

Salford Methodist Circuit



When You Live In This Moment - 30th May 2021

Rev Kim Ratcliffe

Good morning and welcome to worship on the 30th May 2021 on Trinity Sunday. We're here in the Salford Methodist Circuit.

Psalm 29: 10 - 11

*The Lord sits enthroned over the flood
The Lord is enthroned as King for ever
The Lord gives strength to his people
The Lord blesses his people with peace.*

Bible Reading: Isaiah 6 : 1 - 8

God Calls Isaiah to Be a Prophet

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was sitting on his throne, high and exalted, and his robe filled the whole Temple. Around him flaming creatures were standing, each of which had six wings. Each creature covered its face with two wings, and its body with two, and used the other two for flying. They were calling out to each other:

*"Holy, holy, holy!
The Lord Almighty is holy!
His glory fills the world."*

The sound of their voices made the foundation of the Temple shake, and the Temple itself was filled with smoke.

I said, "There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among a people whose every word is sinful. And yet, with my own eyes I have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

Then one of the creatures flew down to me, carrying a burning coal that he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. He touched my lips with the burning coal and said, "This has touched your lips, and now your guilt is gone, and your sins are forgiven."

Then I heard the Lord say, "Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?"

I answered, "I will go! Send me!"

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Hymn: Holy, Holy, Holy

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!*

*Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.*

*Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.*

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!*

Let us pray:

Holy are you, Lord God Almighty.

Holy are you, Jesus Son of God.

Holy are you, Spirit of God.

We are truly blessed that on this day Trinity Sunday we are one in you.

It is you God, Son and Spirit that make our lives complete.

Lord, you gave us the very breath that we take.

You are within us and around us.

Jesus, we thank you for showing us through your life and your teaching how we can make good choices in our lives and encourage others as well.

Holy spirit I don't know at times how to describe you to others, I know that you exist because I can feel your presence.

I'd like to invite you here today but you already are.

Thank you for your calming presence,

Thank you for your energy giving,

Thank you for that fire in our bellies that make us want for more if you in our lives.

God our Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Thank you for your presence with us today.

Amen.



Lord's Prayer

*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.*

Bible Reading: John 3 : 1 - 17

Jesus and Nicodemus

There was a Jewish leader named Nicodemus, who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. One night he went to Jesus and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless God were with him."

Jesus answered, "I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again."

"How can a grown man be born again?" Nicodemus asked. "Certainly he cannot enter his mother's womb and be born a second time!"

"I am telling you the truth," replied Jesus, "that no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. A person is born physically of human parents, but is born spiritually of the Spirit. Do not be surprised because I tell you that you must be born again. The wind blows wherever it wishes; you hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

"How can this be?" asked Nicodemus.

Jesus answered, "You are a great teacher in Israel, and you don't know this? I am telling you the truth: we speak of what we know and report what we have seen, yet none of you is willing to accept our message. You do not believe me when I tell you about the things of this world; how will you ever believe me, then, when I tell you about the things of heaven?"

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And no one has ever gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who came down from heaven."

As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, it is the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him may not die but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its saviour.

Hymn: Immortal, Invisible

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.*

*Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might -
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.*

*To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.*

*Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render: O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.*

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.*

Most of us will want to live simple lives, just 'being'. 'Being' is a word that keeps coming back to me. We have families in whatever shape and form that they are made from. We are who we are with all the different ways we are made.

For example, some of us may like to get up and quite naturally take it slowly, make a brew before taking it back to bed with us or maybe into a different room to get ready for the day ahead. Maybe we enjoy the peace of sitting in our living room and watching the news to see what has happened and is happening in the

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world that day. Or maybe it is our time to meet with God in prayer. No rush, just being.

Some of us may wake up, jump out of bed, do a few star fish exercises and wayhey we're ready to go! We grab a coffee to drink on the way, we may grab something to eat too or we might be so keen to get where we are going that it is lunch time before we actually eat something. Speaking to God on the way to wherever we're going and catching up with the news as we are on the go.

Which of these describe you?
Are you any of these?

It may be that you are like the first example and then something that you think about or feel passionate about makes you sit up quickly and you realise that you need to take action. It may not be the 'normal' everyday person that you are but you feel that that you need to respond at a faster pace than normal, maybe even without thinking about it. If you are someone who likes to take time to think things through then how do you cope with times when you know that you need to respond spontaneously and quickly. Sometimes we need to act quicker than we would normally because of the urgency of the matter but we also need to take time to reflect upon that experience and even justify whether we are being true to what scripture says and also is it in line with our traditions as a church.

Last week was the wonderful day of Pentecost, we celebrated the birth of the church. For some it may have been a let down compared to the 'normal' way we have celebrated Pentecost in the past, instead of being able to raise our arms lifting our banners up high, seeing them wafting in the wind, the band playing wonderful uplifting music for us to walk along through our streets with. It was very different. But on reflection as I have done a lot of almost feeling guilty that it couldn't be like that this year. Reflecting can also be painful too, a painful experience. When we look and see that even if our spirit and minds were willing to do all of the above, would our bodies, for so many of our congregations up and down the country, be able to? Not everyone will agree with me but I love our queen. The strength that she shows to us that comes from within despite all of the experiences that she has had to endure in more recent years. She speaks to us and what she says, for me, brings comfort. I am sure that there are times when she is absolutely elated and maybe some days she has a lot more energy than she portrays in her calmness as she speaks, there's no need to flap her arms around, speak loudly, yet still there is an energy and encouragement that comes from her.

There are times in our lives when we need more energy than others. This isn't always a physical energy that we need to portray. We may not physically be able to do everything that we used to do but does that mean that we show the world our experience of having our Lord Jesus Christ in our lives is something that when we get to a certain age, and I include myself in this, do we show even our fellow worshippers that we have an unmovable faith, one that we can't celebrate

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and pass onto others? A faith that makes us grumpy as we look back to the past instead of rejoicing that we have a future whatever way God chooses for us.

I have a little postcard that a group of Christians gave to me after I had been to share my testimony with them, in fact last Friday was the anniversary of me giving my life to Christ 33 years ago. But back to the little postcard, there are lots of examples of "I am" in the bible especially in the Gospel of John. My little postcard says though:

"I was regretting the past and fearing the future.
Suddenly the Lord was speaking; MY NAME IS "I AM"
When you live in the past, with its mistakes
And regrets, it is hard. I AM NOT THERE.
When you live in the future with its problems
And fears, it is hard. I AM NOT THERE.
WHEN YOU LIVE IN THIS MOMENT
IT IS NOT HARD: I AM HERE."

Today is Trinity Sunday where we sang earlier:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

All thy works shall praise thy name. The work that we do for God doesn't go un-noticed by others. It may go un-noticed by some and we are not and shouldn't be in the habit of waving our hands and trying to attract attention for the work that we are called to do for God. We can celebrate today that each part of the Trinity, God our Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are active and working within us and within the world. At times we will recognise each different part of the Trinity at work in our lives. I loved the conversation with Jesus and Nicodemus this morning.

"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless God were with him."

How do people recognise what we do in the name of Christ? Do we give thanks and praise to God for the work that he has called us to do if even from our front room? Do we show people that the Holy Spirit is working within us? Are we teaching others about God in the way that God has intended us to do or are we way off track? Do we listen to songs and believe that, "I am who I am, I am MY OWN special creation? And "I did it MY Way". They are fantastic songs, in my opinion, to sing along to but are we able to leave the words 'MY WAY' and 'I AM's' in the songs? They speak to so many people.



The Word of God has been spoken to, and by believers as well as non-believers for different purposes. It is important for us to be who we are, to develop and grow as human beings, be a part of our communities, to 'be church' in our communities. It is important for us to be seen 'as one together' and for people to recognise through our actions and our words towards the people who we meet, the people who we live with and the people who we worship with. It is us being kind. Being an active Christian no matter what age we are and what ability we have is surely believing that God is within us and helping us to be church. When I trained as a local preacher in the mid 1990s I learned that the church should be:

Apostolic: Christ gave disciples authority, then sent them on mission - The Great Commission). Then the risen Christ sent his disciples to continue His work.

In the Present: The church should be as Jesus was. At places of need, with people searching, in celebration as well as in places where injustice was happening and suffering was happening.

Active: The church should be active, feeding the hungry, caring for the lost, healing the sick, freeing from sin and evil, struggling for social justice and caring, opposing all who exploit.

The words from Isaiah this morning:

I said, "There is no hope for me! I am doomed because every word that passes my lips is sinful, and I live among a people whose every word is sinful. And yet, with my own eyes I have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."

Then one of the creatures flew down to me, carrying a burning coal that he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. He touched my lips with the burning coal and said, "This has touched your lips, and now your guilt is gone, and your sins are forgiven."

Then I heard the Lord say, "Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?"

I answered, "I will go! Send me!"

Today, we have the help of God our Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit working together, we acknowledge this day, this today on Trinity Sunday. Do we see and practice this through what we have learned through scripture, through our Methodist traditions? Do we take time to listen to reflecting upon and reasoning with what we do, and what we have to do? Our life experiences can be imprinted by others' actions, words and moods even and others' life

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experiences can be imprinted by ours too. Jesus asks Nicodemus a question 'you don't know this?' and then he says 'let me tell you'. Isaiah said "There is no hope for me!" A short while later he was responding to God's question: "Whom shall I send?" Isaiah answered "I will go! Send me!" I will leave you to reflect on this.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray for all people everywhere according to their need.

Let us pray for the Church of Christ

Throughout the world:

For its unity in Christ

For the fulfilment of its mission

For all ministers and preachers of the gospel

For all Christians everywhere

[Silence]

Strengthen your church to carry forward

The work of Christ; that we and all who confess your name may be united in your truth,

Live together in your love,

And reveal your glory in the world.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Let us pray for all the nations and people of the world;

For all who serve the common good

For our own country and government,

And for all in authority

[Silence]

Give wisdom to all in authority;

Direct this nation and all nations in the way

Of justice and peace; that humankind may

Respect one another, and seek the common good.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our Prayer

Let us pray for those we know and love:

For the local community

For our family and friends

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[Silence]

Give grace to us, to our families and friends,
And to all our neighbours in Christ: that we may serve him in one another, and
love as he loves us.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Let us pray for all who suffer:
For the sick
For those who mourn
For those who serve the needy

[Silence]

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

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Let us remember all who have died,
Giving thanks those who have had an influence in our lives including our faith
and those who have simply been lovingly and caring part of our lives in any way.

[Silence]

We commend all humankind to your unfailing love, that in them
Your will may be done;
We rejoice in the faithful witness of your Saints in every age,
Praying that we may share with them in your eternal kingdom.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We offer our prayer to you
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

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Hymn: I the Lord of Sea and Sky.

*I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?*

*Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord,
if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

*I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain;
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?
Here I am, Lord...*

*I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts are satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?
Here I am, Lord...*

Blessing

May the blessing of our Father Son and Holy Spirit
Be with us today and evermore. Amen.



Hymn: Go Peaceful.

*Go peaceful
In gentleness
Through the violence of these days
Give freely
Show tenderness
In all your ways*

*Through darkness
In troubled times
Let holiness be your aim
Seek wisdom
Let faithfulness
Burn like a flame*

*God speed you
God lead you
And keep you wrapped around his heart
May you be known by love*

*Be righteous
Speak truthfully
In a world of greed and lies
Show kindness
See everyone
Through heaven's eyes*

*God hold you
Enfold you
And keep you wrapped around his heart
May you be known by love*

*God speed you
God lead you
And keep you wrapped around his heart*

*May you be known by love
May you be known by love*

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Holy, Holy, Holy - Reginald Heber (1783-1826) (alt.)
Based on Revelation 4:8-11

Immortal, Invisible - Walter Chalmers Smith

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I The Lord of Sea and Sky - Daniel L. Schutte

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