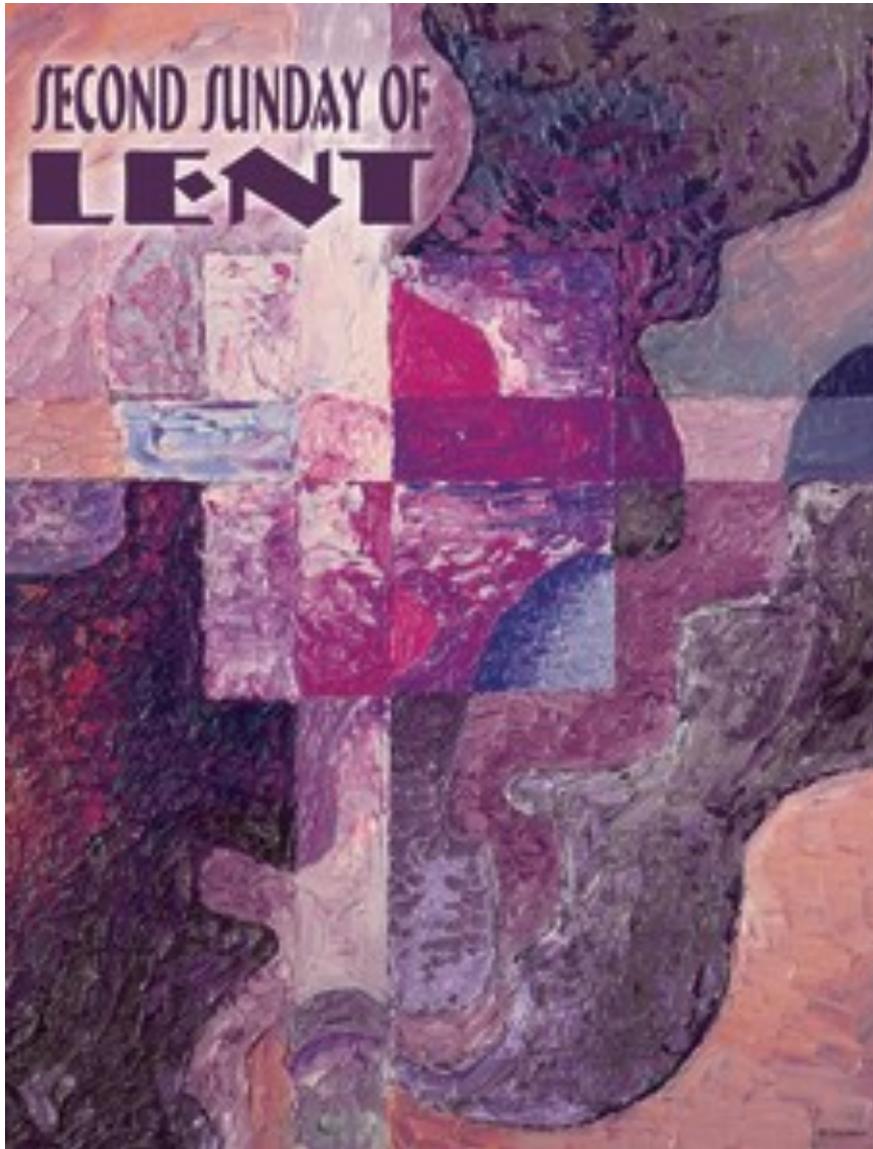


St Leonard's Church, Penwortham

# Worship @ Home



## Preparation

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of our days and years, we set this time apart for you.

Form us in the likeness of Christ so that our lives may glorify you. Amen.

## Hymn

From heaven you came, helpless babe,  
Entered our world, your glory veiled,  
Not to be served but to serve,  
And give your life that we might live.

This is our God, the Servant King,  
He calls us now to follow him,  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to the Servant King.

So let us learn how to serve  
And in our lives enthrone him  
Each others needs to prefer  
For it is Christ we're serving  
This is our God, the Servant King,  
He calls us now to follow him,  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to the Servant King.

### **We say sorry**

The gospel calls us to turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ.  
So we offer ourselves to him in penitence and faith  
We have not always worshipped God, our creator: **Lord, have mercy.**  
We have not always followed Christ, our Saviour: **Christ, have mercy.**  
We have not always trusted in the Spirit, our guide: **Lord, have mercy.**

### **Words of forgiveness**

May the God of love bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins  
and assure us of his eternal love power in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **The Special Prayer for this week**

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,  
That they may return to the way of righteousness:  
Grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion,  
That they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession,  
And follow all such things as are agreeable to the same  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ **Amen**

### **First Reading Romans 4: 13-25**

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations')—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations', according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him', were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

This is the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

### **The Holy Gospel**

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (8: 31-38)

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

**Glory to you, O Lord**

This is the Gospel of the Lord **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Reflection

Last week, in our Gospel reading, Jesus was baptised by John and a voice from heaven, the voice of God, declared that Jesus was "my Son, the Beloved". After this act of commitment and affirmation Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to work out the implications of his revealed identity and how to live out that identity in accordance with God's will.

Mark doesn't go into details of the temptations Jesus faces but from Matthew and Luke we get an idea of what they were: the temptation to be a Messiah of miracles and dramatic signs; to perform super-human feats to prove that God will protect him and to take for himself kingship and power over all the known world.

Jesus deals with each of these temptations in turn and holds steadfastly to his commitment to do things God's way and not his own.

This week we see a similar pattern of events, this time involving the disciples of Jesus, especially Peter.

Peter has just made his memorable declaration that Jesus is the Messiah. His voice echoes the voice of God claiming Jesus as his Son, the beloved.

Jesus now tries to teach the disciples what he understands the role of the Messiah to be: a painful understanding reached through hardship in the wilderness and a great personal struggle with temptation.

Peter has not gone through this process as Jesus has. For him, and the others, it is still quite inconceivable that God's Anointed One should suffer and die; it goes against everything they have always believed about the Messiah.

Now Peter's voice echoes the voice of the tempter in the wilderness. Jesus once again hears that voice disguised in the voice of a friend which is perhaps much more difficult to resist.

Once again Jesus turns on the one he calls Satan who is using Peter to undermine his integrity and strength of purpose. Once again Jesus insists that it is the things of God, the divine things, that must come first, not self interest and worldly concerns.

Then Jesus has to explain to his disciples, and to us, what it will cost to follow him and to try to live like him.

Jesus says "If any want to become my followers let them deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me".

Especially in Lent we perhaps tend to think that "denying ourselves" is something to do with giving up things we enjoy be it wine, chocolates, music, dancing or television. Or we might even think of it as some kind of punishment for our sins.

But perhaps there's a different way of understanding it.

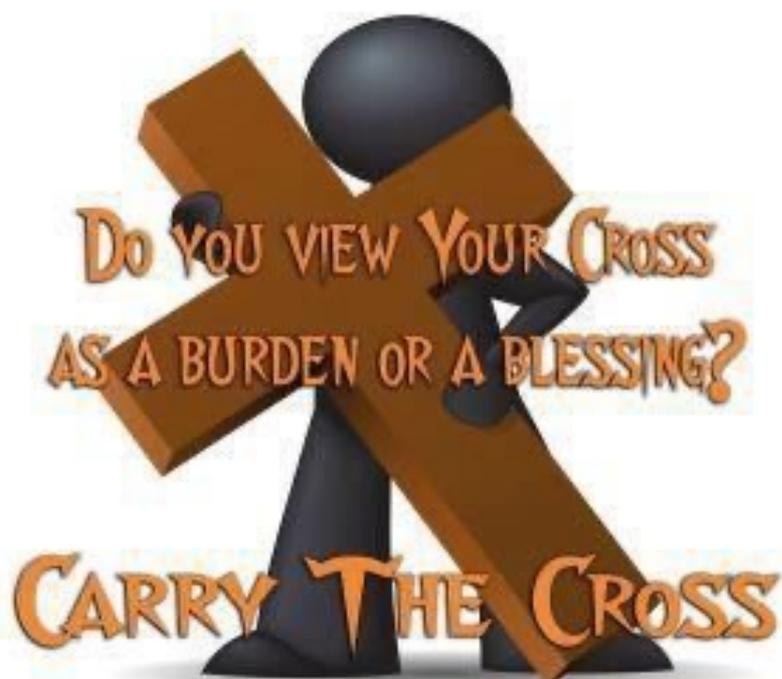
We don't know what form "Satan" took when Jesus was in the wilderness but it clearly was something Jesus recognised as being in opposition to God. In our Gospel reading it's the voice of Peter that tries to pull Jesus away from his intended path.

Now Jesus is saying to those around him, and to us, that if we're serious about following him we are going to have to resist our own inner voice which tries to distract us. And that won't be easy. Our own inner demons know only too well where our particular weaknesses lie and they may have nothing to do with chocolate, wine or time wasting.

Perhaps our weaknesses lie in enjoying gossip, hearing and passing on rumours; making judgments without knowing the whole story; reacting with impatience when we're inconvenienced in some way or breaking rules for our own advantage. We each have our very own temptations and failures and these are what we need to deny ourselves; the things we need to recognise and bring to God asking for forgiveness, healing and the grace to begin again.

Jesus' message is that having everything we want and having everything going our way is worthless if in achieving that we have sacrificed our integrity, our honesty and our identity as God's beloved child in whom he is well pleased.

Similarly the message is that even if our lives in worldly terms seem lacking in achievement, possessions, or status, if we still have our integrity, are being our true selves and following what we believe to be God's will for us then we have a life caught up in divinity and in the eternal kingdom of God.



## Hymn

Take up thy cross, the Saviour said,  
If thou wouldst my disciple be;  
Deny thyself, the world forsake,  
And humbly follow after me.

Take up thy cross - let not its weight  
Fill thy weak spirit with alarm:  
His strength shall bear thy spirit up,  
And brace thy heart, and nerve thine arm.

Take up thy cross, and follow Christ,  
Nor think till death to lay it down;  
For only he who bears the cross  
May hope to wear the glorious crown.

To thee, great Lord, the One in Three,  
All praise for evermore ascend:  
O grant us in our home to see  
The heavenly life that knows no end.

## Affirmation of faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,**

**from whom every family in heaven and on 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**



Let us pray, thanking God for his loving faithfulness and bringing to him our own concerns and the needs of the world around us.

Lord, we pray for your church during this season of Lent. We pray that all of us who believe in you will be strengthened to remain faithful to our calling; to work for understanding and unity where we have created divisions and to show your love and compassion to each other and to all your children.

Lord, we pray for the countless numbers of your children who suffer in this world because of violence, oppression and injustice. We pray for all who suffer because of flood or drought, lack of food, clean water or medical help and supplies. We pray for ourselves that we may learn to see more clearly the needs of your children and to respond to those needs for they are our brothers and sisters.

Lord, we pray for our own communities and churches. We thank you for our families and friends and pray especially for those in particular need today. We pray that your peace and love will surround them bringing them comfort and strength.

Lord, we thank you for those who have travelled before us on the way of the cross and are now at peace in your eternal presence. Help us to live in the assurance of your promise to us that this road of faith will lead into your kingdom.

Lord we thank you that you receive our prayers with grace, mercy and love. Trusting in your compassion and faithfulness we commend to you all those for whom we have prayed and commit ourselves to seeking to do your will and to bringing in your kingdom here on earth. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven

Hallowed be thy name Thy kingdom come

Thy will be done On earth as it is in heaven

Give us this day our daily bread

And forgive us our trespasses

As we forgive those who trespass against us

And lead us not into temptation But deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom

The power and the glory For ever and ever Amen

**Hymn** (Tune: Praise to the holiest in the height)

We praise thy name, all-holy Lord,  
For him, the beacon-light  
That shone beside our western sea  
Through mists of ancient night;  
Who sent to Ireland's fainting Church  
New tidings of thy word  
For David, prince of Cambrian saints,  
We praise thee, holy Lord.

For all the saintly band whose prayers  
Still gird our land about,  
Of whom, lest men disdain their praise,  
The voiceless stones cry out;  
Our hills and vales on every hand  
Their names and deeds record:  
For these, thy ancient hero host,  
We praise thee, holy Lord.

Grant us but half their burning zeal,  
But half their iron faith,  
But half their charity of heart,  
And fortitude to death;  
That we with them and all thy saints  
May in thy truth accord,  
And ever in thy holy Church  
May praise thee, holy Lord.

**Blessing:**

The Lord God Almighty is our Father: he loves and tenderly cares for us  
The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour: he has redeemed us and will defend us to  
the end.

The Lord, the Holy Spirit, is among us: he will lead us in God's holy way.  
To God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
Be praise and glory today and for ever. Amen