

Traditional Home service Sunday 14th February

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:
give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer
with him and be changed into his
likeness, from glory to glory;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

God our Father, we come to you in
sorrow for our sins.

**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.**

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the
name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to
God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms,
hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (*Immortal, invisible*)

READINGS - 2 Kings 2.1-12
2 Corinthians 4.1-12
Mark 9.2-9

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth. I believe in
Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who
was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of
the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was
buried; he descended to the dead. On
the third day he rose again; he ascended
into heaven, he is seated at the right
hand of the Father, and he will come to
judge the living and the dead. I believe in
the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness
of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Spend some time praying for our nation,
our community and our families.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

HYMN 2 (*Praise to the Lord*)

CONCLUSION

The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you
and give you peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you
always.
Amen

HYMNS TO USE

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessèd, most glorious, the
Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great Name
we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as
light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest
in might;
Thy justice like mountains high
soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of
goodness and love.

To all life thou givest—to both great
and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on
the tree,
And wither and perish—but nought
changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of
light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling
their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to
see
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth
thee.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the
King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy
health and salvation!
All ye who hear, now to His temple
draw near;
Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things
so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under His wings, yea, so
gently sustaineth!
Hast thou not seen how thy desires
e'er have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper
thy work and defend thee;
Surely His goodness and mercy here
daily attend thee;
Ponder anew what the Almighty can
do,
If with His love He befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord, oh, let all that is in
me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come now
with praises before Him;
Let the Amen sound from His people
again,
Gladly for aye we adore Him

Sermon for 14th February 2021
Revd Adrian Morton
2 Cor 4:1-12, Confidence in the Gospel

I felt the Lord spoke to me this week through Scripture.

Earlier in the week I had read the 2 Corinthians passage that Louise read out for us.

And to be honest I was struggling to know what to speak on.

I was thinking about something along the lines of Jesus is Lord and having confidence in that simple Gospel message.

But I wasn't sure... I wasn't confident that it was a subject worth speaking on...

And I still wasn't sure on Friday morning, and again was dwelling on the passage.

And I felt the Lord reminded me of the Scripture in Mark 7 whereby Jesus says to his disciples: 'Are you so dull?'

Or in the message translation, "Are you being wilfully stupid?"

And I felt the Lord was applying this Scripture to me...

I didn't have confidence to speak about having confidence in the simple Gospel message, "Jesus is Lord".

That there was a certain irony to that...

So that is what I want to speak on this morning.
Having confidence in the Gospel message, Jesus is Lord.

I do wonder whether the Lord often speaks Mark 7 to me...

Anyway...

The Gospel reading today is the transfiguration account.

I'm sure that reading has much deep theology, but for simplicity sake, it also shouts at us:

This Jesus is Lord.
He is no ordinary human being.
He is above Moses and Elijah.
He can't be consigned to being thought of as just a good teacher.

There is more to Him.
He is Lord.

And the Father wants us to 'listen to Him.'

Now in our 2 Corinthians reading, Paul said 'we don't preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord.'

Paul also preached Christ crucified.

And both Jesus is Lord and Christ crucified kind of sum up Paul's Gospel message.

It was that simple...

And the situation in this church at Corinth was such that the church had lost faith, had lost confidence in Paul as an Apostle.

And Paul was kind of saying, it doesn't really matter whether you have confidence in me, have confidence in the Gospel message.

That's the important thing.

There is much at the moment that has probably shaken our confidence.

For many, this pandemic has shown we can't be overly confident of a long healthy life.

Many have experienced loss in their families.
For others, it's our jobs or careers.

For others, it's the lack of contact with family and friends.

I think many are losing confidence in going out.

In simply meeting with others.

We had Matthew & Amy and our grandson come and visit this week.

Apparently, if you have an under 2, you can have a family support bubble.

And so we are now that for them.
They are a bit worn out because the little munchkin won't sleep at night.

But anyway, it was great to see them and spend time with our grandson.

However, whenever we went hear him, his bottom lip started to tremble and he started to cry.

Because he is not used to other people. He's not seeing or interacting with other people.

So Louies and I were these scary others...

And I think that is probably affecting a lot of us.

This lack of interacting with others.

But you know we can still have confidence in the Gospel message.

That Jesus is Lord... actually there is no 'is' in the Greek, its simply Jesus Christ Lord.

That and Christ crucified is a message that means our past is forgiven, our present is filled with meaning and purpose and our futures are filled with hope.

Jesus Christ Lord applies even over death, our worst enemy.

And I'm not trying to minimise grief, or the difficulties many are experiencing in this pandemic,

But 'Jesus Christ Lord' is a bigger, and more impressive truth to hold on to.

And we can have confidence in that.

We are called to proclaim it. And we are called to allow this message to shine out of us more specifically.

I was struck this week by something Bishop Donald said in his latest bulletin.

He was talking about the future of the church post pandemic.

What it might look like.

And in particular the 5 marks of mission

Which include loving service, challenging unjust structures, caring for creation... but he said this:

We ought to be serious and intentional about environmental issues. We ought to be working and campaigning for peace and justice. We ought to be finding ways of helping the poor and marginalised. We ought to be teaching and building each other up in our faith. That is all part of our mission. I commend and encourage all such actions. But if we aren't talking about Jesus, proclaiming him, commending him, naming him as Lord and Saviour, we aren't doing his mission.

And he went on...

getting people into our buildings or to our social events may be good, but it isn't mission unless we commend Jesus personally to them. The same goes for visiting the prisoner or the sick, feeding the hungry, resisting injustice, reducing climate change: all good things to do, and all part of our mission; but none of them counts as mission unless we are intentionally, actively, verbally, commending Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

Why did he say that..

Well, Jesus Christ Lord, Christ crucified is the simple message that has the power to change lives and bring hope.

And one of the points in this 2 Cor passage is that we can have confidence in that simple Gospel message.

I'm sure many of us, during this pandemic, have tapped into some wonderful teaching by some very charismatic leaders and teachers.

And its great that all this is easily accessible to us...

Actually for those of you who are more 'internet challenged' than others you may not find it easily accessible.

But our confidence isn't to be located in global charismatic speakers, or even not so charismatic local leaders and speakers..

It needs to be founded, rooted in the simple Gospel message, Jesus Christ Lord, Christ crucified.

And that was one of Paul's points in this passage.

He, more than anyone, could have cause to boasts about himself.

But he pointed people away from himself to the Gospel.

verse 7 says, "we have this treasure in jars of clay to show this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

Interesting imagery...

Corinth was known for its pottery.

One type was highly glazed black work. Which was the expensive sort.

The other was made of clay, it was of bad quality, ordinary... But it was these poor quality, cracked jars that would allow light to shine through...

And Paul is saying that its our weakness that allows the light of the Gospel to shine through.

You can read later in 2 Cor 11 for some examples of what made Paul weak..

In our culture we tend to celebrate and look up to those who seem to have got it all together, those who seem successful.

But Paul is turning this on its head... and is saying embrace weakness not success.

I don't know how you feel about how qualified you are to proclaim the Gospel. Or how well you think your life allows the Gospel to shine through...

If you are like me, then you probably feel rubbish at it a lot of the time?!

But the point is that it is through weak people that the Lord uses.

Maybe you, like Paul, feel hard pressed on every side, perplexed, persecuted, struck down even...

Well know that the Lord won't allow you to be crushed, to fall into despair, abandoned or destroyed.

1 Cor 10:13 in the Message says:

"No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it."

So its a call to embrace weakness rather than success...

And that's not an excuse for laziness. Or to exacerbate our bad features..

But its a willingness to be fragile and vulnerable in who we are.

And in our weakness to know that the light of the Gospel is able to shine out...

Amen.