



Martin Bird's Prayers for Monday 26th April – Sunday 2nd May

Monday – Mark the Evangelist

Reading – Mark Chapter 12, verses 26 to 34

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Lord Jesus, may we always be as sure as the teacher of the law who heard you speak, and know that the most important commandments are that we love the Lord our God with our whole hearts, our souls, our minds and our strength, and that we love our neighbours as ourselves. May we show this in our lives through all that we do, all that we say, all that we think, and all that we are, and may we too come to know that what you said to the teacher you say to us. That, as long as we know that these two commandments are the most important, and live them out, we are also not far from your kingdom. In your name we pray, Amen

Tuesday

Reading – John Chapter 10, verses 22 to 30

Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”

Jesus, our Lord and our Saviour, we do believe – help us in our unbelief. Help us to always be your sheep and to always listen to your voice. Bring us to you and help us to receive your eternal life for ourselves, knowing that we will never perish because we believe in you and live out that belief in our lives. Thank you that we have been given to you by your Father and our Father, and because of that, we can know that no one can snatch us away from you – our Risen Messiah. Amen

Wednesday

Reading – John Chapter 12, verses 44 to the end

Then Jesus cried out, “Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. “If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

Jesus, our Rock, help us to truly believe in you, and to accept your words into our lives. Help us to live our lives and show this belief in all we do, so that we can know that we won't be condemned on the last day. You are the light of the World, Lord Jesus – may we now shine that light out as brightly as possible so that more and more people may come to you and be saved, just as we are saved. Amen

Thursday

Reading – Luke Chapter 4, verses 1 to 13

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’” The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If you worship me, it will all be yours.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’” The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here. For it is written: “‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Lord Jesus, when we read of your temptation by the devil, it reminds us of all the times we have been tempted by the devil to do wrong things, and given in to that temptation. So we come to you today, asking for your forgiveness, and asking for your strength so that we too can resist the devil, and send him packing, just as you did. We know we will not stop being tempted, but we also know that through and with your strength in our lives, we will be able to stand strong and live for you. Amen

Friday

Reading – John Chapter 14, verses 1 to 6

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

Lord Jesus, help us at this tough time to not let our hearts be troubled because we know we have you in our lives. Thank you that you are the way, the truth and the life and that no one comes to the Father except through you. May our lives walk your way, the only way, so that we too may come to see you and your Father in Heaven. Amen

Saturday – Philip and James, Apostles

Reading – James Chapter 4, verses 7 to 10

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Lord God, let us take these words of James and set them in our hearts so we don't forget them. Help us to always submit to you, and resist the devil. Help us to come near to you, knowing that you will come near to us too. And help us, Lord God, to truly humble ourselves before you, knowing that you will lift us up. Amen

Sunday

Reading – Acts Chapter 8, verses 26 to the end

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.”

The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and travelled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Lord Jesus, when we read this story, what leaps out is that part when Philip asks the eunuch if he understands what he is reading, and the eunuch tells him that he can't possibly understand unless someone explains it to him, which is what Philip does. Lord, we ask now that you would help us to think of those people in our lives that don't know your word or your presence in their lives, and have never had it explained to them. Give us the opportunities to be that person that explains things to them, and, when we do, give us the words that will bring them to you. And may they, like the eunuch, go on their way rejoicing. Amen