

Christchurch Rayleigh – Sunday 27th February 2022

(email to Sue Deane for print etc, and Naomi for website)

For those unable to attend church and do not have access to watch via live-streaming:

Opening Hymn – O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the works Thy hands hath made
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, the power throughout the universe displayed;

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to Thee,

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to Thee,

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;

when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze;

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to Thee,

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to Thee,

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

And when I think that God His son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross my burn gladly bearing, He bled and died, to take away my sin;

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to Thee,

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to Thee,

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart;

Then shall I bow, in humble adoration, and there proclaim, my God how great Thou art!

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to Thee,

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

Then sings my soul, my saviour God to Thee,

How great Thou art, how great Thou art!

Family Time – led by Sandy

Hymn: Brother, sister let me serve you

Brother, sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you;

Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant to.

We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road;

We are here to help each other, walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ light for you, in the night time of your fear;

I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh I'll laugh with you;

I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony;

Born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you;

Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant to.

Offertory – prayer for children as they leave for their departments

Prayers of Intercession – Duty Elder

Hymn: You laid aside your majesty

You laid aside your majesty, gave up everything for me,

Suffered at the hands of those you had created;

You took all my guilt and shame, when you died and rose again;

now today You reign, in heaven and earth exalted.

I really want to worship you my Lord, You have won my heart and I am yours;

for ever and ever, I will love You. You are the only one who died for me,

gave your life to set me free, so I lift my voice to You in adoration!

From the gospel stories, we see Jesus was a very popular person, crowds gathered wherever he went. He preached, what we now call 'the gospel' the good news, he was a man of deep compassion and we have accounts of him healing physically and mentally ill people.

Why then, would anyone, especially his own family and the teachers of the law (the Torah) accuse him?

Reading: Mark 3 : 20 - 25 (please keep your Bible open and follow)

Address:

To try to answer this question, let's work through the verses we have just heard and see if we can see what is happening, and perhaps more importantly, what we can learn from the story...

Verse 20 – we see that Jesus is indeed a very popular person – as he enters the house there isn't sufficient room to eat....

Verse 21 – I find the words in this verse most strange! The parents, his mother and father, have witnessed their son, after growing up within their family, maybe working as a carpenter alongside his father - choosing to go about the countryside – calling fellow Jews to join him. Preaching in the synagogues, in houses and in the open air – a message of repentance and forgiveness. Healing people, of physical and mental illnesses - **should they not be proud of their son?**

“He is out of his mind” - my interpretation of that, is that he is crazy, he is mentally ill...

Verse 22 – not surprisingly, the hierarchy of the church, witness this ‘lay person’ this uneducated person, and presumably are not overly pleased that crowds are gathering to see and hear Jesus!

The teachers of the law have a different approach – his family say he is crazy, but they go one step further and accuse Jesus of being in league with the devil !

You can imagine, this places the crowds in a difficult position – these respected people, the teachers of the law, surely they know the scriptures – that's what they study...

Look at **verses 23 to 27** - knowing this, Jesus tries to speak to them in a language he hopes they may understand; how can satan drive out satan...

In **verse 28**, Jesus says, people can be forgiven every

BUT, verse 29, whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, commits the eternal sin. Not good news for the teachers... Please look carefully at the words in **verse 30 – why did Jesus say this? Jesus is confirming for us, his Spirit is pure!**

In **verse 31**, we return to the parents – who, for whatever reason, did not go into the house, but sent someone else to talk to their son!

And we have recorded for us, the immortal words of our Lord Jesus in **verses 33 to 35.....**

Who are my..... ???

Whoever does God's will....

It's an interesting story, which we have all heard many times, and my guess is that in some shape or form, we, you and me, will be thinking **'thank goodness I'm not like that'!**

BUT, as I sat and reflected on this story over what we call "Christmas" time, when we celebrate the birth of this meek and mild infant – we sing songs and try to recreate the story of the birth of Jesus during our nativity plays etc.

All very nice, being able to worship this baby, where we, as adults, like his parents are in control.

However, as this baby grows and becomes an adult, we see a very different Jesus.

No longer a helpless child in a manger, but **the man Jesus!**

Calling disciples, preaching the gospel, healing the sick – challenging his disciples to follow in His footsteps.

When his **parents** witnessed this ‘**outlandish**’ **behaviour**, they proclaimed that Jesus was out of his mind! They would have nothing to do with him, they would not even enter the same house – **why?**

Thank goodness, I’m not like that... did I hear anyone whisper earlier?

When Jesus calls you, to follow him – to show compassion, to visit and comfort the sick; to work with the elderly and lonely; to work with the homeless, the destitute; those caught up in the horrors of drug and alcohol abuse....

What is our response? Oh no, we don’t call Jesus crazy, or out of his mind, we are far too clever, or subtle for that.....

Oh, is this the preacher banging ‘his’ drum again?

Banging the drum? Yes!

His drum? No!

Our brother James in his letter to the church tells us that ‘religion’ that God is pleased with is to look after those who cannot look after themselves (James 1 : 27) and..

Saint Teresa put pen to paper and wrote this prayer:

Christ Jesus, has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which must look out Christ’s compassion on the world.

Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good.

Yours are the hands with which He is to bless men and women, now!

Read verses 34 and 35....

Then Jesus looked at those seated around him and said – here are my mother and brothers!

Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister

Amen!

Let us pray (prayers of reflection)

Father God, we have listened to your word today and our hearts and souls have been searched.

Many issues have been raised and we seek your forgiveness for the times when our wills have been habit bound and slow!

Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, taught us how to pray, in the words that we have memorised since childhood. By the power of your Holy Spirit, change our lives as we pray...

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 that 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

Closing hymn – When I survey the wondrous cross

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God;

all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His hands, his head, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down;
did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose, so rich a crown.

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all!

Benediction

Let us say the Grace to each other:

The Grace of our Lord, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all, ever more,

Amen