

Traditional Home service Sunday 21st February

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; 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.

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 (*At the name of Jesus*)

READINGS - EPHESIANS 1:17-21
5:1-2

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 (*O Jesus I have promised*)

CONCLUSION

The love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen you in his service,
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts;
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

1 **At the name of Jesus** ev'ry knee shall bow,
ev'ry tongue confess him King of glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

2 At his voice creation sprang at once to sight,
all the angel faces, all the hosts of light,
thrones and dominations, stars upon their way,
all the heav'nly orders in their great array.

3 Humbled for a season to receive a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious, when from death he passed.

4 In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not true;
crown him as your Captain in temptation's hour:
let his will enfold you in its light and pow'r.

5 Brothers, this Lord Jesus shall return again,
with his Father's glory, with his angel train;
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

1 **O Jesus, I have promised**
To serve thee to the end;
Be thou forever near me,
My Master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If thou wilt be my guide.

2 O let me feel thee near me!
The world is ever near:
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear.
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.

3 O let me hear thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will.
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, thou hast promised
To all who follow thee
That where thou art in glory
There shall thy servant be.
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
My Master and my friend.

Sermon for 21st February 2021
Matthew Beeby 'Sit, Walk, Stand'

I first became a follower of Jesus Christ back at the beginning of 2007. It was possibly 6 months after that Jez Safford, (now the vicar of Burton Latimer, back then a trainee under Adrian) he invited me for lunch.

During that lunch he asked me what I was going to do with my new-found faith. It was a question that I was not expecting, but I thought about it and gave it my best shot, and listed a few possibilities.

To my surprise, considering as far as I was concerned it was two friends having lunch, he tore into me a bit. 'Where is God in those things?'

He then proceeded to give me a bit of lecture, which left me stinging a little. When it was time for me to go, he qualified what he'd done by saying that he prayed earnestly before I arrived and he felt strongly the Lord telling him to, 'tear a strip off me.'

He said the Lord had told him to give me a little book, entitled, Sit, Walk, Stand, and that this book would not only build me back up, but would show me exactly what a Christian Life should look like.

I remember getting home, still a little raw, but eager to open this book, and sure enough after just a few pages the whole truth about Jesus Christ was beginning to reveal itself.

A huge revelation, one might say!

Today's talk is going to be based on, and use extractions from that book, because having read it again recently, I have found it just as relevant to me as it was back then.

I guess the fundamentals of our faith are always relevant, and as we grow as followers of Christ, we may receive the messages differently, but they never cease to land.

Verse 20 of our Ephesians reading states, 'He raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.'

So let us first consider this word seated, or for our purposes the word 'sit'. Following Jesus does not begin with walking, it begins with sitting.

When I had replied to Jez what I might do with my faith, that implies that I'm walking. Had I replied, 'I'm waiting to see what the

Lord says to me' that would have implied I'm sitting.

I was making a common mistake, I was walking in order to sit. It's a natural reaction to something new. I was thinking, 'how could I possibly achieve any goal without walking.'

But following Jesus is a strange business. If at the outset we try to do anything, we get nothing. If we seek to attain something, we miss everything.

For following Jesus does not begin with a 'do', it begins with a very big 'done'. The Lord God Almighty has done everything for us in His work of His son Jesus Christ. And we, at the outset, are invited to sit down and enjoy what God has done for us. Certainly not to try and attain it for ourselves.

We did nothing whatsoever to save ourselves, we simply laid upon Him the burden of our sin-sick souls. To take the first step in faith we must say, 'I can do nothing by myself, but by His grace God has done everything for me.'

Following Jesus, from start to finish, is based upon the principle of utter dependence. He will give us everything, but we can receive none of it unless we rest on Him.

Sitting is an attitude of rest. Something has been finished, work has stopped, and we sit. God did the work, he stopped, and we sit. Our new life starts when we learn to sit. We let Him bear the responsibility, we cease to carry that burden ourselves.

God worked for six days and then rested. On that 6th day he made Adam, meaning that Adams first full day on earth was a day of rest.

And here too is the Gospel, it went a stage further. God completed the work of redemption in His son Jesus Christ. We need to do nothing but enter directly into the values of that completed work. We must see ourselves seated in Christ, God has given us our place of rest.

So each time we embark on a new Spiritual experience, it must start with an acceptance by faith of what God has done. A new 'sitting down', if you like.

I receive my forgiveness, I receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, not by my merit, but by sitting down and resting in the work of Jesus. When

the Holy Spirit shows us Jesus and we believe in Him, with no further act on our behalf, there begins a life in union with Him.

Our 'old person' has gone, that one that troubled us for years. It has been crucified with Christ and put away. Our new life has begun and we too sit next to the Son in the heavenlies. We are no longer in bondage to sin, not because of anything we've done, nor even on what God is going to do, but what has already been done in Christ Jesus.

When we realise this, acknowledge this, we then find the secret to a Holy Life.

Read pages 10-11.

God is so wealthy that His chief delight is to give, His treasure stores are full to the brim. It pains Him when we refuse to give Him the opportunity of lavishing those treasures upon us.

If we leave all the all the giving and work to God do we think the result will be less satisfying than if we do some of it?

Let us briefly take a peek at the most famous parable, The Prodigal Son, one we all love. The elder son was not in a far-off country, squandering money, but in actual fact he was only at home in theory. His position was one that could ever be enjoyed as did the Prodigal Son on his return. No! He was steadfastly clinging on to his works.

Stop giving and you will prove what a giver God is, stop working and you'll discover what a worker God is.

The younger son was all wrong until he came home and found rest, and that is where the life of being a follower of Jesus begins.

So now we know that our spiritual experience must begin with sitting, every task where we walk first will end in disaster. But it does not end there, sitting must always be followed with walking. Once we are well rested and have found the strength bestowed on us, then we can begin to walk.

Walking is the practical outpouring of our heavenly position here on earth.

It is clear that the body of Christ is not something remote and unreal, to be expressed only in heavenly terms. It is very present and practical, finding the real test of our conduct in relation to others.

While it is true we are heavenly people, it is no use just to talk of a distant heaven. Unless we bring heavenliness into our dwellings, our offices, our shops, our kitchens, and practice it there, it will be without meaning.

It is the flow of our own personal lives which gives us an indication of our Christ dwells in us. If we are often at logger-heads with others, or we are constantly burnt up with what is right or wrong maybe some sitting is required. After all, since the day that Adam took the fruit off the tree of knowledge, man has been engaged in deciding what is good and what is evil.

The natural man has worked out his own standards of justice and injustice, and striven to live by them. Of course, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to a different standard. We have realised that the starting point for good and evil is a different one. We do not start from the tree of knowledge, we begin with Christ and the work of the Cross.

Nothing has done greater damage to our Christian faith than us trying to be right and demanding it of others. We think about whether we have been treated justly or unjustly, and use that to vindicate our actions.

As followers of Jesus, our standard can not be right or wrong, our standard is the cross. With Jesus it is a question of His Father's grace, not right or wrong. Right or wrong is the principal of gentiles and tax-gatherers.

We can't go the extra mile, the extra mile is only typical of the 3rd and 4th and onwards. When Jesus died on the cross, he did not do so to defend our rights, it was grace that took Him there.

So, to sum up and explain Paul's language in his letter to the Ephesians. He has first learnt to sit, he has come to a place of rest in God. As a result, his walking is not based on his efforts, but on God's almighty inward working. There lies the secret of Paul's strength.

So, may we be seated with Christ in the heavenlies, may we rest in His finished work. May we see our position clearly, and from this position, may we walk with Christ, in His strength.

Amen