

## Lent 2 - Sunday 28th February

### Opening Hymn

Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul  
Worship his holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul  
I'll worship your holy name

The sun comes up  
It's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing your song again  
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing when the evening comes

Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul  
Worship his holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul  
I'll worship your holy name

You're rich in love and you're slow to anger  
Your name is great and your heart is kind  
For all your goodness I will keep on singing  
10, 000 reasons for my heart to find

Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul, Worship his holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul

**I'll worship your holy name (*repeat*)  
And on that day when my strength is failing  
The end draws near and my time has come  
Still my soul will sing your praise unending  
10, 000 years and then forever more**

**Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul  
Worship his holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul  
I'll worship your holy name**

**Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul  
Worship His holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul  
I'll worship your holy name**

**I'll worship your holy name  
Yes, I'll worship your holy name**

*Songwriters: Matt Redman / Jonas Myrin Ccli # 6016351  
10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord) lyrics © Worshiptogether.com Songs, Sixsteps  
Music, Thank You Music Ltd., Atlas Mountain Songs*

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you  
**and also with you.**

**Confession - we acknowledge our sins, and pray for healing  
and forgiveness  
Summary of the Law**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.  
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,  
firmly resolved to keep God's commandments  
and to live in love and peace with all.

(Pause for reflection)

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.  
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,  
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

Lord, wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin:  
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Against you, you only have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight:  
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me: *cf Psalm 51*  
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

## **Absolution**

May the God of all healing and forgiveness  
draw *us* to himself and cleanse *us* from all *our* sins,  
that *we* may behold the glory of his Son,  
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Response to God's mercy and forgiveness:**

**Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;  
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.  
Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided,  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.**

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!  
Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided,  
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.**

*Thomas Obediah Chisholm, William Marion Runyan © 1923.  
Renewed 1951 Hope Publishing Company CCLI SONG # 18723*

## **Collect**

**Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent  
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,  
and by following in his Way**

**come to share in his glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**1st Reading: Romans 4:13-25. (NIV)**

**13** It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. **14** For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, **15** because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

**16** Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. **17** As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

**18** Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." **19** Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. **20** Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, **21** being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. **22** This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." **23** The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, **24** but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. **25** He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Response:**

**Only by grace can we enter  
Only by grace can we stand  
Not by our human endeavour  
But by the blood of the Lamb  
Into Your presence You call us  
You call us to come  
Into Your presence You draw us  
And now by Your grace we come  
Now by Your grace we come**

**Lord if You mark our transgressions  
Who could stand?  
Thanks to Your grace we are cleansed  
By the blood of the Lamb  
Lord if You mark our transgressions  
Who could stand?  
Thanks to Your grace we are cleansed  
By the blood of the Lamb**

*Gerrit Gustafson © 1990 Integrity's Hosanna! Music  
Ccli SONG # 190579*

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.  
The Lord is a great God, O that today  
you would listen to his voice.  
Harden not your hearts. (cf Psalm 95.3,8)  
Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

### **Mark 8:31-38 (NIV) Jesus Predicts His Death**

**31** He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. **32** He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

**33** But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

### **The Way of the Cross**

**34** Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. **35** For whoever wants to save their life, will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. **36** What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? **37** Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? **38** If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

### **Sermon - Preached by Revd Andrew Goodman**

Have you got something you'd like to ask Jesus to do? His followers once asked him, '*Increase our faith*' (Luke 17:5) He replied, "*If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in*

*the sea,' and it would obey you.* Was Jesus saying they didn't even have a mustard seed size of faith - that they were lacking even a teeny bit of faith to do the job? I think he might have been saying something like, 'it's not about *how much faith* you've got - it's about *who* or *what* you're putting your faith *in*'. Because obviously it's not *our* faith that moves mountains, is it? But if your faith is in God, well then, anything is possible, and it doesn't matter how much of it you have - a mustard seed will do.

And so it was, '*that against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised*'. And it turns out, says Paul in our first reading, that Abraham's faith made him our '*faith father*' - the spiritual father of all those, who like him, put their trust in God for something seemingly impossible, being saved from ourselves. If we are honest, we will acknowledge that there are dark areas in our lives where we have little or no control. We feel trapped and hypocritical. This interior darkness is where most of us have hidden our addictions, the things we do to numb our pain.

And that little leap of faith, as tiny as a mustard seed, is all it takes for us to receive the gift of God *saving us* - His paying the price of his own Son, Jesus - the price to ransom us from our fatal attraction to all that harms us. Jesus dying for us on the cross out of love, and then rising to new life so we can too. That mustard seed of trusting faith is all it takes for us to be transferred out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God. It's not about you being a 'good person' or trying harder - none of us could ever be good enough to escape our addiction to messing things up.

Do you realise God 'swapped' Jesus for you? Do you know that Jesus is the bodyguard, like in the movie of that name, who took the bullet meant for you? Listen, Lent is really serious, nothing less than your life, and your soul is at stake, and the ripples on the lives of people who know you. Is Jesus inviting you to cast a 'mustard seed' of faith and trust Him for your life, either to renew your trust, or for the first time?

When I was 17 I went on an Outward Bound course rock-climbing, and we were doing a difficult traverse, where the instructor who was a really tough Marine made it across a particularly tricky point by dint of his own sheer strength. I gulped as it was my turn to follow. I reached the point where his strength had got him by, and I could feel I was slipping and the sweat on my fingers. Suddenly, like a dead weight I fell 20 feet, and I can tell you, so sweet was my relief when I bounced on that rope, pulling my mate off the rock and onto his rope too! I was so glad to be alive, and not a body on the rocks 200 ft below. I was acutely conscious that all that stood between me and sudden death was the rope. Jesus is 'the rope' that saves us from falling.

There's a paradox though, while trusting in God is all it takes to be saved, in the gospel Jesus tells us there's work to be done; after we're saved, we need to be *transformed*. We're to 'deny ourselves', take up our own cross and follow Him. After I was saved in the fall, I had the hard work of climbing back up, and then climbing other cliffs quite soon, so I could conquer the fear of falling and not lose confidence. It was hard work. It's good news too - we get to participate! God has dropped us a lifeline out of our brokenness, addiction, sin and death - something we could never do ourselves, but we must

still grab hold and keep climbing every day, with every ounce of strength we have.

Let me give you a Lenten challenge, something to do this week. First, renew your decision to trust Jesus for your life, or tell Him you trust Him for the first time. Second, after you've told Him, pray about an opportunity to *'not be ashamed of Him and his words'* in the coming week. Look for a chance to speak of him to someone, or to do something to deny yourself and follow Him.

In the words of Jim Elliot, *'he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.'* Amen

### **Response:**

**Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown?  
Will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?**

**Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?**

**Lord your summons echoes true when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.  
In Your company I'll go  
where Your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.**

*John L. Bell & Graham Maule © Words and Music: 1987 WGRG, c/o Iona Community, Glasgow, Scotland CCLI SONG # 4668756*

## **Our Declaration of Faith**

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,  
he did not cling to equality with God,  
but made himself nothing.  
Taking the form of a slave,  
he was born in human likeness.  
He humbled himself and was obedient to death,  
even the death of the cross.  
Therefore God has raised him on high,  
and given him the name above every name:  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.**

*cf Philippians 2.6-11*

## **Intercessions: Led by Stephen Lines, St Michael's Shefford**

Loving God as you revealed yourself to Abraham in ancient days, reveal yourself to us today. Fire us to be a faithful people ready to trust in your promises and to follow you wherever you lead us.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Holy God, during this period of Lent, give us a new awareness of your presence in our Churches here in Bedfordshire, and teach us the humility to accept that all our

gifts come from you to be used in the service of your people. Live in us through all our small acts of love, care and sacrifice and help us to be cheerful in our fasting and giving as our Lord Jesus Christ commanded.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Creator God your son walked upon earth and taught us to seek your hand in the beauty and wonders of earth and sea and the sky. We so often see too much of the evidence of poor stewardship in our surroundings and it is easy to forget that the world belongs to you. Help us to recognise your presence in our modern world and help us to use the resources of the earth more wisely and more equitably.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Father God, we give you thanks for our Local and Church community here in Bedfordshire: for our neighbours, for our friends and for the people with whom we work and share our daily lives. We pray for those who are frail or lonely, those isolated because of ill-health, and those who find it difficult to be accepted. Show us all that we can do to help those around us and walk with us as we try to be good neighbours and true friends.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God, we pray for the sick and the suffering, those undergoing treatments and surgery, those convalescing and those who are recovered. We pray that they may all experience your love and peace.

We bring before you now all that we know personally who are in need of your love.

(short silence)

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

We pray for all those who have supported and cared for the sick, the vulnerable, the lonely, our children and young ones selflessly throughout this pandemic. Many have witnessed things that no one should have to face, relentlessly, day after day, without relief. Many have made the ultimate sacrifice – Lord we honour them and ask you to bless them and their families and friends.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Almighty God be near to all those who are grieving today over the loss of a loved one. We bring before you now those known to us who have died, and those who have died alone, unnoticed.

(Short Silence)

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our Prayer**

Faithful God as we go out into the world today help us to remember that your son was tempted by the Devil but chose faithfulness before popularity, service before fame and sacrifice before power. Give us the strength to reject temptation through our Lenten journey and beyond it throughout the rest of our lives.

Merciful Father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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 forever. Amen.**

**Notices and Birthdays**

**Note: Women's World Day of Prayer is 5th March**

**The BLESSING**

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,  
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;  
and the blessing ...

**Final Hymn**

**O Jesus, I have promised**

**To serve thee to the end;**

**Be thou forever near me,**

**My Master and my friend;**

**I shall not fear the battle**

**If thou art by my side,**

**Nor wander from the pathway**

**If thou wilt be my guide.**

**O let me feel thee near me!**

**The world is ever near:  
I see the sights that dazzle,  
The tempting sounds I hear.  
My foes are ever near me,  
Around me and within;  
But, Jesus, draw thou nearer,  
And shield my soul from sin.**

**O let me hear thee speaking  
In accents clear and still,  
Above the storms of passion,  
The murmurs of self-will.  
O speak to reassure me,  
To hasten or control;  
O speak, and make me listen,  
Thou guardian of my soul.**

**O Jesus, thou hast promised  
To all who follow thee  
That where thou art in glory  
There shall thy servant be.  
And, Jesus, I have promised  
To serve thee to the end;  
O give me grace to follow,  
My Master and my friend.**

James William Elliott, John Ernest Bode CCLI SONG # 1831356  
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## **Heading Out Prayer**

As we go, may...

The strength of God. **Guide us**

The power of God.      **Preserve us**

The Wisdom of God      **Instruct us**

And the Spirit of God...

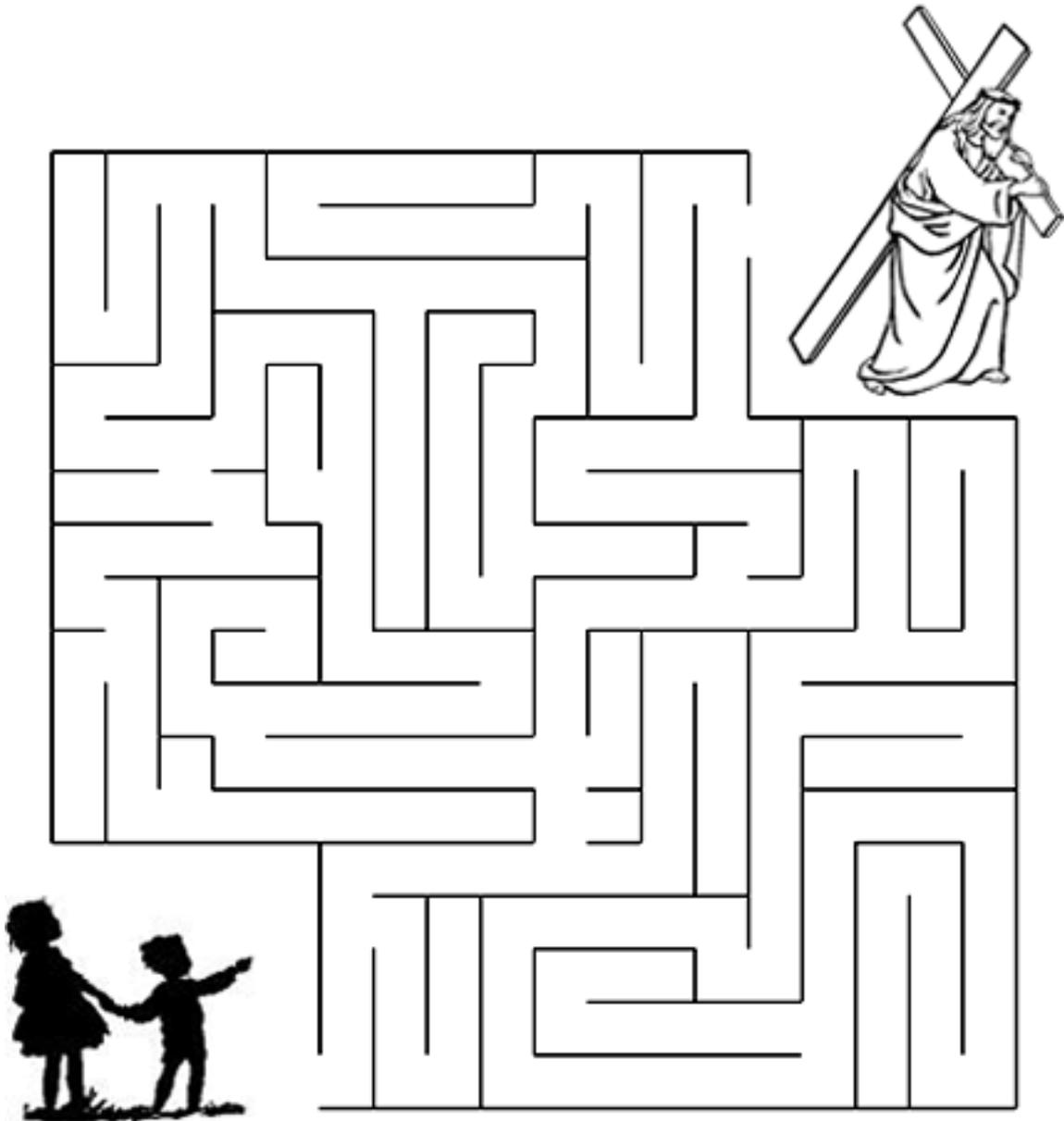
**be within us this day and ever more.**

**Let us go out in the power the Spirit  
to live and work to his praise and glory.    Amen**

Our grateful thanks to James and Miriam Read  
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# Take Up Your Cross Maze



Can you find the path to Jesus?

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

Mark 8:34

# Take Up Your Cross

What good is it for a man to gain the whole world,  
yet forfeit his soul? Mark 8:36

Based on Mark 8:34-37



V M H E O S O D F W C N E X A  
K Z H W S L H V E O H R J W Y  
U Z T C O W I B Q N R O O T H  
A C L I O R V F D G Y F L W N  
V S D L L P L E E S X Y E E D  
B K L E N R A D I E G M G I D  
D O L Z V Y R S O U L Y A C T  
F L W Z W D Q I X Z I R I R G  
H Y Z J R U D C M V X G N O O  
V I R D I S C I P L E S B S S  
Z I M F L Y D E X J R E S S P  
E W H S V K V P G F S C T P E  
O I L P E A J M K O O G U X L  
E I X P S L A J L S O W N C X  
F R Z I E Q F Z A E O D T C W

FORFEIT  
WORLD  
SAVE  
CROSS

WHOLE  
LOSE  
GOOD  
DISCIPLES

GAIN  
FOLLOW  
HIMSELF  
LIFE

DENY  
GOSPEL  
SOUL  
CROWD