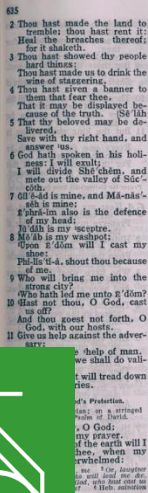


**We will, with
God's help!**



Our devotions this week will focus on the first of the six baptismal promises we make at baptism (page 159 of the Book of Alternative Services). It is possible you have been baptised but have never made these promises. This is ok. These promises can still be adopted as you move forward in your spiritual journey with Christ.

Peace on your week.


the Reverend David Taylor, Rector

Our Third Baptismal Promise:

Will you proclaim by word & example the Good News of
God in Christ?

We will, with God's help!

1. The Preparation

A candle is lit as someone says,

Steadfast God, you have enriched & enlightened us by the revelation of your eternal Christ. Strengthen us to walk the path of his teaching, so that by word & deed & in the power of the Spirit we may manifest the gracious news of your faithfulness & love. Amen.

2. The Reading & Reflection

Read the passage from Scripture then reflect using the wonder questions as your guide. This guide uses the New Revised Standard Version.

JOHN 1:29-42: PROCLAIMING THE LAMB OF GOD

Notes on the reading:

- In Jesus' time there were several factions vying for religious & political authority. Some thought authority was in the hands of the political rulers. Some thought it was in the systems of the Temple with its priests. Others, like John, left the arenas of politics & religion to establish a new "desert" authority that superseded the other arenas. John, & those like him, looked for a more interior authority that was subject to God.
- When John proclaims Jesus as the Lamb of God he is saying this in direct competition with the authority of the Temple with its priests. Forgiveness of sins will not come from participation in outward signs or practices, but from following Jesus, the Lamb, who brings us into his home (v.39).
- Once we find true, inner authority, we cannot help but spread the word (v. 41).
- We proclaim a message of freedom from the burdensome demands & false hope of political & religious power & authority.

*I wonder how Jesus is different from political or religious power.
I wonder if you have ever been disappointed in politics or religion.
I wonder how Jesus is your "home".
I wonder if you know anyone who is searching for a home.*

ISAIAH 49:1-7: PROCLAIMING HOPE

Notes on the reading:

- Isaiah 49 comes from what scholars call “Second Isaiah”. Second Isaiah includes chapters 40 to 54 & is written by someone in exile. Exilic prophets offered hope to the suffering community. They reminded them that God is still with them, that they can find a home in their new place, & that God will bring them back to the place they came from (v.5).
- Exile is an important Biblical theme that describes the human predicament beyond the physical. It is a metaphor for our exile from God. The human story is one of separation from our “home” in God, & God’s work to bring us back together again. This hope is our Christian proclamation.
- The servant named in this chapter is both Israel as a people (v. 3) & the prophet (v. 6). Christians later would come to understand Jesus as the servant & the “survivors of Israel” (v. 6) as the church.
- The promise that those who were once abhorred will be honoured (v. 7) is a certain theological precursor to Mary’s Magnificat & Jesus’ Beatitudes.

I wonder what it is like to be an exile.

I wonder what it is like to have your home taken away from you.

I wonder how Jesus is your “home”.

I wonder what we can say to exiles. What can we do for them?

I CORINTHIANS 1:1-9: PROCLAIMING GOD

Notes on the reading:

- Paul established the church in Corinth then left to do the same in other places. Later he heard that there were disagreements & divisions in the Corinthian church. This is the reason for his letter.
- The first nine verses of the letter are a traditional greeting in all letters. But it is also a reminder of where the Corinthian church came from, who it belongs to, & what it is meant to accomplish. It is important to remember these things in order to be able to respond to the current crisis.
- The Corinthian church is diverse & vibrant with many gifted leaders. This has led to infighting & has confused the message they are meant to proclaim. Paul reminds them that the church is God’s & is held together by God’s faithfulness, not their charismatic giftedness. It is time for the church to celebrate God, not their own accomplishments.
- God’s grace (v. 4) is God’s faithfulness (v. 9).

I wonder if we proclaim our goodness or God’s at St. Dunstan’s.

I wonder what happens when the church confuses itself with God.

I wonder if we rely on God’s faithfulness or our own giftedness.

I wonder how we talk about God at St. Dunstan’s.

MATTHEW 9:35-38: PROCLAIMING LIKE JESUS

Notes on the reading:

- In all things Jesus is our exemplar. What we see Jesus doing is what God wants us to do.
- Jesus was proactive in his proclamation. He deliberately went to places to proclaim. He didn't rest on his laurels, waiting for people to come to him.
- Jesus taught. He knew something other people didn't know & was diligent in passing it on to them. Wherever people gathered, there he taught. The Greek word for gathering together is synagogue. It is where Jews get the name for their places of prayer.
- Jesus proclaimed good news. Everything Jesus said was good news. If we find Jesus' news bad, we are either reading it wrong or do not want to admit our culpability in what he is saying.
- Jesus cured diseases & sickness. He wasn't all words. He was compassionate action.

I wonder how you have imitated Jesus.

I wonder if you are more comfortable using words or actions.

I wonder if you have ever told someone good news.

I wonder if you have ever done something good for another.

MATTHEW 5:13-16: PROCLAIMING WITHOUT WORDS

Notes on the reading:

- Matthew 5 is the beginning of Jesus' lengthy Sermon on the Mount (chapter 5 to 7). It is Jesus at his most "practical" as he reframes ancient adherence to the law into motivations of the heart.
- Jesus calls his followers salt. Salt effects change in its surroundings. Everything that encounters salt is transformed. There is a passivity to being salt. There is a passivity being a Christian. Sometimes we "accidentally" change the world for the better.
- Jesus calls his followers light. Light too is passive; it shines where it shines. But it can be hidden or obscured. Jesus asks us not to hide the light inside us. But to let it shine. What is this light? Our good works, visible to the world, that bring God glory. Sometimes Christians "purposefully" participate in the transformation of the world.

I wonder if following Jesus is a matter of your heart or mind.

I wonder if you have accidentally proclaimed God.

I wonder how you have purposefully proclaimed God.

3. Prayers & the Lord's Prayer

Pray one of the litanies beginning on page 110 of the Book of Alternative Services & conclude with the Lord's Prayer.