



Heacham Parish Church



**Sunday Service 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent**

*Hilary and Lesley play 'Lord you have my heart' and 'May the fragrance of Jesus' on their recorders.*

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

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God, so let us come together to be God's people.

This is the day the Lord has made

**Let us rejoice and be glad in it**

Loving God we have come to worship you

**Help us to pray to you in faith,**

**To sing your praise with gratitude,**

**And to listen to your word with eagerness;**

**through Christ our Lord. Amen**

*Prayers of confession and absolution*

Paul says: 'Be imitators of God; love as Christ loved;

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit; put away all anger and bitterness, all

slander and malice.' So, let us confess our sins to God, who forgives us in Christ.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight.**

**We are sorry and repent.**

**Have mercy on us according to your love.**

**Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.**

**Renew a right spirit within us and restore to us the joy of your salvation,**

**Through Jesus Christ our lord. Amen**

May we know that the God of love  
brings us back to himself,  
forgives us our sins,  
and assures us of his eternal love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Song: Christ is made the sure foundation**

sung & played by Hilary, Lesley, Sue, Judith and Richards G and C

Christ is made the sure foundation,  
Christ, the head and cornerstone,  
Chosen of the Lord and precious,  
Binding all the Church in one;  
Holy Zion's help forever  
And her confidence alone.

To this temple, where we call You,  
Come, O Lord of hosts, and today;  
You have promised loving kindness,  
Hear Your servants as we pray;  
Bless your people now before you  
turn our darkness into day.

Hear the cry of all your people,  
What they ask and hope to gain;  
What they gain from you, for ever  
With your chosen to retain  
And hereafter in your glory  
Evermore with you to reign.

Praise and honour to the Father,  
Praise and honour to the Son,  
Praise and honour to the Spirit,  
Ever three and ever one:  
One in might and one in glory  
While unending ages run!

Bible Reading: John 2: 13-22 read by Sue T

**A Reflection** by Peter Murray

Jesus cleanses the Temple

Welcome, dear feast of Lent:  
Who loves not thee,  
He loves not Temperance, or authority,  
But is composed of passion.

We usually associate the season of Lent with a time of fasting rather than a feast. The 17<sup>th</sup> Century Anglican poet, George Herbert, described it in the words above. Herbert is saying that we do well to observe Lent by seeing it as an opportunity to walk in Christ's way and so be drawn closer to him. And though the whole poem is about the value and significance of fasting, he develops the idea of fasting being about feasting!

The term Lent comes from the Germanic word for springtime, so the season gives us space for some spiritual spring-cleaning – a time to rid ourselves of all that hinders our relationship with the Lord and to feast on God's love, grace, and mercy. Herbert, in his poem, shows us that by "starving sin", we discover the real feast of life. Lent is a welcome feast.

Speaking of spring-cleaning, this surely seems to be what was going on in the temple, according to today's reading. 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild' does not appear in the passage. He is angry – very, angry. Things had got out of hand in the temple, the major centre of worship. Every pious Jew made the journey to it when it was possible, even if only once in a lifetime. But the temple had been desecrated. People had forgotten its true purpose.

The story of Jesus cleansing the Temple appears in all four gospels. In John's gospel we find it at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. In the others it appears during Holy Week at the end. John puts it where he does to emphasise Jesus' challenge to the people's apathy towards God and to renew the faith. It was a necessary spring clean.

It was not so much to do with the animals being bought and sold, and coins being changed. That has always been happening. Jesus was

familiar with the law and the way things operated in the temple. The trouble was that the system had become corrupt. All devout Jews were required to pay a temple tax. Most of them didn't carry temple coinage, so the currencies had to be changed. By the time Jesus visited the temple people were being exploited by the practice which had developed into a money-making racket. Also, any blemishes on an animal meant that another would have to be purchased at an extortionate price. The whole business was a glaring social injustice, perpetrated in the name of religion.

Jesus went on to demonstrate that his coming to the earth would abolish the need for a physical temple. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 we read that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit. During this "dear feast of Lent" we are challenged to drive out all that hinders our spiritual well-being with the same vehemence that characterised the incident in the temple in Jerusalem.

**Song: As the Deer Pants**

sung & played by Lynda, Rosie, Colin, Karen, Terry, Lesley and Hilary

As the deer pants for the water,  
so my soul longs after You,  
You alone are my heart's desire,  
and I long to worship You.

*You alone are my strength, my shield,  
to You alone may my spirit yield.  
You alone are my heart's desire,  
and I long to worship You.*

I want You more than gold or silver,  
only You can satisfy.  
You alone are the real joy giver,  
and the apple of my eye.

You alone are.....

You're my friend and You are my Brother,  
even though You are a King,  
I love You more than any other,  
so much more than anything.

You alone are.....

You alone are....

*Prayers of Intercession* led by Veronica Wilson

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,  
let us pray to the Father.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith.

We pray for all of your Church in the service of Christ, that those who confess your name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world. This Lent may we be sustained and focused on you, serving you and sharing your love to those around us.

Bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen; give wisdom to all in authority; and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace; that we may honour one another and seek the common good.

In this time of pandemic, we pray for our government and its advisors, as prepare to come out of lockdown give them wisdom we pray.

Give grace to us, our families, and friends, and to all our neighbours, that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us. We pray for our village of Heacham, for all who live and work here, we give thanks for the sense of community and the care for each other which has been seen in the last year, may we continue to be good neighbours.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, we pray for all who are struggling at this time, and in a moment of quiet we name them before God ..... give them courage and hope in their troubles and give them your peace. We pray for those who care for others, asking for patience and strength when it is tough.

We remember those who have died both the many who have died from Coronavirus in the last year, and those who have died from other causes. We give thanks for the memories we have of those we have known and loved. We pray for those who are bereaved by their loss, give them your peace, and help them to know your love for them.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints,  
we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.  
**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ, Amen**

**We pray together the Lord's Prayer:** led by Craig

*Closing prayers*

In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy,  
Help us, heavenly father,  
To trust your love, to serve your purpose,  
And to praise your name;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

May God give to you and to all those you love his comfort and his peace,  
His light and his joy, in this world and the next;  
and the blessing of Almighty God, Father Son and Holy Spirit, be with  
you and those you love now and always **Amen**

*Lesley and Hilary play 'Lord I lift your name on high'*

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