



Martin Bird's Prayers for Monday 15th to Sunday 21st February 2021

Monday (Sigfrid)

Reading – John Chapter 3, verses 1 to 21

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven - the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Lord God, we thank you that your reason for sending Jesus to us on earth wasn't anger or disappointment, but rather it was love. You loved the world so much that you sent your Son to us to save us from our sins. May we live our lives as saved and loved people, knowing that because of your love we are saved and we are loved, more than we can possibly imagine. Amen

Shrove Tuesday

Reading – Psalm 29

**Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendour of
his holiness. The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders,
the LORD thunders over the mighty waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of
the LORD is majestic. The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the
cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon leap like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox. The
voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning. The voice of the LORD shakes the desert;
the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
The voice of the LORD twists the oak and strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry,
“Glory!” The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.
The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.**

Lord may our very lives, in whatever way we can, give you glory. May what we do, say
and are worship you in the splendour of your holiness. Lord God, you are enthroned – so
we say reign in us again. You give your people strength – may that strength be felt by all
who are suffering at this time and by all who feel weak, mentally and physically. Lord you
bless your people with peace – may your peace come over this whole world and over us.

Amen

Wednesday – Ash Wednesday

Reading – Matthew Chapter 6, verses 1 to 6, and verses 16 to 21

**“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you
do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. “So when you give to the needy,
do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the
streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But
when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is
doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in
secret, will reward you. “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to
pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell
you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close
the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done
in secret, will reward you. “When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for
they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have
received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your
face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father,
who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. “Do not
store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where
thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths
and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your
treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

Lord Jesus, help us to store up our treasures in heaven with our Father God by doing what
is right here on earth. May we do as you ask, and do all things for you and not for how
good we might look or for how much we might get out of it. May we pray in the right way,
and live in the right way – through you and with you at the centre of everything we do,
say and are. Amen

Thursday

Reading – Psalm 57

Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed. I cry out to God Most High, to God, who vindicates me. He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me - God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.

I am in the midst of lions; I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts - men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. They spread a net for my feet - I was bowed down in distress. They dug a pit in my path - but they have fallen into it themselves. My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.

Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. May your glory be noticed by your whole world through your very creation, and, in so realising what they are looking at – the very glory of God, may the whole world come together to protect your world and save your animals that are being driven to extinction at the moment. May we all realise that we have a part to play in looking after your world and that this is what you ask us to do – to be good stewards of your planet so we can pass it on to the next generation and other generations to come. May we truly praise you in all we do, and all we say, and may we spread your love around the world, so all may see it and know it for themselves. Amen

Friday

Reading – John Chapter 4, verses 27 to 42

Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward him. Meanwhile his disciples urged him, “Rabbi, eat something.” But he said to them, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about.” Then his disciples said to each other, “Could someone have brought him food?” “My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labour.” Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.”

Lord Jesus, your food was to do God's will. So may it be for us too. The fields are ripe for harvest – there are so many people in the world who are seeking spirituality but doing so in ways that will not help them. May your Holy Spirit come upon them and us, and may we be able to help people come to you as we are called to do. May we also not try to use our words when talking to others about you, but rather use your words of love and warmth and acceptance so that more and more people may come to you. May this outpouring of your words be happening across this world, even at this most difficult of times, so that the number of believers may grow exponentially and your world get closer and closer to being the loving place you created it to be. Amen

Saturday

Reading – Luke Chapter 5, verses 27 to 32

After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Matthew sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, and Matthew got up, left everything and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Lord Jesus, let us hear those wonderful words afresh again today – follow me. Help us to hear them again being said to us, and may we answer just as Matthew did – with all certainty and being absolutely sure that that is what we will do. Follow me you said – may our reply be a heartfelt “I will – here I am”. Amen

First Sunday of Lent

Reading – Mark Chapter 1, verses 9 to 15

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Lord Jesus, you said at the beginning of your earthly ministry "The time has come – the Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" So Lord, may we truly repent, and come back to you. May we truly believe the good news that the Kingdom of God has and does come near. May we truly believe the good news of God, made real in your life, death and resurrection. Amen