

Worship at Home – 21st March 2021

Passion Sunday – Lent 5

Prepared by Rev Adam Pawley, Rector



A prayer to start

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. Amen.

Bible Reading (John 12:23-33) – Jesus Predicts His Death

²³ Jesus [said], 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

²⁷ 'Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? "Father, save me from this hour"? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!'

Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.' ²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰ Jesus said, 'This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' ³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

Thought

Today is Passion Sunday – 'Suffering' Sunday. It is the Sunday when our thoughts turn to Jesus' Passion – Jesus' suffering that would lead eventually to his death on the cross. As miserable as it sounds, Passion or 'Suffering' Sunday is a day to look forward in hope. In today's reading, Jesus announces that he will soon be 'glorified'. He helps us to understand what this means by telling the (very short) parable of the grain (or kernel) of wheat (v24). And what does the parable mean?

Just as a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, so will Jesus. A dying seed in turn sprouts new life. One day that new sprout of life will grow to become a blade of wheat that will produce many seeds. So too will Jesus rise to new life in the Resurrection – and be glorified. As the Risen Lord he will then facilitate new life for his people too – and be glorified.

On Tuesday it will be one year since the prime minister first announced to the UK that we must 'Stay At Home' and it will be a national day of reflection. We have lots to process at the moment. As we reflect on the past year we realise that we have much to mourn and lament over that has been lost. Many grains of wheat have died. Jesus' parable however also points us to the hope of new life. We should try to celebrate and give thanks for the good that has come out of Covid too – increased community spirit, discovering new ways to work or worship from home or online, a raised awareness of the need to care for God's creation, time to learn skills (I'm over the moon with the hen run I constructed last year), more time for ourselves and our households.

Moreover, each day, we are becoming more aware of the 'national recovery' that has begun. There is reason for hope and celebration. Many of you are receiving your vaccinations, new cases are at their lowest in six months, schools are reopening and soon, we trust, so will more businesses. Our church buildings are slowly reopening for worship. Whilst our 'personal recoveries' may not yet have arrived or even hardly begun – it is helpful to trust God that in time they will. As Christians we are people of renewal and hope. We have a Saviour who died but who is alive and living, and cares for us. We have a Saviour who, as we learn to trust him, promises new life – a restored life – a re-energised life – a renewed life – for this life and our next.

Prayers

Heavenly Father, thank you for the parable of the grain of seed. Thank you for the gift of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Thank you that even when Jesus found life difficult, he trusted you. Thank you that even though Jesus died he rose again to new life. Please help me to trust you through any time of difficulty and loss, loneliness and mourning, fear or worry that I may experience. Help me to know your peace and strength. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

We hope you are safe and well. Please feel free to contact Rev Adam (01978 760439) or Rev Gareth (07731 827988) if we can help. Thank you.

Good News! Emmanuel, Penyffordd, reopens this Sunday 21st March. Call Jane on 01978 761458 to reserve your seat. Hope Church reopens on Palm Sunday 28th March at 11am. Call Liz on 01978 762862 to reserve your seat. Worship At Home will continue as will Dial-A-Church-Service 01244 566311.