

WORSHIP AT HOME 28th February 2021: 2nd Sunday in Lent (by Alan Middleton)

WELCOME Opening lines from STF 28

Jesus calls us here to meet him as, through word and song and prayer,
We affirm God's promised presence where his people live and care.
Praise the God who keeps his promise; Praise the Son who calls us friends;
Praise the Spirit who, among us, to our hopes and fears attends.

HYMN STF 20

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here;
Come bow before him now
With reverence and fear:
In him no sin is found –
We stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour he is crowned:
How awesome is the sight -
Our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place:
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister his grace:
No work too hard for him –
In faith receive from him,
Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place.

OPENING PRAYERS

All powerful God of past, present and future, Keeper of promises:

How we love you

Son of man, the way, the truth and the life, Loving despite rejection:

How we love you

Holy Spirit, living power within, Helping, guiding, testing and transforming:

How we love you

Father, Son and Holy Spirit Your unique relationship to us :

How we love you

AMEN

Words of greeting on the lips, words of love on the lips –

The example you gave us :

Forgive us when we fail to act as you do, Lord.

Words of retaliation, insincerity and malice on our lips.

Forgive us when we act towards others in this way, Lord.

Overwhelmed by complex relationships and rocky paths:

Forgive us for not setting our minds on you and your ways.

Fear of rejection and wary of being our true selves:

Forgive us and help us to give of ourselves as you give.

Forgive us Lord for our failure to trust you:

For not allowing you to be in the driving seat.

Lord of our covenant relationship, lead us and help us to live your way.

Jesus was handed over to be crucified for our sins.

He died and rose again to make us right with God.

Through him we are forgiven.

THANKS BE TO GOD

AMEN

(With acknowledgements to ROOTS for these prayers)

The Lord's prayer (in whatever version you are most comfortable)

TODAY'S READINGS (See final page for full texts)

Genesis 17 vv1-7 and 15,16

Mark 8 vv31-38

REFLECTION

Throughout the Old Testament God makes many covenants (promises) with his people.

The Genesis reading outlines the second of these, given to Abraham.

God had already promised Abraham a son, even in his old age and his wife Sarah declared to be barren.

But they took things into their own hands, not believing God; and Abraham had a son (Ishmael) with Sarah's servant girl Hagar.

Now God is fulfilling his **original** covenant promise to give Abraham a son with Sarah.

Their son is to be called Isaac, and he will be Abraham's true heir and the father of many nations and his offspring will be more numerous than the stars in the sky!

So God kept his covenant promise.

Thoughts to ponder – Do we always keep our promises?

How hurtful can it be to others when we do not?

God's covenant promises are always kept, despite the nation of Israel constantly forgetting, or being unwilling, to keep their side of these arrangements throughout the nation's history.

So throughout the Bible we see, and can therefore **know**, that God's promises are always kept.

Leading to the most important of God's promises – to send a saviour to redeem the nation of Israel – **JESUS**.

"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" (John 3.16)

Most importantly, for us as Christians, God extended this promise to include all nations not just the nation of Israel.

What a promise; what a sacrifice (on the cross); what a cost; what love: what an offer!

HOW CAN WE REFUSE?

HYMN STF 594

Lord Jesus Christ,
You have come to us,
You are one with us,
Mary's son;
Cleansing our souls from all their sin,
Pouring your love and goodness in,
Jesus, our love for you we sing,
Living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ,
You have come to us,
Born as one of us,
Mary's son;
Led out to die on Calvary,
Risen from death to set us free;
Living Lord Jesus, help us see
You are Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ,
We would come to you,
Live our lives for you,
Son of God.
All your commands we know are true;
Your many gifts will make us new;
Into our lives your power breaks through,
Living Lord.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

We pray for those areas of the world experiencing war and political tensions. Thinking today especially of the situations in Uganda and Myanmar.

We pray for those who are sick and suffering, particularly for the situation all over the world with the Covid19 pandemic. For the families of those who have died, and for the health workers striving tirelessly to treat the sick.

We pray for the homeless, the disadvantaged and those who have little – the very people Jesus was constantly helping.

We pray for the church of Christ here on earth, in all its denominations. Praying particularly for those who have the responsibility of leadership.

In Jesus' name

AMEN

SENDING OUT PRAYER

Father God

Help us to remember that you always keep your promises,

That you are with us through your Holy Spirit wherever we go,

And that your love demands a response from us.

AMEN

READINGS

Genesis 17 vv1-7 and 15,16

When Abram was 99 years old, the LORD appeared to him and said "I am God Almighty: walk before me and be blameless. I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." Abram fell face down and God said to him "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations." No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful, I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you." God also said to Abraham "As for Sarai your wife you are no longer to call her Sara; her name will be Sarah. I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations, kings of peoples will come from her."

Mark 8 vv31-48

He (Jesus) then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again, He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get thee behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself; and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? If

Anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."