

Sunday Worship at Home, 7th November 2021, Third Sunday before Advent.



Opening Prayers:

Lord, speak to us; **that we may hear your word.**

Move among us; **that we may behold your glory.**

Receive our prayers; **that we may learn to trust you. Amen.**

A Prayer of Confession:

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call.

Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early.

**Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement; bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Collect

Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation:

stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope
that all creation will one day be healed in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Reading: Jonah 3:1-10 **Jonah goes to Ninevah**

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.

This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Reflection on the reading:

The Gospel for today and the book of Jonah are about God's call to do his work and faithfully walk in his path wherever that path will lead us, and in whatever task he gives us, To share in his work of growing his Kingdom here on earth. Marks Gospel tell the story of Jesus calling the four fisherman Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John away from their family and fishing nets with the words "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men". And immediately they did. Jonah responded to the same calling very differently: Go to East to Nineveh and give them my message. Jonah's response is to go West and hide in Spain. When he did eventually go the right way it was begrudgingly. The story ends with Jonah sulking because God forgave the people of Nineveh and did not destroy them.

I encourage you to find the book of Jonah in your bible and read the whole story, it is only 4 very short chapters. The point that I want to make this morning is that we can make one of three responses to God when he calls us to do something for him. We can ignore his call and try to run away and hide. We can follow his call reluctantly, grudgingly and complain about it. We can follow his call willingly and immediately even though we may not know where that path will take us. Following him may be hard at times but it is always exciting. Ignoring or disobeying him often turns out to be much harder and much more uncomfortable in the end. Personally, I know how I would rather respond to my calling, but how do you respond to yours, for that is your choice, and yours alone. Amen.

The Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and 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

Be still and pray: In your prayers, include prayers for the church, the needs of the world and our local community. Particularly pray for: Areas of the world affected by War, natural disasters and man-made disasters, especially Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, La Palma, and the West and East Seaboards of America; for world leaders and other conference delegates as they travel home from COP26; for our own county, nation and other nations dealing with rising COVID infection rates; for healing and peace for those who are ill; and for the souls of those who have recently died, and comfort for those who are mourning their loss.

Finish with The Lord's Prayer:

Conclusion

May God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the source of all life and love, pour his blessing upon all things created, and upon you his children; **Amen**

Reverend Eddie