**Westfield Communion Service 7th March 2021 10.30 am** **Andrew**

**Call to worship Psalm 19:1-4**

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

**Hymn No. M.P. 367 Jesus is Lord! Creation’s voice proclaims it**

Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it,

for by his power each tree and flower

was planned and made.

Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it

sun, moon and stars in heaven cry: 'Jesus is Lord!'

Jesus is Lord, Jesus is Lord!

Praise Him with hallelujahs,

for Jesus is Lord!

Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal

in flesh he came to die in pain

on Calvary's tree.

Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding,

yet gave his life a ransom thus setting us free.

*Jesus is Lord .....*

Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror,

from death he rose and all his foes

shall own his name.

Jesus is Lord! God sends his Holy Spirit

showing by works of power that Jesus is Lord.

*Jesus is Lord .....*

David Mansell (1936- ) © 1982 Authentic Publishing/CopyCare CCLI 150801

**Prayer and Lord’s Prayer**

God our Father, your love is at work in all that you have made.

Son of God, in your likeness we are made new.

Holy Spirit you touch our lives with hope.

Receive our worship, claim us for your service, set us free to honour you today.

Father we have sinned against you and against our fellow men and women, through ignorance, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.

We have belittled your love and betrayed your trust. We are sorry for all we have done that is unworthy of you.

Holy God, giver of light and grace forgive us all that is past and lead us to walk as children of light. We ask all our prayers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who taught his disciples to pray.. The Lords Prayer

**Notices, Mission Prayer and Prayer of Dedication of Offering**

**Reading** Psalm 19:7-11

**Reading** John 2:13-22

**Hymn No. M.P. 54 Bind us together**

Bind us together, Lord,

bind us together

with cords that cannot be broken;

bind us together, Lord,

bind us together

O bind us together with love.

There is only one God,

there is only one King,

there is only one body –

that is why we sing:

*Bind us together, Lord.....*

Made for the glory of God,

purchased by His precious Son.

Born with the right to be clean,

for Jesus the victory has won.

*Bind us together, Lord.....*

You are the family of God,

You are the promise divine,

You are God’s chosen desire,

You are the glorious new wine.

*Bind us together, Lord.....*

Bob Gillman © 1977 Thankyou Music CCLI 150801

**Sermon**

Today we have two readings which seem to contradict one another. The first a Psalm extolling the virtues of the Laws God had given his people, of the values of keeping them and the virtues in keeping them. Laws which were given to build up his people in their knowledge of God, their understanding of him, their wisdom in how to live life his way, and how all this brings life a quality of joy it cannot have without them. That is, of course, what God intended but not what happened over the years and when we turn to the reading from John we get a very different picture of the value of the Law.

In the other Gospels it was Monday morning, the day after Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem on what we now call Palm Sunday, but John, rather than put things in a chronological order, and in his desire to bring together passages which emphasised the point he was trying make, sets it alongside the wedding at Cana which was right at the beginning of Jesus ministry.

On that day, it was business as usual in the Temple. The pilgrims arriving from other countries coming to make their sacrifices to God and pay their Temple Taxes as was their responsibility under the Law. However essential the business was as a part of the day to day working of the Temple, the marketing side of worship you might call it, we get a picture of an extremely upset Jesus. That was because the businesses were legal but the way they went about their practises were not and although the Law needed them to be there the theft, the fiddling and the deception that went on were not meant to be a part of it. It would not have been acceptable anywhere else but there in the temple, that place seen as the symbol of God’s presence with his people with the Holy of Holies at the heart of it, there it was an absolute disgrace and the fact that the businesses should have been there to help pilgrims to make their sacrifices to God rather than fleece them of their money made it even worse.

So we have the picture of Jesus turning over the tables of the money changers.. no more would they charge exorbitant fees for changing currency and even for giving change. Then letting the pigeons go and driving the sheep and cattle out of the Temple too.. no more would they reject the pilgrims own sacrificial bird or animal and make them pay over the odds for one approved as suitable to offer to God.

So it wasn’t the business that was wrong it was the way the Priests and those who worked for them had come together to make enormous and both illegal and immoral profits from the Pilgrims and done it all in the name of God.

It is a vivid picture of how the written Law had not been broken but the spirit of what it intended had been totally lost. However, in a bid to defend what was happening, the Jewish Authorities challenged Jesus to perform a miracle and so show that what he had done was with the authority of God. Jesus could not have come up with a more controversial idea than he did. Demolish the Temple and rebuild it in three days.

We know now what he was referring to, his death and his resurrection, but to the Jewish Authorities Jesus was talking both heresy and nonsense but John does not give us a reaction from them, only pointing out how the disciples remembered his words and following his resurrection believed what the scriptures said about him.

Today we don’t talk about great temples and God’s presence in a Holy Place that we cannot enter but about our bodies being the living temples where God dwells through his Holy Spirit. If we then take that reading and put it into our context there are two questions:

1. Do we live by the word or the spirit of the teachings of Jesus?

Do we do what we do because that is what we have been told to do or because we want to worship God and glorify him through our words and actions both in church and living out our daily lives?

2. What condition are our temples in?

Jokingly we might say in need of repair here and there or even the need for a replacement. I had a church member who used to say when asked how he was: “I’m alright round the edges” but at the time of year when we start talking about Spring cleaning our homes it might be the right time to think about it for ourselves.

When we clean, our purpose is to get rid of the unwanted dirt and dust that has built up over the year, particularly the winter, in those places where you can’t clean them on a regular basis. In the same way do our lives need cleaning and polishing? A bit of spiritual sprucing up to get rid of any unwanted things that stop God’s Spirit working in us?

Lent is our time of preparation as we look to Easter and it does give us the time to listen to God, to pray to him and to seriously look at ourselves so that we can be truly ready to celebrate Christ giving himself for us and then being gloriously resurrected 3 days later.

**Halleluia!**

**Prayers of Intercession**

Gracious God, rejoicing in your blessings, trusting in your loving care for all, we bring you our prayers for the world.

We pray for the created world:

for those who rebuild where things have been destroyed;

for those who fight hunger, poverty and disease;

for those who have power to bring change for the better and to renew hope.

We pray for our country; for our queen and her family; for those who frame our laws and shape our common life; for those who keep the peace and administer justice; for those who teach, those who heal, all who serve the community.

We pray for people in need; those for whom life is a bitter struggle; those whose lives are clouded by death or loss, by pain or disability, by discouragement or fear, by shame or rejection.

We pray for those in our families, our friends, our church family at Westfield and all the churches in Wyke and for those especially in our thoughts today and we ask all our prayers in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Hymn No. M.P. 381 Jesus stand among us**

Jesus, stand among us at the meeting of our lives,

be our sweet agreement at the meeting of our eyes;

O Jesus, we love you, so we gather here,

join our hearts in unity and take away our fear.

So to you we're gathering out of each and every land,

Christ the love between us at the joining of our hands;

O Jesus, we love you, so we gather here,

join our hearts in unity and take away our fear.

Jesus stand among us at the breaking of the bread;

join us as one body as we worship You, our head.

O Jesus, we love You, so we gather here;

join our hearts in unity and take away our fear.

GRAHAM KENDRICK (1950- ) CCLI 150801

**Communion**

We come to God’s table because Jesus said ‘Come to me,

all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’

He also said ‘I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Anyone who comes to me I will never turn away.’ So, we come to God’s table at his invitation.

We come not because we must but because we may.

We come as individuals but not alone.

We come as the people of God open and ready to receive the gifts of God.

**The Institution**

Let us hear again the words of Institution of this feast as recorded by the Apostle Paul: *(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)*

For I received from the Lord the teaching that I passed on to you: that the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed,

took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and said: “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in memory of me.”

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup and said,

“This cup is God’s new covenant, sealed with my blood.

Whenever you drink it, do so in memory of me.”

This means that every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who east and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgement on himself.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and following his example, we take this bread and this cup and give our thanks to God.

**Prayer – please** take a few moments to reflect on how you stand before God….

Loving God, through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made.

May we know your presence in the sharing of this bread

so that we may know your presence in our lives.

Loving God, through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and the work of human hands.

May we know your presence in the sharing of this wine

so that we may know the refreshing of your Holy Spirit in our lives.

We celebrate the life that Jesus has shared among his community through the centuries, and shares with us now.

Made one in Christ and one with each other we offer the bread and the wine and with them we offer ourselves, a single, holy, living sacrifice.

**Amen.**

**The bread** which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. Take, eat, it is the body of Christ given for you. Do this in remembrance of him.

**The cup** of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ. Take it and drink, It is the new covenant in the blood of Christ shed for you and for all, for the forgiveness of sin: drink of it.

Prayer

Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home.

Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body

live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we who the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us; so that we and all your children may be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord.

AMEN

**Hymn No. M.P. 744 We’ve a story to tell to the nations**

We’ve a story to tell to the nations,

that shall turn their hearts to the right;

a story of truth and sweetness,

a story of peace and light,

a story of peace and light:

For the darkness shall turn to dawning,

and the dawning to noon-day bright,

and Christ’s great kingdom shall come on earth,

the kingdom of light and love.

We’ve a song to be sung to the nations,

that shall lift their hearts to the Lord;

a song that shall conquer evil,

and shatter the spear and sword,

and shatter the spear and sword:

*For the darkness.....*

We’ve a message to give to the nations,

that the Lord who reigneth above

hath sent us His Son to save us,

and show us that God is love,

and show us that God is love;

*For the darkness.....*

We’ve a Saviour to show to the nations,

who the path of sorrow hath trod,

that all of the world’s great peoples ,

might come to the truth of God,

might come to the truth of God;

*For the darkness.....*

Colin Sterne (1862-1926) CCLI 150801

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you, and remain with you, now and always. Amen.