

Sunday Worship at Home, 3rd March 2022, 5th Sunday of Lent – Passion Sunday



Opening Prayers:

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Make me a clean heart, O God,

and renew a right spirit within me.

A Prayer of Confession:

God shows his love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Let us then show our love for him by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

We are often slow to follow the example of Christ. **Lord, have mercy.**

We often fail to be known as Christ's disciples. **Christ, have mercy.**

We often fail to walk the way of the cross. **Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Collect

Almighty God, Gracious Father, you gave up your Son out of love for the world: lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion, that we may know eternal peace through the shedding of our Saviour's blood, Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Reading: John 12:1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ² There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³ Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Reflection on the reading:

In our reading we are given a short story which is heavy with both scandal and symbolism, in which provides us with more questions than answers. Today on Passion Sunday we turn our attention from our own penitential preparation for Easter and begin to focus on Jesus' own path to Calvary. In John's Gospel Jesus begins his journey by staying the night at the house of some friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus whom he had recently raised from the dead. The perfume that Mary uses to anoint Jesus' feet is expensive, equating to approximately £20,000 in today's money. Now imagine the impact that pouring it over Jesus' feet would have had. First there is the smell – imagine taking the largest bottle of perfume that you have and breaking it on the floor. She pours it not on his head, the anointing of a king or priest, but on his feet, the anointing of the dead. And she wipes it off with her hair. Apart from the impracticality of this, I cannot imagine anything less absorbent, her hair is exposed to everyone. But again, the only time a woman would have her hair exposed to anyone except her husband is when she is mourning, as she would have been when Jesus met her at Lazarus' tomb, so it was probably not the first time that he has seen her hair. I also suspect that despite Jesus' words, she actually bought the perfume for her brother, but un-needed now she makes it a gift to Jesus. Does she have some special foreknowledge of what awaits Jesus in Jerusalem, or has Jesus already shared with them all, in an unrecorded part of their conversation, what lies ahead? We cannot know. We do know that Mary's response to his death is an action that expresses her undying gratitude and love towards the one who has brought her and her family new life. **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:

God of peace and justice, God of love and healing; we pray for all those in our benefice who are ill at this time, and those who are caring for them whether at home or in hospital; we pray for those struggling with rising cost of fuel and food, and who are fearful of how they may pay for tomorrow; we pray for the people of Ukraine who fear what this day will bring; we pray for peace and the laying down of weapons; we pray for those with power over war or peace, for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions; we pray for all your precious children living at risk or in fear, that you would hold and protect them.

Finish with The Lord's Prayer:

Conclusion

May Christ crucified draw you to himself, to find in him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Reverend Eddie