

14 February 2021

Christ Church New Southgate &  
Friern Barnet

Please join with us at 11am to read this service together either in printed form, whatapp or via the youtube link on our website [www.christchurchnsfb.org](http://www.christchurchnsfb.org)

Each person in the church is assigned a deacon who will call you to see if you are alright in these times and to pray for you.

---

Welcome to our service this morning. We begin by reading Psalm 63.

*Reading: Psalm 63.1-4,6-7*

You, God, are my God,  
**earnestly I seek you;**

I thirst for you,  
**my whole being longs for you,**  
in a dry and parched land  
where there is no water.

<sup>2</sup>I have seen you in the sanctuary  
**and beheld your power and your glory.**

<sup>3</sup>Because your love is better than life,  
**my lips will glorify you.**

<sup>4</sup>I will praise you as long as I live,  
**and in your name I will lift up my hands.**

<sup>7</sup>Because you are my help,  
**I sing in the shadow of your wings.**

<sup>8</sup>I cling to you;  
**your right hand upholds me.**

*Song: I stand amazed played by John and Andy  
(from Poynton Baptist)*

I stand amazed in the presence  
of Jesus the Nazarene,  
and wonder how He could love me,  
a sinner, condemned, unclean.

*How marvellous! how wonderful!  
and my song shall ever be:  
How marvellous! how wonderful!  
is my Saviour's love for me!*

He took my sins and my sorrows,  
He made them His very own;  
He bore the burden to Calvary,  
and suffered, and died alone.  
*How marvellous . . .*

When with the ransomed in glory  
His face I at last shall see,  
'twill be my joy through the ages  
to sing of His love for me.  
*How marvellous . . .*

*Reading: Mark 9.2-9 read by Susan Rogers*

<sup>2</sup>Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John, and led them up a high mountain, where they were alone. As they looked on, a change came over Jesus, <sup>3</sup>and his clothes became shining white—whiter than anyone in the world could wash them. <sup>4</sup>Then the three disciples saw Elijah and Moses talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, “Teacher, how good it is that we are here! We will make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” <sup>6</sup>He and the others were so frightened that he did not know what to say.

<sup>7</sup>Then a cloud appeared and covered them with its shadow, and a voice came from the cloud, “This is my own dear Son—listen to him!” <sup>8</sup>They took a quick look around but did not see anyone else; only Jesus was with them.

<sup>9</sup>As they came down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has risen from death.”

*All age game: What's changed?*

We often call this story in the Bible the 'transfiguration' which means a complete change of form of appearance. We're going to play a game called 'what's changed?'. I'd like you to close your eyes and open them and see if you can spot what has changed in my study. Are you ready? No peeking .... Open your eyes. I have changed ... things. Who can spot them the fastest?

TATH activity pack link

[https://af51dd98-adab-4c43-ba03-c87e019551a5.filesusr.com/ugd/ebdd71\\_bc347b765d884763a6b8d9f3bacfe7ed.pdf](https://af51dd98-adab-4c43-ba03-c87e019551a5.filesusr.com/ugd/ebdd71_bc347b765d884763a6b8d9f3bacfe7ed.pdf)

In the activity pack this week, you will find a tent making challenge. Can you build a tent or a den at home? Can you think about what it might be like to meet God like the disciples did and how you might be changed?

Dear God, Thank you that you love us and give us your light. Help us to change as we pray and think about the bible today. Help us shine your light just like Jesus did. Amen.

*Song: This little light of mine*

<https://youtu.be/cKkbIZtqhyQ>

*Confession prayer*

*based on 2 Corinthians 4.3-6*

Loving Lord when we have avoided your presence and ignored your voice  
**please forgive us**

Loving Lord when we have hidden in shame from you  
**please forgive us**

Loving Lord for our failures to share your truth and your light

**please forgive us.**

*Silence*

Gracious God,  
may your light pierce  
through our darkness.

Remind us again  
of your good news  
in the glory of Christ.

Help us to share  
our love of Jesus.

You said: "Out of the darkness the light shall shine."  
May your light shine in our hearts.  
Give us knowledge of your glory,  
And so see the very face of Christ.  
Amen.

*Sermon*

I've always liked walking, but of late it has taken on a whole new meaning. Jesus suggested a walk, and I happily joined them, thinking he meant our normal stroll round the duckpond. But he actually led us up a super high mountain. I was not wearing the right kind of shoes. We all trekked up there together, Jesus, Peter, John and me.

Jesus led the way. He always led the way. He was good company, easy to be with and so interesting to talk to. He taught me, he cared for me, we had a laugh but his generosity and love changed me entirely.

I had guessed Jesus would have had a reason for taking us all the way up there, but he didn't give us the plan. He was always saying to the people he healed – don't tell anyone, my time has not yet come.

We got there, hot, sweaty and very much in need of a brew and all of a sudden Jesus changed. He sort of morphed into a more shiny, dazzling version of himself. Like Cinderella, rags one minute, and ballgown the next. Normal looking one minute, and the next : so bright we couldn't look up.

He was dazzling, so very bright. It was a bit like when there's a solar eclipse. Everyone knows you're supposed to find a flat bit of ground and put some cotton clothing on it and look it that way – so you don't hurt your eyes, but every part of you wants to squeak a peek at the real thing? It was like that, when we closed our eyes, we could still see the brightness behind our eyelids.

John has started his gospel in very trendy kind of way, a mystic moment he calls it. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out. I think we saw that light that day. I think we saw some of heavens light, we got a glimpse of heaven. No more than a glimpse, a massive peek. Ah – on a mountain peak. We're calling it our mountaintop experience.

We have these moments in our lives don't we? When we realise through every fibre of our being that God is in the house? When we realise that God is real and that son of God is standing right in front of us ? What do you do? You can't do anything except crumble inside. The day we saw Jesus we even forgot to kneel. We were simple awestruck by God's glory. God's glory is something to behold, his light pierces every darkness we have and those we don't know we have. His light brings new life, love and warmth.

You know Peter wasn't a total wally for suggesting the tents. To be honest I was glad he said something, as we weren't capable of stringing two words together. It was amazing to see Moses and Elijah, it was as if by their presence they were giving Jesus a pep talk,

like a coach does before a big game. I imagine Moses was saying "well God's led his people before, I've taught them every rule they needed to know". And then Elijah – pipes up and says – "yup and I told them everything God told me, they know God's plan of salvation for the world – so go get them". And as soon as we saw them they were gone. To be honest I've been trying to make sense of what I saw ever since.

But it was the cloud that made the difference for me. Clouds have always been part of our stories about God. When Moses went up the mountain – see mountain again, nice link eh? There was a cloud that surrounded him and that's when he got the 10 commandments. Then later on when my people were in the desert, lost and wandering around like nitwits, God provided a cloud to lead us. A cloud is a sign of God's presence to us.

Do you ever feel like God can be present in a cloud? As a child I wanted to jump from cloud to cloud, but as an adult I know this isn't possible. Clouds are part of creation, they are how water moves across the planet. They are not solid but purposeful. You cannot grasp them, or contain them, or lasso them from the earth. They are powerful.

We know that when we see clouds, it's going to rain. Rain in these parts is good news, it means our crops can grow, it means our wells are filled, it means we can live and flourish. What do clouds mean to you? Have you ever known God's blessing or presence in a cloud? When the cloud came, its shadow covered us. Our mountaintop day was incredible, but that shadow came just at the right time, it was almost too much to comprehend. Suddenly the gentle grey granted us a time of reorientation.

It reminded me of something else Jesus said: How I have longed to gather you like a hen covers her chicks. Or from the psalms - living

under the shadow of his wing – we find security. God was offering us space to breathe in his cloud's shadow. He offered us time to understand how God might be at work in this shadow and space enough to hear him speak. And then we heard it. A voice from that cloud 'this is my own dear son – listen to him!' We were just normal people from normal places. We'd followed Jesus and all honesty hadn't understood fully what we had gotten involved with.

Peter had said – Jesus you are messiah the week before. Jesus hadn't exactly confirmed it but talked about how much suffering the son of man would face. But the rest of us still weren't quite sure. But after seeing the cloud and hearing God speak, hearing his voice. It still amazes me that God chose to speak to us. He called us to listen to him, to listen to Jesus. I was sure that listening was just hearing till then, but then I realised that listening to Jesus actually involved my entire life.

Clouds appear in God's story at important times, when we need God's presence but don't realise it. When we are stuck wandering around and need a guiding and leading presence. And sometimes like on that mountain, a cloud so engulfs us that we can do nothing but listen to God. We had to surrender to that cloud. We couldn't push it away, and in the moment that it gave us, we heard properly for the first time the key to all of life, in clouds and sunny skies. Listen to Jesus. Listen when its cloudy, listen when you don't understand what's going on, listen, listen, and know God's voice speaking afresh.

His voice sealed the deal.

Look the reality is that it's kinda awkward to talk about these kinds of experiences because people think you're daft. But I know that Jesus is the son of God because I heard God say it to me. Some people have dreams about

God and turn their life around. Some people take a walk on beach and pray and that's it. Some people are in the lowest valley you can imagine, at the point of death, of total despair, in the wilds of depression, addiction, loneliness and boom an experience of the glory of God transforms them.

Then as quick as it came, the cloud left. Moses and Elijah disappeared. And we were just left with Jesus. Left with Jesus - that's not a bad situation to be in you know. But you can't live forever on a mountaintop. Everyone has to walk down to the valley, but we walked down with Jesus. He came down with us, he came down to us, to be with us. And he's never left my side – cloud or not. Let us listen to Jesus.

### *Reflection*

I invite you to reflect on lockdown as if it were like a cloud. Might it be a heavy fog? Take a moment to jot down a prayer, you can write in the shape of a cloud if you wish. Consider – how has God been speaking to you in lockdown? In what ways have you experienced being in shadow or light? What might the Spirit be leading you to now? How can God's shadow cloud restore or energise you?

### *Intercession*

Almighty God, at the Transfiguration you showed your son Jesus in a new state of glory and gave His disciples a glimpse of what they would see in his risen life. As we worship together week by week help us to get a glimpse of your heavenly kingdom, as well as a deeper understanding of how your son Jesus can transfigure our broken and unfulfilled lives.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for all who are affected with illness, grief or despair. Bring healing to every broken life, relief to all who are in pain, hope to the dying and strength to all who care for them.

In a moment of silence, please pray for one person that you know who is in particular need of God's help today.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

God of wisdom, we pray for the USA as the case regarding the impeachment of Donald Trump is heard and debated. We pray for peace, justice and calm.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

We remember those planning to move from Hong Kong to the UK now or very soon. We pray that you will bless them as they travel and that we would welcome all to our country with the Christian responsibility of hospitality.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

We remember ordinary citizens of Myanmar, protesting against military actions asking for the release of detained elected leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi. As one of their banners read, we pray for justice. Grant this country lord, your peace, your truth and your courage.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, as we move into the coming week, help us to take with us all that we have heard during our time together; may those words be grafted onto our hearts and produce in us the fruits of your Spirit, to the praise and honour of your Holy Name. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## *Notices*

- Church Members meeting 28 Feb 2021 12noon on Zoom instead of coffee and prayer.
- Lent – you should have received a lent prayer reading guide which provides all of the bible readings from *Worship in the Wilderness* for you to follow. Please read these over lent and join us on Thursdays for evening prayer on zoom as well.
- There are just a few *Worship in the Wilderness* books left, if you would like one please contact me and I will send one to you.
- For children this lent we are using Easter calendars, which guides a family through the story of Jesus using stickers and a great map. Please do let me know if you have not yet received this.

## *Blessing*

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine on you,  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face towards you  
and give you peace;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you  
always. Amen.