
And forgive us our trespasses,
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.



Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go,
my daily labour to pursue,
thee, only thee, resolved to know
in all I think, or speak, or do.
The task thy wisdom has assigned
O let me cheerfully fulfil,
in all my works thy presence find,
and prove thy good and perfect will.
Thee may I set at my right hand,
whose eyes my inmost substance see,
and labour on at thy command,
and offer all my works to thee.
Give me to bear thy easy yoke,
and every moment watch and pray,
and still to things eternal look,
and hasten to thy glorious day;
For thee delightfully employ
whate'er thy bounteous grace has given,
and run my course with even joy,
and closely walk with thee to heaven.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788) CCL 215980

Blessing

May the God who created the heavens
and the earth, and who knew us before
we were born, continue to create his
image in us. And may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us this
day and for ever more. Amen.



*God has called me to ministry. What kind of
ministry is God calling me to now?*

As I start Lent, I will draw closer to God by