**Sunday Morning Worship – Third Sunday Of Lent - 13th March 2022**

Before we start today’s service, there are two messages we would like you to read and pray about.

**Firstly Bishop Christopher writes**:

*“I write to you from the Houses of Parliament. I have been here all week. The Ukrainian Crisis has been a constant theme. Each day I’ve led prayers in the House of Lords, with the persistent threat of war in Europe lending them great urgency and poignancy.*

*As the week has unfolded, our worst fears have been realised and the people of Ukraine are now suffering a terrible onslaught. One of the lines from the ancient psalm I used this morning says, ‘I sought the Lord, and he heard me: yea he delivered me out of all my fears’.*

*So, this is the time to increase our prayer and to seek the Lord, that God’s ways of peace would prevail and break through the violence. I call on all people of prayer across Coventry and Warwickshire to join the wave of prayer that is rising in the world.”*

Please click here to read the remainder of Bishop Christopher’s letter…
<https://www.coventry.anglican.org/news/bishops-call-to-prayer-for-ukraine.php>

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**Secondly:-**

Will you please pray as our advert for a new minister has gone live and will be posted for the next 3 weeks.

This is for a fulltime minister for the two benefices of Fillongley with Corley and Ansley with Arley.

Thank you.

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**Our Opening Hymn is** – ***Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus***

 ***1****Stand up, stand up for Jesus!*

*ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner,*

 *it must not suffer loss:
From victory unto victory,*

*His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,*

*and Christ is Lord indeed.*

***2*** *Stand up, stand up for Jesus!*

*The trumpet call obey:
Forth to the mighty conflict,*

*in this His glorious day;
Ye that are men now serve Him*

*against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger,*

 *and strength to strength oppose.*

***3*** *Stand up, stand up for Jesus!*

*Stand in His strength alone,
The arm of flesh will fail you,*

 *ye dare not trust your own;
Put on the gospel armour,*

*and watching unto prayer,
Where calls the voice of duty,*

*be never wanting there.*

***4*** *Stand up, stand up for Jesus!*

*the strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,*

*the next the victor’s song;
To him that overcometh*

*a crown of life shall be;
He with the King of glory*

*shall reign eternally.* (by George Duffield (1818 to 1888)

**Preparation**

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

**All:** And also with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

All: Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

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.

**All:** We say Sorry

Jesus says, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is close at hand.’

So let us turn away from our sins and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**All**: Lord God, we have sinned against you;

We have done evil in your sight.

We are sorry and repent.

Have mercy on us according to your love.

Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.

Renew a right spirit within us and restore to us the joy of your salvation;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in His image to the praise and glory of His name through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen**.**

Blessed is the Lord,

**All:** For He has heard the voice of our prayer;

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy

**All:** And in our song will we praise our God.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, creator and redeemer of all;

to you be glory and praise for ever.

From the waters of chaos you drew forth the world, and in your great love fashioned us in your image. Now, through the deep waters of death, you have brought your people to new birth by raising your Son to life in triumph.

May Christ your light ever dawn in our hearts as we offer you our sacrifice of thanks and praise.

Blessed be God, Father Son and Holy Spirit.

**All:** Blessed be God for ever.

**Our Second Hymn is – *On Jordon’s Bank***

***1****On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Come, then, and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of kings!*

***2****Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
Make straight the way for God within;
Prepare we in our hearts a home,
Where such a mighty Guest may come.*

***3****For Thou art our Salvation, Lord,
Our Refuge, and our great Reward.
Without Thy grace our souls must fade
And wither like a flower decayed.*

***4****Stretch forth Thine hand, to heal our sore,
And make us rise and fall no more;
Once more upon Thy people shine,
And fill the world with love divine.*

***5****To Him Who left the throne of Heaven
To save mankind, all praise be given;
Like praise be to the Father done,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One.* (by Charles Coffin, 1676-1749)

**Collect for the Second Sunday of Lent**

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,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

**All:** Amen

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

**All: And Christ shall give you light.**

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

**All: Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.**

Set your minds on things that are above,

not on things that are on the earth.

**All: And Christ shall give you light.**

When Christ our life appears

you will appear with him in glory.

**All: Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.**

**Our Third Hymn is – *As We Are Gathered, Jesus is Here***

Please go to this Web address:-

**https://www.higherpraise.com/lyrics/love/love852932.htm**

**Our First Reading id taken from *- Philippians Chap: 3***

***Chap: 3***

***17*** *Keep on imitating me, my friends. Pay attention to those who follow the right example that we have set for you.*

***18*** *I have told you this many times before, and now I repeat it with tears: there are many whose lives make them enemies of Christ's death on the cross.*

***19*** *They are going to end up in hell, because their god is their bodily desires. They are proud of what they should be ashamed of, and they think only of things that belong to this world.*

***20*** *We, however, are citizens of heaven, and we eagerly wait for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from heaven.*

***21*** *He will change our weak mortal bodies and make them like his own glorious body, using that power by which he is able to bring all things under his rule.*

***Chap: 4***

***1*** *So then, my friends, how dear you are to me and how I miss you! How happy you make me, and how proud I am of you! - this, dear friends, is how you should stand firm in your life in the Lord.*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All:** Thanks be to God

**Our Forth Hymn is - *Forty Days and Forty Nights***

***1*** *Forty days and forty nights
You were fasting in the wild;
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted, and yet undefiled.*

***2*** *Shall not we your sorrow share
And from worldly joys abstain,
Fasting with unceasing prayer,
Strong with you to suffer pain?*

***3*** *Then if Satan on us press,
Flesh or spirit to assail,
Victor in the wilderness,
Grant we may not faint nor fail!*

***4*** *So shall we have peace divine;
Holier gladness ours shall be;
Round us, too, shall angels shine,
Such as served You faithfully.*

## *5 Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,Ever constant by your side,That with you we may appearAt the eternal Eastertide*. (by George Hunt Smyttan – 1856)

**Here the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to - *Luke Chap: 13***

***31*** *At that same time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "You must get out of here and go somewhere else, because Herod wants to kill you."*

***32*** *Jesus answered them, "Go and tell that fox: "I am driving out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I shall finish my work.'*

***33*** *Yet I must be on my way today, tomorrow, and the next day; it is not right for a prophet to be killed anywhere except in Jerusalem.*

***34*** *"Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets, you stone the messengers God has sent you! How many times I wanted to put my arms around all your people, just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not let me!*

***35*** *And so your Temple will be abandoned. I assure you that you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord.' "*

This is the Word of the Lord

 **All:** Thanks be to God

**Benediction**

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,

**All:** who has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,

**All:** born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets God promised of old

**All:** to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,

To show mercy to our ancestors,

**All:** and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:

**All:** to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship him without fear,

**All:** holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,

**All:** for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation

**All:** by the forgiveness of all their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God

**All:** the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,

**All:** and to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1.68-79)

**All: Glory to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever.**

**Amen.**

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# Sermon

# Based on: *Philippians Chap 3 and Luke Chap: 13*

Our gospel today begins with a warning for Jesus from the Pharisees that Herod plans to kill him; a warning which **Jesus** uses as an opportunity to first reflect on his own life and mission, before issuing a more general proclamation against the city of Jerusalem for the tragic role it often plays in the lives of the prophets.

It’s difficult to pin down the role of the Pharisees in this story. Throughout most of the Gospels, **Jesus** has a relationship with them that can best be described as antagonistic; the scribes and the Pharisees are a catch-all opponent used to throw **Jesus** and his teachings into clear relief.

Yet here they are, approaching **Jesus** to warn him of a plot against his life. It’s possible, of course, that not all of the Pharisees are enemies of **Jesus** – we know from the book of Acts that several Pharisees became Christians.

But Herod doesn’t harbour any murderous intent towards **Jesus** anywhere else in the Gospels – in Luke’s version of the Passion account, when Herod is given the chance to condemn **Jesus**, he refuses to do so.

On the other hand, Herod has had John the Baptist imprisoned and executed – so perhaps the Pharisees’ warning is genuine and meant sincerely.

**Jesus** chooses to take it at face value, but indicates that he does not care about Herod’s plans, which will have no impact on **Jesus’** ministry whatsoever*.*

 *“Tell that fox* *that I will do my work today and tomorrow*.”

Herod has no control over **Jesus; Jesus** will carry on his work, regardless of the intentions of other people, before going to Jerusalem to face his death – a death which has nothing to do with the actions of Herod, but which is inevitable, because that is how Jerusalem treats her prophets.

Earlier in his ministry, **Jesus** had explained to the people around him that a prophet is never recognised in his own house. Partly this is because that’s where people remember what an annoying little kid you were… and partly it’s because people don’t like to be told uncomfortable truths – especially *by* that annoying little kid they remember.

But, **Jesus** says that eventually, Jerusalem will recognise him, and bless those who come in his name.

Who is it though, who comes in the name of the Lord?

Today we live in a world where many people claim to be the emissaries of the Christ.

How are we to tell the true prophets from the false?

I would suggest that to help us, we can apply four tests.

First of all, follow the money. Speaking for ***God*** is *not* a way to become rich. Speaking of John the Baptist, Jesus asks his audience,

*“Did you go out into the desert to see someone dressed in fine clothes?”*

He then points out that no, of course they didn’t. If they had wanted to see *that,* they should have gone to the palace, because that’s where such people are found.

There’s no crime in being affluent, but the followers of **Jesus** don’t use the word of God to make themselves rich.

Second, take note of who it is that the prophet associates with. **Jesus** asks us to keep company with the poor and the powerless.

**Jesus** himself was often criticized for associating with tax collectors and other sinners. A false prophet keeps company with the rich and powerful; but *Psalm 146* warns us to

*“Put no trust in princes.”*

The followers of **Jesus** should not be sidling up to the politicians.

Third, which is related to the second point, for whom does the prophet speak?

The task of the Christian is to comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable. How many church leaders are there out there today telling their congregations what they want to hear?

How many clergy who fawn over political leaders, even as others challenge them to protect the marginalized and serve the common good?

A prophet who ignores the sins of his friends is a prophet for a party, not for God.

Fourth, examine how the prophet speaks.

If we are followers of Christ, then like Christ, our words *may* ring with righteous anger – but *never* with hate. It is our duty to condemn exploitation, but it is our challenge also to have compassion for sinners. If there is no love in our words, then we do not speak with the voice of ***God***.

A true follower of **Jesus** speaks only after listening and praying.

Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, warns his readers not to trust the world. Earthly riches are earthly; they don’t last.

If our concern is for the dictates of our bellies – if we desire only to fulfil the needs of the body, if we tear down ***God*** and replace him with the love of power and influence – then our ending is destruction and shame.

**Jesus** applies this logic to the people of Jerusalem – they run after the false and reject the true, and the house of cards they have built will collapse as a result.

Even today it is the same – we trust to the desires of the world rather than the wisdom of ***God***, and we see the reward we have reaped all around us: poverty, want, degradation, environmental damage, violence and the threat of war.

Throughout Lent we are preparing ourselves to experience **Jesus’** cross.

As part of this, we ought to do so by considering whether our lives lead appropriately to that cross.

Do we make sense of our lives as a part of the establishment of ***God’s*** kingdom in our world?

Or will we allow ourselves to be frightened from our mission by the threats of earthly rulers?

If J**esus** were to speak prophetically to us, what would his message be?

Do we resist ***God’s*** messages and kingdom, and thus play our part in the tragic role of Jerusalem?

Or do we stand firm in the Lord, recognising ***God’s*** messages and kingdom, and playing our assigned role in bringing them about?

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**Amen**

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***Time of Silence …..***

**We Say Together:**

**The Creed**.

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.**

**Prayers and Intercessions**

We pray for God to fill us with his Spirit.

Generous God,

we thank you for the *power* of your Holy Spirit.

We ask that we may be strengthened to serve you better.

Lord, come to bless us

**All:** and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the wisdom of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to make us wise to understand your will.

Lord, come to bless us

**All:** and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the peace of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to keep us confident of your love wherever you call us.

Lord, come to bless us

**All:** and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the healing of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to bring reconciliation and wholeness

where there is division, sickness and sorrow.

Lord, come to bless us

**All:** and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the gifts of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to equip us for the work which you have given us.

Lord, come to bless us

**All:** and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the fruit of your Holy Spirit.

We ask you to reveal in our lives the love of Jesus.

Lord, come to bless us

**All:** and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the breath of your Holy Spirit,

given us by the risen Lord.

We ask you to keep the whole Church, living and departed,

in the joy of eternal life.

Lord, come to bless us

**All:** and fill us with your Spirit.

**All:** Generous God,

**hear our prayer,**

**and make us one in heart and mind**

**to serve you with joy for ever.**

**Amen.**

***We gather our thoughts and prayers in the words our Saviour gave us***

**All:** 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.

**Our Offertory Hymn is – *As the Deer Pants for the Water***

Please go to this Web address:-

**https://genius.com/Religious-music-as-the-deer-lyrics**

**Closing Blessings**

May God give to you and to all those you love

his comfort and his peace,

his light and his joy,

in this world and the next;

and the blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ

and the Love of God

and the fellowship of the Holy Sprit

be with us all evermore.

**All**: Amen.

**Our Closing Hymn is *- Soldiers of Christ Arise***

***1*** *Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His eternal Son.
Strong in the Lord of hosts,
And in His mighty pow’r,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.*

***2*** *Stand then in His great might,
With all His strength endued,
And take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God;
That, having all things done,
And all your conflicts passed,
Ye may o’ercome through Christ alone,
And stand entire at last.*

***3****Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul,
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.
From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle and fight and pray,
Tread all the pow’rs of darkness down
And win the well-fought day.* (by Charles Wesley – 1707 to 1789)

**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

Go in joy and peace to love and serve the Lord

**All:** In the name of Christ Amen.

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