

Sunday Worship at Home, 7th March, 3rd Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayers:

God meets us in our scattered lives,

let us worship him together

Hear our voice, O Lord, according to your faithful love,

According to your judgement give us life. Amen

A Prayer of Confession:

God shows his love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Let us then show our love for him by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

In a dark and hurting world, we have not held out the light of life. **Lord, have mercy.**

In a hungry and despairing world, we have not shared the bread of life.

Christ, have mercy.

In a cold and loveless world, we have kept the love of God to Ourselves.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,

and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified:

mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Bible Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

²⁰ Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Reflection on the reading:

Atheists today might call us fools for continuing to believe there is such a thing as God. For believing that Jesus was the son of God who died and rose again, and for believing that because of Jesus's death on the cross we also will ultimately live forever with God in heaven. But then as we heard in our reading this morning from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, we have been called fools for 2,000 years. Paul writes, "The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God". He went on to compare the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God, calling the wisdom of the worldly foolish in comparison with the wisdom of God. I would like to suggest this morning that placing our trust in the wisdom of God would in fact give us a much happier and better quality of life than placing our trust in the wisdom of the world. It is the wisdom of the world to place our trust in, and chase after, the protection that comes from gathering wealth and possessions around us. It is worldly wisdom to look after Number One. But if everyone is only looking after Number One, the world becomes a cold and lonely place to be. It is the way of the cross to follow Jesus's example who gave up the right to all that he had and to lay down his life for the good of everyone else. It is the wisdom of God to love our neighbours as ourselves. And when that begins to happen then in turn, we find that there are many more people than just ourselves looking after us, and as a result, the world becomes a much better place to be. **Amen.**

The Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Be still and pray:

In your prayers, include prayers for the church, the needs of the world and our local community. Particularly pray for: Our Prime Minister, the Government and all world leaders they struggle to control COVID-19, manage vaccination programmes and plan the relaxation of lockdowns; for our front-line health workers caring for the sick and vulnerable, and administering vaccinations; for those struggling with isolation or financial hardship because of lockdown; for healing and peace for those who are ill; and for the souls of those who have recently died and comfort for those who are mourning their loss.

Finish with The Lord's Prayer:

Conclusion

May God our Redeemer show us compassion and love,
and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, remain with us always. **Amen**

Reverend Eddie