**28th February 2021 10.30 am Lent 2 Andrew**

**Call to worship Genesis 2:2-3**

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creation he had done.

**Hymn No. M.P.467 Morning has broken**

Morning has broken

like the first morning,

blackbird has spoken

like the first bird.

Praise for the singing,

praise for the morning,

praise for them, springing

fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall

sunlit from heaven,

like the first dewfall

on the first grass.

Praise for the sweetness

of the wet garden,

sprung in completeness

where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight;

mine is the morning,

born of the one light

Eden saw play!

Praise with elation,

praise every morning,

God's re-creation

of the new day!

ELEANOR FARJEON (188l-1965) CCLI 150801

**Prayer and Lord’s Prayer**

Loving God, as we take our second step together on our Lenten journey we praise you that though we cannot meet we are still one and through the love you have for each one of us you make us one in Christ. As we take this step we ask you to help us to make it part of our preparation for our Easter celebrations which always remind us that in you we find reason and purpose for living. Bless this time that we take to worship you and open our hearts and minds to listen to you speaking to us as you challenge us to take up our crosses and follow you. We ask all our prayers in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as we share together in the prayer he taught us…. **Lord’s Prayer**

**Notices, Mission Prayer a& Dedication of Offering**

**Reading** Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

**Reading** Mark 8:31-38

**Hymn No. M.P. 302 I want to walk with Jesus Christ**

I want to walk with Jesus Christ

all the days I live of this life on earth;

to give to Him complete control

of body and of soul.

*Follow Him, follow Him,*

*yield your life to Him -*

*He has conquered death,*

*He is King of kings;*

*Accept the joy which He gives to those*

*who yield their lives to Him.*

I want to learn to speak to Him,

to pray to Him, confess my sin,

to open my life and let Him in,

for joy will then be mine:

*Follow Him, follow Him…*

I want to learn to speak of Him -

my life must show that He lives in me;

my deeds, my thoughts, my words must speak

all of his love for me:

*Follow Him, follow Him ...*

I want to learn to read His word,

for this is how I know the way

to live my life as pleases Him,

in holiness and joy.

*Follow Him, follow Him ...*

O Holy Spirit of the Lord,

enter now into this heart of mine;

take full control of my selfish will

and make me wholly Thine:

*Follow Him, follow Him ...*

 C Simmonds, 1964 CCLI 150801

**Sermon Carrying our crosses**

In the reading from Genesis we have part of the story of God calling Abram and making a covenant with him, an agreement that he would have countless descendants, and as a sign of this promise to Abram God changed his name to Abraham which in Hebrew sounds like the word meaning ‘ancestor of many nations.’ In a similar way he changed Abraham’s wife’s name from Sarai to Sarah which in Hebrew means ‘Princess’.

So, together they are promised by God that they would become the ancestors of many nations, what more could two people aged between 90 and 100 hundred year sold wish for. Wonderful promises in a setting we would not have believed could be possible but in God we see anything is possible and within that understanding we see how names have a definite meaning set within the purposes of God. In reflection on that, what importance do we put on a name?

Today parents chose a name for their child for all sorts of reasons. One which is popular at the time, because of a certain pop star or TV personality, a footballer from their favourite team, even a whole football team, a family name that everybody has to have, a name of a biblical person, even a name that sounds right with their surname and the initials don’t make any strange or rude words. Philip Ian Gough would not thank his parents for having to go through life with the initial PIG. For us, names then are important right throughout a persons life a part of the proof of their identity which is very different from what we see in OT times.

When we turn to Mark’s gospel the passage is set at Caesarea Philippi, a name meaning Philip’s town, and it was there that Jesus had asked the disciples who people thought he was. The response was a number of different names: John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets, all names of other people who had had an influence on the life of the nation of Israel or peoples lives in more recent times but he was his own person so when he asked the disciples who do you say I am the response from Peter was to give him his personal name the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

In Matthew’s gospel Jesus response is ‘Good for you, Simon son of John’, to identify him from one of the other disciples Simon the Zealot, and then to call him Peter, which means ‘Rock’ and point to the future when Peter would be the rock on which the church would begin to be built. We don’t know the reaction of the other disciples but the excitement didn’t last long because it was at that point that we picked up the story in the passage we read where, because the disciples had begun to understand who Jesus really was, he had to tell them that he would now begin his journey to Jerusalem where he would be rejected by the Jewish leaders and put to death but three ways later would rise from the dead. Peter was determined to prevent that happening and from being Peter, the rock on which the church is built, he was then called Satan by Jesus reflecting his attempt to divert Jesus from fulfilling what was God’s will for his life, his death and resurrection.

So we see how names play an important part in the working out of God’s plan in the Old and New Testaments but what does that say to us today? For me it is a reminder that what we are called and who we are in legal terms actually means little to God. What age we are and what ability we have also mean little to God because he is not bound by the physical limitations of time and space and neither are his purposes. What ever our name is what matters is the person behind the name, but not just the person as the world sees them, the person that God wants each of us to be and can mould us into.

God changed Abraham’s name to signify the change in him as he faithfully accepted the promise God made to him. To signify our decision to be followers of Jesus Christ we become Christians and change from being people of the world to children of God. If then, in God’s purposes, the name has a meaning for us it has to be that as Christians we try to live in ways that reflect the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and point others to him. So, just as God sees us as we were and changes our identity to what he desires us to be, in the same way he sees our physical age but without the limitations in the way we see it. We see the things we can’t do but he looks to the things we can do and in the power of his Holy Spirit enables us to achieve far more than we ever thought we could. I know that when my dad gave up playing cricket at 59 I thought how well he had done to keep going to such a ripe old age but when I reached 59 it didn’t seem so remarkable at all. In the same way, when we look at the people around us we don’t see each other in the same way God sees us as he sees much more clearly the possibilities for what we can do and gives us the strength to enable us to do it. In that way he sets the pattern of the ways in which we serve him.

So when we hear the people use the phrase about having been ‘born again’ it is about them having given their life to God so that he can change that life into one lived for him. In that way we are led to begin to see the world the way God sees it, to see people as he sees them and to see his purposes unfolding before us. The reason for that is that it stops us making the mistake Peter did when, in his misunderstanding of the role of the Messiah, he tried to stop Jesus going to Jerusalem and so tried to stop what God knew it was necessary to happen and he was told his thoughts were from man not from God. So let us try to make sure that our thoughts, our actions, our lives are worthy of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and come from the prompting of the Holy Spirit not from the ways of the world.

That is what it means to ‘carry our own crosses’, standing up for what we believe and standing out because of what we believe as we live out our lives day by day.

**Prayers of Intercession**

Loving God, it can feel so tempting to walk away from the tough choices we meet in life, to see our own individual needs as most important and like Peter we can tend to focus on what suits us best rather than what you have planned for us. You desire more for us and long for something deeper from us. You challenge us to take the way of the cross, to denying ourselves; giving up that which makes us feel safe on our own and protected from what is going on in the world around us. You tun our world upside down and invite us to choose differently because in losing our lives to you we gain them in abundance.

As we see the light at the end of the tunnel we thank you for the scientists who have produced the vaccines, the NHS and care workers who have worked so hard to care for those suffering in whatever ways. We pray for those who have lost loved ones and whose attempts to grieve have been made even more difficult by the pandemic and ask for you peace in their hearts.

We pray for all those around the world who do not have the basics for life such as a roof over their heads, sufficient food to eat, adequate clothing and clean water to drink and ask you to remind our world that those who have are needed to share with those who have not.

We pray for all the aid agencies in the many different situations that they will continue to make such a difference to many peoples lives.

May we and all those we have prayed for let your love shine out in our lives and may you continue to be glorified through all we do, in Jesus name we ask it. Amen.

**Hymn No. M.P. 41 At the name of Jesus** (tune Camberwell)

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,

every tongue confess him King of glory now.

‘Tis the Father’s pleasure we should call him Lord,

who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

Mighty and mysterious in the highest height ,

God from everlasting, very Light of light.

In the Father’s bosom, with the Spirit blest,

love, in love eternal, rest, in perfect rest.

Humbled for a season, to receive a Name

from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,

Faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,

brought it back victorious when from death he passed.

Bore it up triumphant with its human light,

through all ranks of creatures, to the central height;

to the throne of Godhead, to the Father’s breast,

filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.

In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue

all that is not holy, all that is not true.

crown him as your captain in temptation’s hour,

let his will enfold you in its light and power.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus shall return again

with his Father’s glory, with his angel train;

for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,

and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

Caroline Maria Noel (1817-77) CCLI 150801

**Blessing**

May the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us and those who we love today and for ever more. Amen.