



Connection

Sunday 20th June 2021
Third Sunday after Trinity



Collect

Almighty God,
you have broken the tyranny of sin
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts
whereby we call you Father:
give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,
that we and all creation may be brought
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;
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

2 Corinthians 6: 1-13

As we work together with Christ, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.' See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see – we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return – I speak as to children – open wide your hearts also.

Mark 4: 35-41

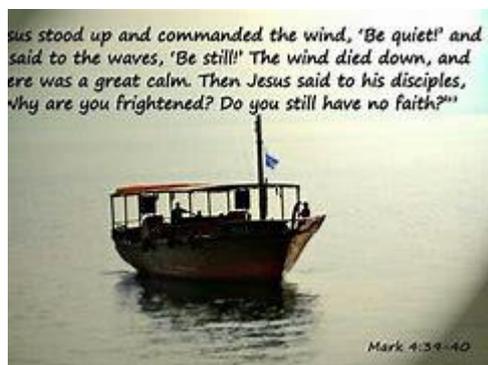
When evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

Post Communion Prayer

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen

Reflection



This week's reflection is by Jonathan Kimber, Director of Ministry and Discipleship. You can listen to the podcast at:

<https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/your-faith/prayer-worship/sermon-podcasts>

Hello. I'm Jonathan Kimber, and I am Director of Ministry and Discipleship for the diocese of Worcester.

In today's gospel reading, Jesus has spent yet another day with the crowds: teaching with insightful stories, healing the queues of sick and distressed people, giving his all, hour after hour after hot hour. By the end of the day, he is exhausted and needs a break. So he asks his boat-savvy followers to take across the lake. Even if the crowds are waiting for him when he gets to the other side, at least he can use the commuting time to begin to recover. Within minutes, he is fast asleep, curled up on the cushion in the stern.

But the weather turns quickly in that part of the world. It doesn't take long for the wind to really pick up. White crests appear on the waves. And still it gets stronger. Water starts coming into the boat. It keeps getting worse. His friends are experienced enough to know their limits. Things are now genuinely dangerous. The odds are now stacked against them. These men have spent half their lives in boats, and they know when fear is appropriate - namely, right now. Eventually, they wake Jesus up. He commands the wind and the sea to be still – and, stunningly, that's what happens.

But it's what happens next – what he says to his friends – on which I want to focus. What he says to his friends, and especially the manner in which he says it.

The words Jesus says are translated in this way: "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"

The King James version puts it like this: "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"

Or a more contemporary rendering: "Why are you such cowards? Don't you have any faith at all?"

I wonder what tone of voice you imagine Jesus using to ask these questions? The simple fact is that, when it comes to the manner in which he spoke, we are told nothing. There are no clues in the text.

What are the possibilities?

One is basically critical: Why are you such cowards? Don't you have any faith at all?

Another option has frustration at the forefront: Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?

Or the words could be spoken much more kindly and compassionately, reassuringly: Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?

I think it matters what was Jesus' motivation when he spoke, and thus how his words came across. However much we hear of God's love, some of us will be highly attuned to any sense of criticism. And if we think we're being criticised for being afraid, the impact is easily counter-productive. Rather than using our fears, the likelihood of criticism can make the fears go underground. We can deny them, even to ourselves, until we genuinely believe they're not there. Afraid? Me? Never? No no no! I trust in God! I'm a Christian!

Rather than hiding our fears, let's be truthful before God. Jesus is described as being full of grace and truth. His grace can cope with our truth. The more we are truthful in his presence, the greater our appreciation of his grace.

I don't have the answer as to the tone of voice Jesus used when he spoke. But we can have a good guess as to his intention. We can make an informed judgement as to his purpose, what he wanted as the outcome. I wonder how you would describe what he hoped the impact of his speaking would be?

In this encounter, I think Jesus is doing three things:

First, acknowledging that, in these life-threatening circumstances, his friends were indeed fearful. It is okay to truthfully name this primal emotion, to register its presence.

Second, by speaking in questions, he is encouraging them to question themselves, to be curious about the source of their feelings. Why exactly is it that they are afraid? What are they afraid of? Probably, death. OK. Let's face that fear. Let's be truthful with ourselves, and gracious with ourselves, in registering what's going on inside.

Third, he is encouraging them towards reassurance. Fear may still be a regular feature of our lives. But the more secure we are in God, the less that fear need have the final say in dominating our experience.

So let's seek to grow in our truthfulness and our grace, in acknowledging and working with our own human emotions, and with those of others. And may we grow in our trust that God knows our truth through and through, and responds with the deepest grace.

Requests for Prayers



We pray for all those who are sick everywhere and for those who have asked for our prayers and for their carers: Roy and Margaret Putnam, Edward Bunn, Brian Bolam, Wendy Dufty, Yvonne Seward, Andy Caddell, Gayle Richards, Laurence Alexander and Jill Chapman.

We continue to pray for: Percy and Sharon Blizzard, Jackie Pickford, Clive Hunt.

We pray for those who are in residential care: Sheila Bigland-Gibbons, Barbara Milton, Rita Sheppy and David Wilkinson.

We pray for those who have died everywhere: For Jonathan Saunders and Pat Farey and their families. And also for those whose anniversary of death falls at this time.



Church Services

The church services this week will be at:

10.30am St Peter's, Besford – Revd Allison Davies

10.30am St Michael's, Great Comberton – Archdeacon Robert Jones

If you would like to attend the above service, please contact Phil Airdrie at phil@airdries.co.uk or 07934071670 to reserve a place. Thank you.

June Services 2021

Date	Church	Time	Minister
27 th June	Chapel of Ease, Bredon's Norton	9.00am	Reverend Catherine Lack
	St Margaret's, Alstone	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies



Kingdom People

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Pershore & Evesham Deanery

Leading Worship in Church

Lay ministry in the Pershore and Evesham Deanery is thriving in many different ways. Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM) further enables and affirms this. ALM Worship Leaders are one form of authorised lay ministry.

Do you know someone in your parish or benefice who you think might be called to serve as an ALM Worship Leader? Might it be you who God is asking to take this step?

With encouragement from the Diocese, the Pershore and Evesham Deanery is intending to offer the diocesan ALM Worship Leaders training course in our local area. We want to develop and

encourage those who may be called to serve their communities and churches by this ministry. The training consists of a one-year course. An outline of the modules and an introductory video to the diocesan 2020 course can be found here:

<https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/your-church-role/alm/>

The intention of running the same course locally within our Deanery is to facilitate local support between those training, both through and beyond the duration of the course, and it is hoped, current ALM Worship Leaders will share in ongoing supportive relationships.

Once we know how many are interested, we will plan where the training will be provided, the dates, and for the core days in the programme whether it is preferable to team up with another deanery offering a similar course, to broaden the contexts of ministry.

Please consider if God is calling you to lead worship. Please think if you know someone in your benefice who might be called to serve in this way. Then, speak with your Vicar. Your vicar will be pleased to help you discern a calling, and they will be able to support your next step. For the first course, please have this conversation **before 28th June 2021**.

Ordained ministry, licensed lay ministry, and authorised lay ministry all work together to support the shared witness and service of all who are called into Christ's fellowship.

Sarah

Revd Sarah Dangerfield
Area Dean of Pershore and Evesham



News from the Diocese

Prayers and diocesan news can be found at

www.cofe-worcester.org.uk

Reverend Allison Davies

Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group

