

## Sunday 28th February 2021

### Opening Prayer

Dear Lord you call us to be in relationship with one another  
and promise to be wherever two or three are gathered.  
In our community, we are many different people;  
we come from different places,  
we have different cultures,  
different experiences and expectations.  
Open our hearts, that among us  
we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion  
and the treasures of diversity. **Amen**

**Hymn: Be still for the presence of the Lord.** David J Evans (CCL license: 256444) click [here](#) to hear the tune

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here  
Come bow before him now with reverence and fear  
In him no sin is found we stand on holy ground  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around  
He burns with holy fire, with splendor he is crowned  
How awesome is the sight our radiant king of light  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place  
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace  
No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from him  
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place

**Reading : Mark 8 vs 31-38**

### Reflection

The reading this week tells of Jesus giving an unpalatable teaching to the disciples and quite naturally tells of Peter's disagreement with this, or really his not liking the message too much. It shows us also that although Peter spoke his mind, that Jesus only rebuked him he didn't reject him.

Some things are very hard to hear but often they need to be said.

We need to be like Peter, to be able to be honest and challenge without fear of rejection. Peter kept making mistakes and jumping in with both feet, but he never gave up or got rejected and he went on to be the leader of the Church of Jerusalem.

Often it is how we respond to our actions/mistakes, do we actually realise we have made them? Do we realise how they may have affected other people? Do we argue or do we hide? It often depends on the importance I suppose.

Who will we speak to this week? What conversations will we have? How do we respond more like Jesus, especially if those conversations may be difficult or we don't agree entirely with them? Sometimes we have to take a risk and have difficult conversations and we don't always know what the outcome will be.

J.K. Rowlings had 12 rejections before someone finally published her "Harry Potter " books, she

didn't give up because she believed in them, she just took them along to another publisher. I would think those 12 that rejected her have very sore ankles from kicking themselves!

What was Peter thinking about? Maybe he just didn't like the whole suffering and dying thing, it wasn't what he had signed up for, wasn't who he thought the Messiah would be. Peter probably didn't say anything and the other disciples weren't thinking. People thought Jesus had come to conquer, but in fact it was quite the opposite, he came to suffer and die, something people did not want to hear. Maybe Peter didn't say anything we haven't thought or even wanted to say. Jesus has a very different understanding of discipleship than the one most of us probably want. When another person's reality and vision begin to conflict with and overtake our own, we rebuke. We take them to one side to enlighten them, help them understand, show them the error of their ways. That's all Peter did.

If we are really honest, haven't we at some point disagreed with Jesus, I know I have, asking why he doesn't do what we want? It all seems so clear to us.

If he can make someone walk why are so many crippled with fear, dementia, or addiction?

If he can calm the sea, why does he not calm the storms of our world? But they rage on with violence, war and poverty.

If he can feed 5000 with a few fish and some loaves of bread, why do so many go hungry?

I have wondered about these things. Maybe we are not so different from Peter.

Although relationships are made up of different opinions we can still get along, like the rainbow is made up of different colours but together it makes a beautiful sight. WE need to know ourselves and accept our differences.

### **Prayer of forgiveness**

Lord forgive us when we fail to act as you do.

Words of retaliation, insincerity and malice on our lips:

forgive us when we act towards others in this way,

Overwhelmed by complex relationships and rocky paths:

forgive us for not setting our minds on you and your ways.

Fear of rejection and wary of being our true selves:

forgive us and help us to give of ourselves as you give.

Forgive us, Lord, for our failure to trust you;

for not allowing you to be in the driving seat.

lead us and help us to live your way.

In your name we pray. **Amen**

### **Prayers for others**

Lord we bring our Church family before you, whatever their circumstances and needs may be, you know them well.

We ask that at this time you are with the leaders of the country that they make the best decisions for our future.

We ask for other countries that not only are going through this current pandemic but going through other trials and tribulations, be with them at this time. **Amen**

### **The Grace**

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.**

*Elaine*