

14th February 6pm They Saw Jesus' Glory

Service led by Anthony Manning, Sermon by Sam Whiteside

Bible readings by Hanne Manning and Rosie Lee. Prayers by Anthony Manning

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Greeting

[Anthony:] Good evening, everyone. And welcome to this service of Evening Prayer from St. John's Church in Kenilworth. My name is Anthony and I'll be leading the service. Our Bible readings will come from Hanne and Rosie

[Rosie:] Hi there.

[Anthony:] and then Sam will be speaking to us.

[Sam:] Hello.

[Anthony:] And Matt is running the technology that connects us to you. Thank you. The words we use are on the church's website. But if you don't have them, I still hope that you feel that you can be part of our service. So we begin like this.

Preparation

The light and peace of Jesus Christ be with you

All **and also with you.**

The glory of the Lord has risen upon us.

All **Let us rejoice and sing God's praise for ever.**

Yes, let's sing God's praise in our first hymn: *At the Name of Jesus.*

1st Hymn: At The Name Of Jesus

1. At the name of Jesus
Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess Him
King of glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call Him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.

2. Humbled for a season
To receive a name
From the lips of sinners
Unto whom He came,
Faithfully He bore it
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious,
When from death He passed.

3. Name Him, brothers, name Him,
With love strong as death,
But with awe and wonder
And with bated breath:
He is God the Saviour,
He is Christ the Lord,
Ever to be worshipped,
Trusted, and adored.

4. In your hearts enthrone Him;
There let Him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true.
Crown Him as your Captain
In temptation's hour,
Let His will enfold you
In its light and power.

5. Brothers, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again,
With His Father's glory,
With His angel-train;
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him
King of glory now.

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Confession

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

All **Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**

Absolution

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Opening prayer

The day is almost over, and the evening has come;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

Holy God, we see Your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.
May we reflect His life in word and deed,
that all the world may know His power to change and save.
And this we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

All Amen.

And now we're going to turn to the Bible. Hanne and Rosie will bring us our two readings. And then Sam will speak.

1st Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6 [NIVUK 2011]

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. **4** The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. **5** For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. **6** For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

2nd Reading: Mark 9:2-9 [NIVUK 1984]

2 After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. **3** His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. **4** And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

5 Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' **6** (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

7 Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!'

8 Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

This is the word of our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

[Sam:] Hello. Shall we just pray before I speak?

Heavenly Father, I just pray tonight that You will hear our prayers, You will hear our worship, and as we open Your Word, that You will bless us in an abundant way. Lord, we just thank You for Your Word tonight. In Jesus' name, teach us through it. Amen.

Have you ever had a mountaintop experience? Of course you have. It's Valentine's Day! So you've had a mountain top of experience when you fell in love, when you got married, maybe when your children came along, and you enjoyed them. Mountaintop experiences! Mountaintop experiences when you came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, mountaintop experiences when you pass an exam, or achieve something for which you reached in your life. Have you had any mountaintop experiences recently? Are you expecting any? One mountaintop experience that I had was when a young man came to give his life to Christ. But he was accompanied by his mother. And although his mountaintop experience was coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ, that was great, and it was a great mountaintop experience for me because I'd known this young man for some years. But the greatest mountaintop experience on that occasion was this smile on the mother's face when her son came to know Jesus.

Are you expecting a mountaintop experience this week? This month? This year? Maybe several? The mountaintop experience that we experienced tonight in our reading, Mark 9 and verses 2-9, is an occasion, in fact the second occasion when Jesus took Peter, James and John up the mountain, on one of His missions, He took them with Him. And you remember that it was the same three disciples, Peter, James and John, who accompanied Jesus on the raising of Jairus' daughter. So a question for us tonight is how willing are we to accompany Jesus on missions? That's question number one. There will be several questions, as we go through tonight.

A word about the mountain: not named, but generally known as Mount Hermon. 9,200 feet high, about 12 miles north-east of Caesarea Philippi, quite a trek. I wonder how far we are prepared to go with Jesus on His mission? And are we finding it a little difficult, maybe because of COVID-19? And this Transfiguration probably occurred at night. Although Luke in his account, Luke 9 and verse 32, was careful to emphasise and show that the disciples were in fact awake. It wasn't a dream. They didn't dream this incident.

Also, in all that happened, did you realise, as we went through the reading tonight, that there was no communication between Moses and Elijah, and the disciples. They spoke with Jesus, it says, They spoke with Jesus. And I wonder why that was? Well of course, Moses and Elijah were not in their normal country, situation. They were in Heaven. And of course, and so was Jesus. He was transfigured before them. And that the disciples, Peter, James, and John, were on this planet still. And so the communication was between Elijah, Moses, and Jesus.

And you notice that they spoke about the Cross? Well, although they didn't say 'the Cross' in the Scriptures, they were talking about Jesus' departure, which would include the Cross, but they were talking about His Resurrection in the reading, Mark 9, verse 9, when Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone. That was rather strange, wasn't it? But it was because they were not in the same situation as the prophets of old and Jesus were in their situation now. Peter, of course, true to life, suggests building three shelters (Mark 9, verse 5). And here's another question. How about our own impulses, our own ideas? Sometimes, sometimes we get into a certain situation, which God has taken us to, Jesus up the mountain, as it were, and we have our own ideas. What about those?

Well, there's some outlines, but what I want to get at tonight is really, let us think about what we see in the Transfiguration. What do we see? Do we see the glory of the sinless and perfect humanity of Jesus, ready to return home to Heaven? He could have done, because He was sinless. But He chose to share in human death. But more than that, to be the perfect sacrifice for sin, and the means, of course, by which salvation could be achieved. Surely every Christian's mountaintop experience! But the Transfiguration, although it was significant as an event, and, of course, was significant concerning the person of Jesus, it was also a very important part of the spiritual education of the disciples. "Listen to My Son, whom I love," said the voice from the cloud (Mark 9, verse 7). This event, you see, confirmed their faith, although they'd have been perhaps beginning to waver a bit. In the previous chapter, Mark 8, the disciples had been told that Jesus was going to suffer many things, and be killed (verse 31). And of course, anyone that follows Him must be prepared to take up his cross and follow (verse 34). So maybe the disciples' faith was wavering a bit at this time.

And as we look forward from there to the future, the early church, we find the Transfiguration also had a profound effect on that church. 2 Peter 1 and verse 16 through 18 tells us, listen to what it says:

16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty. **17** For he received honour and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." **18** We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

How is our faith? How is our faith today, many years later? And how much are we listening to the Lord, and how much are we taking notice of the Holy Spirit's leading?

And then again, the Transfiguration also shows that the testimony of the Old Testament prophets, of whom Moses and Elijah were there, as representatives on the mountain, they also were being shown to the disciples before their very eyes. The prophecies that had been told were there before their very eyes. In Deuteronomy 18, and verse 15, it says

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.

"You must listen to Him." Peter of course had been unwilling to do that. Remember (Mark 8:32) when Jesus was predicting His death, Peter was saying, "no, no, no, no, no, no." And Jesus had to rebuke him and say "Get thou behind me, Satan" or "Get you behind me, Satan."

It's a reminder that one way in which God speaks to us, one way in which Jesus speaks to us, is through the Scriptures. And the question is, are we listening? Are we listening? During the week I shared with Denise and Steve the fact that somebody asked once, "Where did Noah keep his bees during the flood?" And of course he kept them in the ark-hives. I hope you don't keep your Bible in the archives. Use it every day. Read it every day. It's necessary sometimes, and very often, for God to speak through His Word, the Bible.

And talking about scriptures, we had another reading tonight, 2 Corinthians 4 verses 3 to 6, that's those four verses. In 2 Corinthians, Paul talks in verse 3 of this chapter, and he talks about the veil. And he links it with 2 Corinthians 3 and 13, where the veil covered Moses' face. But there's another veil, the veil that is represented in our reading tonight, a veil that seeks to hide the present age from the glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Satan was, and still is, seeking us to turn away from the light. Paul declares that man is made in the image of God, obviously linking it to Genesis 1:26. But sin has marred that

image. However, Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). He shines in the heart of the believer. And the illumination that He gives accompanies regeneration. He shines, therefore any unbelief by mankind is not the obscurity of the message, but the hostility of humans, human beings. And that hostility is largely made up of not listening, not listening to Jesus when we have been told to listen to Him, just as the disciples at the Transfiguration on the mountaintop were told to listen to Him by the voice in the cloud.

So can I ask you to be bold. Go up the mountain, see the glory of God, listen to Jesus. You will have the light of life! And if you're already a Christian, go up again. We all need to go up and hear the voice every day. Your faith will be strengthened. Your life will be more abundant. It will be a mountaintop experience. And as a postscript: in the resurrection morning, when Jesus shall appear in the heavens, shining in all His glory, and His holy angels with Him, it will be a joyful time. He will be present. He will be present with us. And He will present us to the Father, saying, "These are the children You have given to Me." And we will rejoice together. What a mountaintop experience that will be!

Shall we just pray.

Heavenly Father I just pray tonight, that You will anoint Your Word, that You will speak to us, that we will be ready to go where You want us to go with You, we may be willing to go, that we may listen to Your voice and we will obey it. And we will rejoice in giving You all the glory, and all the praise. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Creed

[Anthony:] Thank you, Sam. So let us respond by telling God and Jesus, in the words of the Apostles' Creed, how we believe in Him.

**All I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

2nd Hymn: Cornerstone (My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less)

1. My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' name.

Repeat Verse 1

Chorus:

Christ alone, Cornerstone
Weak made strong, in the Saviour's love
Through the storm
He is Lord, Lord of all

2. When darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace.
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.

Chorus

3. When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless, stand before the throne

Chorus

Intercessions

So, now let us pray together.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, You promised through your Son, Jesus Christ, to hear us when we pray in faith. We pray for Christians who feel isolated in these strange times. We pray for your people in countries where it's particularly hard to be a Christian.

We pray for our church leaders who have to make decisions about church life in these changing times.

Lord, in Your mercy,

All hear our prayer.

We pray for governments in different countries, trying to make decisions about how to move forward safely.

We thank you for our NHS, and for all the people we rely on in these difficult times.

We pray too for families with children learning at home, and having half term now, and for teachers planning to reopen schools.

Lord, in Your mercy,

All hear our prayer.

We pray for people in danger, for people in pain, for people living in fear, for people we know with problems whom we name before you now.

Please, comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. Give them courage and hope in their troubles and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in Your mercy,

All hear our prayer.

Collect for the day (Sunday next before Lent)

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the Cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into His likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

And now, gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray together slowly, as our Saviour taught us.

**All Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.**

Blessing / Grace

So, let us bless each other in the words of the grace.

**All The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore.
Amen.**

3rd Hymn: Crown Him with Many Crowns

So thank you all for joining in this service of Evening Prayer from St. John's Church in Kenilworth. Our final hymn is *Crown Him with Many Crowns*.

1. Crown Him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon His throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
Of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity.
2. Crown Him the Son of God
Before the worlds began,
And ye, who tread where He hath trod,
Crown Him the Son of Man;
Who every grief hath known
That wrings the human breast,
And takes and bears them for His own,
That all in Him may rest.
3. Crown him the Lord of life,
Who triumphed o'er the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife
For those he came to save;
His glories now we sing,
Who died, and rose on high,
Who died, eternal life to bring
And lives that death may die.
4. Crown Him the Lord of peace,
Whose power a sceptre sways
From pole to pole, that wars may cease,
And all be prayer and praise:
His reign shall know no end,
And round His piercèd feet
Fair flowers of paradise extend
Their fragrance ever sweet.
5. Crown him the Lord of years,
The potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres,
Ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For Thou hast died for me;
Thy praise shall never, never fail
Throughout eternity.

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

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