

SUNDAY 18th Oct 2020

Welcome & Announcements

Call to worship Psalm 34;vs 1-3

Praise 'What a beautiful name'

Opening Prayer

Old Testament Reading Exodus 18:5-6 & 13-24

Video 'As Iron sharpens iron'

Pastoral visitors' commissioning

New Testament Reading 2 Timothy 1:11-18

Sermon

Prayers

Hymn Hp 776 Make me a channel of your peace.

Blessing

Call to worship- I will praise the LORD at all times;

his praise is always on my lips.

² My whole being praises the LORD.

The poor will hear and be glad.

³ Glorify the LORD with me,

and let us praise his name together. (NCV)

Praise 'What a beautiful name'

You were the Word at the beginning
One with God the Lord Most High
Your hidden glory in creation
Now revealed in You our Christ

What a beautiful Name it is X2
The Name of Jesus Christ my King
What a beautiful Name it is
Nothing compares to this
What a beautiful Name it is the Name of Jesus

You didn't want heaven without us
So Jesus You brought heaven down
My sin was great Your love was greater
What could separate us now

What a wonderful Name it is X2
The Name of Jesus Christ my King
What a wonderful Name it is
Nothing compares to this
What a wonderful Name it is the Name of Jesus X2

Death could not hold You, the veil tore before You
You silence the boast of sin and grave
The heavens are roaring, the praise of Your glory
For You are raised to life again

You have no rival, You have no equal
Now and forever God You reign
Yours is the kingdom, Yours is the glory
Yours is the Name above all names

What a powerful Name it is X2
The Name of Jesus Christ my King

What a powerful Name it is
Nothing can stand against
What a powerful Name it is, the Name of Jesus

Opening Prayer

God of glorious beauty... God who is Creator, Saviour & Sustainer, we worship You alone this morning for there is none like You. *You were the Word at the beginning..One with God the Lord Most High ...You who didn't want heaven without us so in perfect love you gave yourself that we might be forgiven & made right Truly what a wonderful name it is, what a wonderful name it is... the name of Jesus Christ my Lord... And so we say today God you have no rival...You have no equal...forever & ever You will reign... for you alone are perfect in beauty, power & wonder..*

So glorious gracious God as we sit in your wonderful presence now we still ourselves in worship & we confess that we have not always acknowledged your Lordship... we each have the opportunity to confess our sins to God asking for His fresh mercy & grace through Christ Jesus...We hear the gracious message of the gospel that in Jesus our sins are forgiven. amen.

Old Testament Reading Exodus 18:5-6 & 13-24

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons & wife, came to him in the wilderness, where he was camped near the mountain of God. ⁶ Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife & her 2 sons.".....

¹³ The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, & they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?" ¹⁵ Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. ¹⁶ Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, & I decide between the parties & inform them of God's decrees & instructions."

¹⁷ Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸ You & these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. ¹⁹ Listen now to me & I will give you some advice, & may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God & bring their disputes to him. ²⁰ Teach them his decrees & instructions, & show them the way they are to live & how they are to behave. ²¹ But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties & tens. ²² Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. ²³ If you do this & God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, & all these people will go home satisfied." ²⁴ Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said.

Video 'As Iron sharpens iron'

Pastoral visitors' commissioning

Prayer & Words of commissioning

We are the body of Christ: *each of us is a member of it.*

There is one ministry of Christ: *in this ministry we all share.*

There are different ways of serving God: *it is the same Lord whom we serve.*

Sisters and brothers, do you believe that you are called by God through the Church to the work of Church Visitor? : *I do so believe.*

Relying on God's grace, will you endeavor to fulfill this ministry?
With God's help, I will. PRAYER

Members of the body of Christ, will you encourage these Church Visitors in their ministry and support them with your prayers?
With God's help we will.

OFFERING

New Testament Reading 2 Timothy 1:11-18

And of this gospel I was appointed a herald & an apostle & a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, & am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith & love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus & Hermogenes. May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me & was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

Sermon He was described in the Independent newspaper as 'one of the iconic film stars of the 20th century, a tall, rugged actor with patrician features' Who is the paper describing? Well let me give you a few clues... He starred as John the Baptist, Michelangelo, got it yet? He was also, El Cid, Mark Antony & General Gordon... yes? & for those who don't know who it is.. then he was most famously Ben Hur & Moses... **SLIDE 1** Yes of course it's Charlton Heston... To many the PERFECT picture of a strong powerful leader, .the perfect Moses

This morning as we continue looking in the book of Exodus, at the people of God in the wilderness we come to a passage that might not look as interesting or exciting as some of the others we have looked at... for it seems to be all about logistics & organisation... In that sense we might be tempted to overlook Exodus chapter 18 & go straight on to giving of the 10 commandments. However I

believe that this passage has got something important to say to us this morning... for on a day when we commission our pastoral visitors ...it reminds us that as followers of Jesus we are a family & a team...**SLIDE 2** that we are need one another & that we each have a role to play...

But before we focus on that let me say that this Exodus passage ALSO addresses the temptation that can arise for us as followers of God to PUT CERTAIN LEADERS on a PEDISTAL & think that they are made of different stuff from us... **Slide 3**

I don't know if Moses looked anything like Charlton Heston, probably not but I can see how those Israelites could have thought of him as a sort of superman... Just cast your mind back to what had happened at the Red Sea as Moses lifted his staff & stretched out his hand the sea divided.. Ex 14:16... Remember how the people came to Moses crying out for food only for quail & Manna to be amazingly supplied & remember how Moses struck a rock with his staff & water gushed out for all the people (Ex17:1-7) & finally remember how when the Amalekites attacked , the battle hinged on whether Moses' hands were raised or not.. (Ex17:12) Surely we can understand why some of those Israelites began to see Moses as something more than a man... ?

Now I am sure that Moses didn't think of himself in that way at all.. In fact when we go back to God calling him in Exodus 3 & 4 we discover that Moses certainly didn't think that he was up to the job of leading the people & we get no indication from our passage that Moses was drunk on power...rather that he was

burdened by the weight of responsibility.... No Moses was as scripture tells us *a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.* Num 12:3 **Slide 4**

Nevertheless trouble was growing because all the people wanted to bring their problems to him, believing that he alone could solve them.... Now this wasn't only a terrible drain on Moses time & energy...but it also led to people waiting all day or longer to get their chance to meet with the great man & this must have led to frustration...But worse still this kind of attitude can lead to people not finding their place in God's team... & it can give people easy excuses as to why they aren't following & serving God the way they know they should.... *well I'm not like her or him...* I'm ordinary ...I can't be expected to really get involved ...can I?

Yes Moses had become almost super human in the peoples' eyes... But MOSES was just MOSES in the eyes of Jethro... **Slide 5** For Jethro was Moses father in law & he knew him well. He knew Moses as the simple shepherd looking after Jethros herds in Midian, & he knew him as the husband to his daughter. A daughter, who by the way, wasn't getting to see her husband at all at the moment! So Jethro knew Moses, the man..not just Moses the legend & because Jethro knew Moses 'warts & all' he was able to stand back & look at his son in law's schedule, at how the people were lining up all day to see only him & Jethro could say without any malice or envy Moses "What you are doing is not good.

And isn't that an important but difficult thing to do... at times? I mean don't we all need correction at times...? And if we really care about someone don't we sometimes need to say ... I'm not sure what you are doing is good... Now just to be clear, I'm not saying we should all feel free to do this with each other whenever we think someone needs corrected... Remember Jethro was Moses father in law, he already had a relationship with him over many years... & he cared about Moses... it was out of this care that his criticism came... So if we don't really know someone we should be careful about sharing our opinions too readily! However when we are close with someone then there can be times when out of love we share something that might not just be what they were hoping to hear...

Moses quickly listened to Jethro's constructive criticism & he delegated different levels of responsibility to chosen people...

Now Moses STILL HAD a special part to play... Slide 6

for as Jethro acknowledges Moses was in a special way 'the people's representative before God' & so the most severe disputes still needed to come to him... so that he could resolve them & show them how to *live & how they are to behave.*'

However Moses didn't have to be the 'lone ranger' he needed his Tonto! Slide 7 or rather his many, many Tonto's! FOR we all have a part to play... And no 2 parts are exactly the same...

Even the Apostle Paul...Paul the great missionary...the great letter writer, the great leader & theologian...Paul the spiritual giant. Yet in our NT passage we see Paul the man...Paul who knew

what God had called him too... yet he was so discouraged for he felt that after his imprisonment '*everyone in the province of Asia has deserted (him), including Phygelus & Hermogenes.*' Slide 8 Yes even Paul was made of the same stuff as us... even Paul could feel let down... could even feel a bit of self pity... everyone has abandoned me... Oh wait... No not everyone... not Onesiphorus.

Onesiphorus... Slide 9 we know nothing about him except what we hear in these few verses... that he '*often refreshed*' Paul , that he was '*not ashamed of (paul's) chains*' & that upon his arrival in Rome he had searched for Paul until he found him....' Yes we know so little about Onesiphorus...but what we do know is that as Paul neared the end of his life in prison...it was this man who cared for him & refreshed him... it was this otherwise unknown disciple who lifted the apostle's head & helped him see that he was not alone.

Today as we commission our pastoral visitors we remember that while we are all different & God gives us different roles & responsibilities... Slide 10 that we need each other.... for NONE of us are superhuman... sometimes we do things that are not good... & we need those who love us & know us best to have the courage to lovingly & gently but also clearly tell us that.... But even more than that we each need an Onesiphorus.... we need people who will lift our heads when we feel like we are alone..... or when we think there is no way out of what we are in.... we each need an Onesiphorus.... Slide 11 And we can EACH BE AN Onesiphorus.... today we have commissioned our pastoral visitors

& I say again what an incredible job they have been doing both before & now so much more through this difficult time.... BUT can I also say that you don't need to be commissioned as a pastoral visitor to care for each other.... If when you are praying God puts someone in your mind & heart... a neighbour , a colleague , someone from Church or from your bowls club... then pray & pick up the phone & ring... We each NEED , we can EACH BE an Onesiphorus.. Let us take a few moments in quiet as we each ask God to help us be an Onesiphorus to someone over the week ahead.. & over the winter ahead..

Prayers for Others... Lord God this day when we have thought about Moses Jethro Paul & Onesiphorus.. we pray that you would help us find our place & know our part in serving in your family.

We pray now for those who today face huge challenges... For those who are sick & those who are caring for them....for the families of those who are ill & those who have lost loved ones... We also pray for those who feel isolated & lonely.... & we pray for those who have to make such difficult decisions at these times & those whose jobs or businesses are under threat

And we pray for those who have requested are prayers ... for - 10 year old **Leo**, for **Timothy Harte**, for **Daniel Kidson**. Lord bring your healing to these boys we pray.

We pray also for **Paul McDowell, Jean Woods, Jean & Jerry Mchaffee, Bernie McKee, Sarah, Lucy, Anna, Mark, Trevor, George, Susanne, Liz, Lucy, John, 8 month old Arianna**

awaiting surgery, pastor Raymond & his wife Connie with Covid & Linda with cancer & her family.

We also remember those who have experienced loss at this time... the family of **Percy Foster, Margaret Mawhinney & family, the family of Tina Donaldson & family of George Mckee.** And we prayer the Lord's prayer together.

HYMN Make me a channel of Your peace
Where there is hatred, let me bring Your love
Where there is injury, Your pardon Lord
And where there's doubt, true faith in You

Make me a channel of Your peace
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light
And where there's sadness, ever joy

*Oh Master, grant that I may never seek
So much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love with all my soul*

Make me a channel of Your peace
It is pardoning that we are pardoned
In giving to all men that we receive
And in dying that we're born to eternal life

Chorus

And we finish by sharing the GRACE together...amen