

Worship at Home
A Service for Bible Sunday
The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity
25th October 2020
With the Bishop of Penrith

HYMN

Lord thy word abideth

Recorded this week by St Martin's Voices

Lord, thy word abideth,
and our footsteps guideth;
who its truth believeth
light and joy receiveth.

When our foes are near us,
then thy word doth cheer us,
word of consolation,
message of salvation.

When the storms are o'er us,
and dark clouds before us,
then its light directeth,
and our way protecteth.

Who can tell the pleasure,
who recount the treasure,
by thy word imparted
to the simple-hearted?

Word of mercy, giving
succour to the living;
word of life, supplying
comfort to the dying!

O that we discerning
its most holy learning,
Lord, may love and fear thee,
evermore be near thee.

Words: Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)
Tune: Ravenshaw

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Rt Rev Dr Emma Ineson

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you.

All and also with you

Welcome to this online service on today which is Bible Sunday, as we celebrate the centrality of the Bible, God's Word, to our life and faith.

I'm standing today in the Parr Chapel of Holy Trinity Church in Kendal. The Parr family built this chapel in the 14th century and the family coat of arms is seen up there on the ceiling.

Now, the Parr family's most famous member is Catherine Parr, the 6th and final wife of King Henry VIII (the one who 'survived' as the little rhyme goes). There's a large tomb in the chapel which is believed to be that of William Parr, Catherine's grandfather.

And Catherine was a devout Christian who encouraged the reading of the Bible by everyone in English. The Bible translator Miles Coverdale was amongst her closest advisers. And unusually for a woman of her time, Catherine wrote and published two devotional books.

In one, she wrote these words: *"I have hope nor confidence in any creature, neither in heaven or earth, but in Christ my whole and only Saviour".*

Today our service will be led by people from across the beautiful county of Cumbria and further afield, who, like Catherine Parr, look to the Bible for the inspiration which leads them to hope in Christ their saviour.

So, let's pray together:

Blessed are you, Lord our God.
How sweet are your words to the taste,
sweeter than honey to the mouth.
How precious are your commands for our life,
more than the finest gold in our hands.
How marvellous is your will for the world,
unending is your love for the nations.
Our voices shall sing of your promises
and our lips declare your praise
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The president says

The word of God is living and active.
It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
All is open and laid bare before the eyes
of him to whom we give account.
We confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence is kept.

Your word convicts us:
all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

Your word commands us:
repent, and believe the Good News.
Christ, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Your word assures us:
Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.
Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw us to himself,
and cleanse us from all our sins
that we may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

REFLECTION ONE

Rev Madi Simpson, Assistant Curate at Ulverston Parish Church

Madi Simpson is a curate from the South Lakeland town of Ulverston. She was ordained as a priest a few weeks ago and here she reflects on how during lockdown her reading of the Bible has brought close to her the great cloud of witnesses.

Hello, my name is Madi Simpson and I am the Assistant Curate at Ulverston Parish Church in the South Lakes in Cumbria. I've been asked today to share a brief reflection on how I read scripture or how my reading of scripture has changed during lockdown, it being Bible Sunday, and I thought this was a really good question to ask because I've been reading the Bible for many, many years, so in some ways it's really familiar, I know where my favourite bits are, so the content doesn't strike me as new, sometimes if I'm allowed to say that, although there are new things always to be discovered in it. But what has really come home to me while reading it during lockdown is the company that I'm in when I read.

What do I mean by that? Well, one of the worst things about lockdown is the feeling of being lonely, being isolated, and that sense of loneliness and isolation can be modified or offset or cushioned somewhat by comforting ourselves behind locked doors, so we can read any number of novels, we can watch TV and we can text people and things like that. But, it's so different to have somebody alive and with you in the warm flesh.

And the thing about the Bible is, or has come home to me, is that it's not just Jesus, the living word who is with me, alive and resurrected in his flesh, but there is all the great company of heaven, and what I've loved to experience and just to reflect on frequently throughout the last six months is that everybody who's had a hand in compiling this, the authors in it, everybody whom Jesus brings alive in his encounters with them in the stories in the Bible, is alive now, and there's so much on my side and I would love you to know that today as well, that there is a vast company in heaven and here on earth, a great company of believers, a great company of people whom Jesus has brought alive, who are very much not dead, who are with you and who are reading with you, who are singing God's praises alongside you and have you in their thoughts and prayers. Jesus took some people to task in Luke chapter twenty for not believing this and I think he wants us to remind, to be reminded of that today. So God be with you and all the company of heaven.

HYMN

Thanks to God whose word was spoken

Recorded this week by St Martin's Voices

Thanks to God whose word was spoken
In the deed that made the earth,
His the voice that called a nation
His the fires that tried her worth,
God has spoken, God has spoken
Praise Him for His open Word.

Thanks to God whose Word incarnate,
Glorified the flesh of man,
Deeds and words and death and rising,
Tell the grace in heaven's plan,
God has spoken, God has spoken,
Praise Him for His open Word.

Thanks to God whose Word was written
In the Bible's sacred page,
Record of the revelation
Showing God through every age,
God has spoken, God has spoken,
Praise Him for His open Word.

Thanks to God whose Word is answered
By the Spirit's voice within,
Here we drink of joy unmeasured
Life redeemed from death and sin,
God is speaking, God is speaking,
Praise Him for His open Word.

*Words: Reginald Thomas Brooks (1918-1985)
Tune: St Helen*

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Dave Henley, Police Officer with Cumbria Constabulary.

Our first reading is brought to us by Dave Henley who is a police officer, with Cumbria Constabulary.

Today's reading is taken from the Letter of St Paul to the Colossians three, verses twelve to seventeen.

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through him.

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTION TWO

Rev Cathrine Ngangira, Assistant Curate at Holy Cross Bearsted

The Bible is a directive and operative voice in my life, more like a manual or a sat nav. And it is going to be a source of hope and encouragement especially in this pandemic. When we first entered into lockdown I would read my scripture and just being selective to what I listen to, listening in to that just one verse, or one book, that I felt was providing answers to the questions that I had. And when I wouldn't find those answers it was like, 'is God still speaking through this book?'

But then, the longer we stayed in lockdown, I also learnt to take a step back, and instead of coming with my own questions, to also allow scripture to raise certain questions in me. And it meant allowing God, through the Holy Spirit to direct me, to give me the hope, the encouragement that I needed, and that I still need. It hasn't been easy, but it has been transformative.

PSALMODY: 119.9-16

Connor Wilson, Solway Network Youth Church

Psalm 119, verses nine to sixteen:

- 9 How shall young people cleanse their way •
to keep themselves according to your word?
10 With my whole heart I have sought you; •
O let me not go astray from your commandments.
11 Your words have I hidden within my heart, •
that I should not sin against you.

- 12 Blessed are you, O Lord; •
O teach me your statutes.
- 13 With my lips have I been telling •
of all the judgements of your mouth.
- 14 I have taken greater delight in the way of your testimonies •
than in all manner of riches.
- 15 I will meditate on your commandments •
and contemplate your ways.
- 16 My delight shall be in your statutes •
and I will not forget your word.

Glory to the father and to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit as it was in beginning,
is now and shall for ever.
Amen.

GOSPEL READING

Read by Abby Lawson

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew. (24.30-35)

Our Gospel reading is brought to us by Abby Lawson, and you may be able to hear some traffic noise behind her as she reads, but that's because Abby is from St James' Church in Tebay, which is just on the side of the M6.

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter twenty-four, verses thirty to thirty-five.

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and then they will see "the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven" with great power and glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. 'From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

SERMON

The Rt. Rev Dr Emma Ineson, The Bishop of Penrith

Let's pray together:

Merciful God,
teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty,
that trusting in your word
and obeying your will
we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

THE CREED

Let us affirm our faith.

All Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers,
and to all the apostles:
this we have received,
and this we believe.
Amen.

ANTHEM

Thy word

Recorded remotely by St Martin's Voices during lockdown

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path

When I feel afraid
And I think I've lost my way
Still you're there right beside me
Nothing will I fear
As long as you are near
Please be near me to the end

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path

I will not forget
Your love for me and yet
My heart forever is wandering
Jesus be my guide
And hold me to your side
I will love you to the end, yes to the end

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path
Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path

Beautiful word, wonderful word, wonderful word of life.
Beautiful word, wonderful word, wonderful word of life.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Words and Music: Michael W. Smith, Amy Lee Grant, arr. Lloyd Larson

PRAYERS

Led by The Mountain Pilgrims

Prayers will be led for us by the Mountain Pilgrims, a Fresh Expression of church in Carlisle Diocese, which meets and prays and reads the Bible on the mountains.

Greetings from Cumbria. Ordinarily as Mountain Pilgrims our prayers are inspired by the natural world around us, we find that nature invites us to open ourselves up, allowing God to minister to us through nature, and in return we minister back to nature by honouring and respecting it. But this morning we're glad to join you, time on a church with some spoken prayers. As we pray together we'll offer the line, 'Come breath from the four winds' and your response is, 'Breathe life into our prayers'. And so let us be still together and notice once again that God is here in us, around us, with us and for us.

We open our hearts and minds to you God and the world around us and ask that you would teach us and inspire us to pray.

Come breath from the four winds

All Breathe life into our prayers

We look at the world and see all that you have created. We thank you for your love revealed and experienced through it and ask that we might, in return, learn to love you and all that speaks of you. We think of the natural world. We think of the people of the world. Especially today, we think of the Bible and those involved in opening it up as a revelation of you through translation and distribution throughout the world.

Come breath from the four winds

All Breathe life into our prayers

We look at the world and notice the people who care for it, we see their struggle to protect and nurture. We thank you for them and ask for strength for their hands and hearts. We think of farmers, foresters, gardeners and environmentalists. We think of health and care workers; and those who teach; and those who lead. Especially today, we think of those who teach and interpret the Bible in order to nurture and encourage others.

Come breath from the four winds

All Breathe life into our prayers

We look at the world and see where harm is being done; we long for repentance and restoration, that your will be done on earth as in heaven. We think of places impacted by pollution and over consumption of natural resources. We think of places impacted by war, violence and oppressive governments. Especially today, we think of the harm caused by the misunderstanding or abuse of the Bible where division is preached rather than reconciliation.

Come breath from the four winds

All Breathe life into our prayers

We look at the world and grieve with all who have lost someone or something dear; we seek your peace, comfort and joy. We think of the mass extinction of plant and animal species. We think of those affected by loss of health or life; of those who've lost homes or employment. Especially today, we think of those experiencing persecution or loss of freedom because of owning or distributing the Bible.

Come breath from the four winds.

All Breathe life into our prayers

We look at the world and pray: thy will be done.

All Amen

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers,
for the sake of your Son
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

THE COLLECT

Blessed Lord,
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:
help us so to hear them,
to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,
we may embrace and for ever hold fast the
hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

Mountain Pilgrims

All The Word of life which was from the beginning we proclaim to you.

The darkness is passing away
and the true light is already shining;

All the Word of life which was from the beginning.

That which we heard, which we saw with our eyes,
and touched with our hands,

All we proclaim to you.

For our fellowship is with the Father,
and with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All The Word of life, which was from the beginning,
we proclaim to you.**

The darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We pray together the Lord's Prayer in the contemporary version.

All 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.

Thank you so much for joining me for this online service today.

So, go now in peace,
knowing that you have been born again,
not of perishable seed, but of imperishable,
through the living and enduring word of God;
and the blessing of God almighty,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with you now and for ever.

All Amen.

HYMN

Thou Whose Almighty Word

Recorded this week by St Martin's Voices

Thou whose almighty word
chaos and darkness heard,
and took their flight;
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the Gospel-day
sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light.

Thou, who didst come to bring
on thy redeeming wing
healing and sight,
health to the sick in mind,
sight to the inly blind,
O now to all mankind
let there be light.

Spirit of truth and love,
life-giving, holy Dove,
speed forth thy flight;
move on the water's face,
bearing the lamp of grace,
and in earth's darkest place
let there be light.

Blessed and Holy Three,
glorious Trinity,
wisdom, love, might;
boundless as ocean's tide
rolling in fullest pride,
through the world far and wide
let there be light.

Words: John Marriott (1780-1825), Thomas Raffles (1788-1863)
Tune: Moscow

Acknowledgments

Service led by The Bishop of Penrith, The Rt. Rev Dr Emma Ineson.

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British Sign Language Interpretation provided by Gill Behenna.

Music performed by Andrew Earis and St Martin's Voices.

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Bible readings accessed from <https://bible.oremus.org/> (New Revised Standard Version).