

The Fifth Sunday in Lent '*Passion Sunday*'

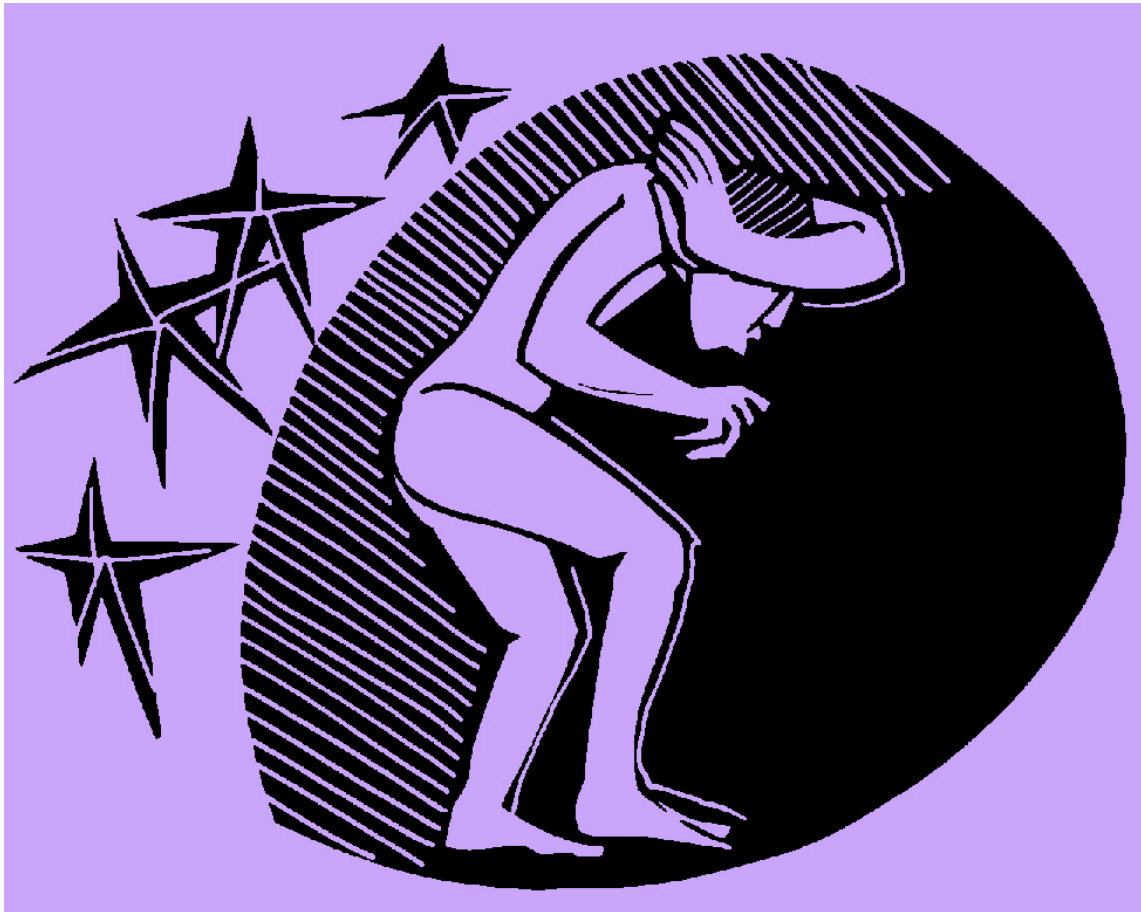
Sermons, Readings and Hymns

for

**The Order for the Administration of
The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion**

and

A Shorter Form Service of the Word



HYMN My God, How Wonderful Thou Art

1. My God, how wonderful Thou art,
Thy majesty how bright;
How beautiful Thy mercy seat
In depths of burning light!
2. How dread are Thy eternal years,
O everlasting Lord,
By prostrate spirits day and night
Incessantly adored!
3. How wonderful, how beautiful,
The sight of Thee must be;
Thy endless wisdom, boundless power,
And glorious purity!
4. O how I fear Thee, living God,
With deep and tender fear;
And worship Thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears!
5. Yet, I may love Thee, too, O Lord,
Almighty as Thou art;
For Thou hast stooped to ask of me
The love of my poor heart!
6. No earthly father loves like Thee,
No mother, e'er so mild,
Bears and forbears as Thou hast done,
With me, Thy sinful child.
7. Father of Jesus, love's Reward!
What rapture it will be
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie,
And gaze, and gaze on Thee!
Meter: CM

My God, How Wonderful Thou Art

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EPISTLE

The reader says

The Epistle is written in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews beginning at the 5th verse.

⁵So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. ⁶As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. ⁷Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; ⁸Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; ⁹And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; ¹⁰Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Here endeth the Epistle.

Hebrews 5.5-10

HYMN AT HOLY COMMUNION Glory be to Jesus

- 1 Glory be to Jesus,
who, in bitter pains,
poured for me the life-blood
from his sacred veins.
- 2 Grace and life eternal
in that blood I find;
blest be his compassion
infinitely kind.
- 3 Blest through endless ages
be the precious stream,
which from endless torments
did the world redeem.
- 4 Abel's blood for vengeance
pleaded to the skies;
but the blood of Jesus
for our pardon cries.
- 5 Oft as it is sprinkled
on our guilty hearts,
Satan in confusion
terror-struck departs.
- 6 Oft as earth exulting
wafts its praise on high,
angel-hosts rejoicing
make their glad reply.
- 7 Lift ye then your voices;
swell the mighty flood;
louder still and louder
praise the precious blood.

Meter: 65 65.

Glory be to Jesus

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Hymn in the Service of the Word: Breathe on Me Breath of God

- 1 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.
- 2 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.
- 3 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
till all this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.
- 4 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

Meter: SM

Breathe On Me Breath Of God (SoW)
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GOSPEL

The holy Gospel is written in the 12th chapter of the Gospel according to Saint John, beginning at the 20th verse.

All **Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

²⁰Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. ²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus.’ ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour. ²⁷‘Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say – “Father, save me from this hour”? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to him.’

³⁰Jesus answered, ‘This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. ³¹Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.’ ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

John 12.20-33

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to thee, O Christ.

Sermon the Licensed Lay Minister at Holy Communion Service

“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

Jesus is a model for us, on which to base the way we live and the way we die.

He lived for us to teach us how to live a life in God’s kingdom, good in God’s eyes, good for those around us and ultimately good for ourselves.

We should, of course, be thankful for his life and do our best to live as he did and base our lives on his teachings.

Jesus died for all of us so that if we follow him we might be forgiven for our sins and live forever with God. Like the grain of wheat, he fell to the ground and died. We should be thankful for his death. And we should also be prepared to die, not perhaps literally, as he did, though the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, but nevertheless, in various ways, to die to ourselves so that the gospel might spread. Today I want to focus on what we might be prepared to die to in our worship, to spread the gospel better.

The most important job of Christians is to spread the gospel, to help God to bring others to Jesus. We are the only way this can happen. Jesus is no longer on earth, so the job is left to us, the body of Christ, the Church. We are Jesus’s hands and feet. What we do and what we say.

We are the Church. To be precise, we are the Church of England. The Church of England at the moment is, or should be, in a period of mission. Of course, this should always, to some extent, be the case, but for many years, we were a basically Christian country, and the Church maintained the status quo, admittedly doing a lot of good, but not necessarily in a missional sense, at least not in this country. But now this is not enough. We need to find new, culturally appealing ways to introduce Jesus to our community. For some years the Anglican Church has been involved in something called “fresh expressions”, trying to find new ways to get the message across, which has had some success.

I believe that to bring the church to our local community those of us who know Jesus might have to die to ourselves in a number of ways. Please note that I am not attempting in this talk to suggest ways forward, merely to think about our personal attitudes to dying to some established practices and views.

We need to be prepared to die to our comfort zones and traditions. There is nothing bad about traditions *per se*. They can be an enjoyable and meaningful part of life. It is when they become so entrenched that they become the focus of our worship, rather than God, that they are a problem. Society is changing. We need to change some of the traditions in our churches. Do you know the song from the “Fiddler on the Roof” - “Tradition.... Tradition....Tradition ”? That says it all. And also, if something is always the same, might it not lose its impact?

Think, for example of our music. I am into classical music. Many are not. I like some Victorian hymns. Many do not. We have a lovely choir, which is actually quite flexible. However, I can never forget when our last rector played his guitar once in a church service and one member of the congregation was so upset that the rector never played again. Is that really a good thing?

Perhaps we need to be prepared occasionally to die to our liturgy. It is beautiful, comforting and theologically true, but it is not how people usually speak. It is telling them what they must say, expressing concepts they might not understand. By rote. We understand it. We are comfortable with it. What about everyone else?

This is hard. Would we be prepared to die to our beautiful church buildings? Yes they are beautiful. And the new building in Droxford Church is great. And hopefully is already having some missional effect. Yes, our churches have had Christians worshipping in them for hundreds of years. Yes, they are architecturally important, and I hope they will survive. But it is such a job keeping ancient buildings going. And there are so many organisations concerned with conservation. So many hoops, so much bureaucracy. Old, listed buildings eat up money and energy that some would argue could be used in better ways. And they can be intimidating and off-putting for younger generations. And they can distract us from God. Paul said in 1, Corinthians, that we are God’s temple. Us. Yes, buildings can be wonderful, but should be our servants, not our masters.

I love our cathedrals. Yet, during lockdown, Tony has done some really lovely outdoor services, which had a certain sense of freedom. And the most famous sermon ever was on a mountain top!

Just ask yourself: would you still worship God in a village hall? Or a school? Or a disused garage? Just ask. Then you will know where your priority lies.

I am not saying anything that has not been said often before. Just asking, would we be prepared to die to our own comfort zones? For the sake of others?

We must die to ourselves in order to live in Christ in lots of ways. And perhaps we must be prepared to die to ourselves, just sometimes, in the context of Church worship. In other words, we need to care more about bringing Jesus to others in ways that they can accept than we care about worshipping in the way that we like.

What happens to us personally in this life should not, in theory, matter too much because we are really not here for all that long. It is hard to make eternity our focus, but it should be.

Jesus said, in the gospel of Matthew, “Every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his store room new treasures as well as old.”

Let us pray.

Dear Lord, thank you that you died for us and rose again and made it possible for us to have new life in you. May we find effective ways of being church, particularly in the way we worship, that will attract our neighbours. If that means we occasionally have to sacrifice something to which we are attached, then please fill us with your Spirit and enable us to do it with love. For your sake.

Amen

SERMON BY THE RECTOR AT THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Lord, through the intercession of your holy spirit, and your grace, let us too, ‘see Jesus’, your living word. Amen

The text of today’s Gospel narrative of Jesus suffering in Gethsemane is situated dramatically in the context of the festival of the Passover; preceded by events such as the raising of Lazarus, Mary anointing Jesus’ feet, and the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The responses to these events are intensely divided, as crowds of people form to hear Jesus; while others plot to destroy him, and some of his disciples become more reverent, within the heart of one of them, Judas, irritation escalates.

Momentum builds in this narrative, as all eyes – including those of some Gentiles – strive to focus on Jesus. The scene is strikingly shaped for a powerful statement by Jesus to his disciples regarding not only what is to happen, but also what it means. One. More. Time...he tries to tell them what his mission really is.

The hour has come, says Jesus. It is an hour to which his whole life has been leading, an hour in which he is to be glorified. It is clearly important to him that his disciples have some understanding of this hour, yet what he offers them is an oddly jarring proverb.

Grains of wheat must in a sense die to what they are if they are not to remain alone and fruitless. And so it is that we must also, in a sense, die to our love for our own lives, lest in loving ourselves above all else we lose our life and paradoxically destroy ourselves.

This hour of which Jesus speaks, then, sounds like a cautionary and foreboding tale of diminishment, destruction and loss – even though it may have a happy ending. Indeed, as the hour comes, Jesus says that his ‘very soul is troubled’.

Yet he will not ask to be spared this hour, for it bears the reason of his life. In Gethsemane, we ache with him...

Here we have a central revelation of God’s wisdom and action to those who can understand it. Yet grasping it, as the words were spoken, appeared beyond the capability of Jesus’ closest disciples, and it

would prove through the centuries to be no less difficult for theologians – or simple believers like me to explain!

Yet in the end, with the experiences of Jesus' resurrection and the coming of the Spirit, the disciples did come to understand it; and – when we are *able* to explain it well enough - believers have grasped it without exhausting its mystery. Theologians continue to struggle with its articulation.

So, let's move away from what we don't know, and try to make sense of what we do know.

The 'hour' is the time of Jesus' completion of his mission. It is the time of his absolute and salvific surrender to the God whom he calls Abba – Father.

There has been much talk through the centuries as we try to make sense of Jesus' saving action as a sacrifice on the order of a blood offering to an offended and angry God, a price exacted in order to reverse a catastrophic disobedience somewhere in the depths of human hearts of the past and present.

But the tradition has not been satisfied with this way of explaining the 'hour' of Jesus' ignominy and glory, for it does not adequately reflect the God revealed in and by Jesus Christ as a God of mercy and love. Could we argue that the initiative for reconciliation comes from God's own self?

The 'no' of humanity with its resulting radical incapacity to reverse itself, could be changed only by the 'yes' of God, but this yes must rise also TO God out of the genuinely human.

The fourth Gospel makes it clear that the incarnation of God is the first movement in God's action to reconcile humanity to God Himself; it is an action of self-emptying which will be accomplished in a final free, surrendering love.

Hence the 'hour' in the end is not unexplained, The God who became human will effect an action of ultimate love by dying on the cross of human existence.

In the end by his actions, Jesus gathers up the whole of his own human existence, takes to himself the whole of the human situation, makes possible the 'yes' of humans into an unending future and reveals the kind of God whose love can no longer be questioned.

No matter what the forces of evil will do to Jesus they will not take from his heart his love for God. The hour of utter self-abandonment, and acceptance even of abandonment by God – the hour of love that holds 'no matter what' is a consummation.

A human 'yes' forever sealed in death, meets the divine 'yes' and neither will be revoked.

Within the mystery of salvation and ultimate glory, there lies one more message for the disciples of Jesus. They will also be asked to drink the same cup Jesus drinks, to carry the same cross, to make the same absolute surrender – to God.

The cross symbolises the above all else the salvific 'yes' of Jesus, but also the potential participation of all human beings in the new life of Jesus the Christ.

'...and I, when I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself'.

By the cross, life and love are offered to Jesus' disciples, and the cross in this sense constitutes both an appeal and a demand; it attracts and it heals,

so that the demand can be fulfilled. Jesus' action is not a private action; his life is his own but so are we 'his own' and in his life we abide. Cross and resurrection, suffering and transformation, loss of life but faithful love:

'if the grain of wheat dies, it bears much fruit'.

Therefore, believing this, the followers of Jesus can come to trust to the 'hour' by the which they – by which we – must share.

Amen

HYMN Lift High the Cross

Refrain:

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
'til all the world adores his sacred name.*

1. Come, brethren, follow where our captain trod,
our King victorious, Christ the Son of God. *Refrain:*
2. Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine. *Refrain:*
3. Each new-born soldier of the Crucified
bears on his brow the seal of him who died. *Refrain:*
4. This is the sign which Satan's legions fear
and angels veil their faces to revere: *Refrain:*
5. Saved by the cross whereon their Lord was slain
the sons of Adam their lost home regain. *Refrain:*

6. From north and south, from east and west they raise
in growing unison their song of praise. *Refrain:*
7. O Lord once lifted on the glorious tree
as thou hast promised, draw us unto thee. *Refrain:*
8. Let every race and every language tell
of him who saves our souls from death and hell. *Refrain:*
9. From farthest regions let them homage bring
and on his cross adore their Saviour King. *Refrain:*
10. Set up thy throne, that earth's despair may cease
beneath the shadow of its healing peace. *Refrain:*
11. For thy blest cross which doth for all atone
creation's praises rise before thy throne:
*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
'til all the world adores his sacred name.*

Meter: 10 10 and Refrain

Lift High The Cross

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POST COMMUNION HYMN Ah Holy Jesu How Hast Thou Offended?

- 1 Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended,
that man to judge thee hath in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by thine own rejected,
O most afflicted.
- 2 Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee.
'Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee:
I crucified thee.
- 3 Lo, the Good Shepherd for the sheep is offered;
the slave hath sinned, and the Son hath suffered;
for our atonement, while we nothing heedeth,
God intercedeth.
- 4 For me, kind Jesus, was thy incarnation,
thy mortal sorrow, and thy life's oblation;
thy death of anguish and thy bitter passion,
for my salvation.
- 5 Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay thee,
I do adore thee, and will ever pray thee,
think on thy pity and thy love unswerving,
not my deserving.

Meter: 11 11 11 5

Ah Holy Jesu How Hast Thou Offended?

Based on an 11th Century meditation

(Johann Heermann (1585 – 1647))

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HERZLIEBSTER JESU

Johann Crüger (1598 – 1662)

Arr: Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

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HYMN O Love How Deep

- 1 O love, how deep, how broad, how high!
How passing thought and fantasy,
That God, the Son of God, should take
Our mortal form for mortals' sake!
- 2 He sent no angel to our race
Of higher power or lower place,
But wore the robe of human frame
Himself, and this lost world came.
- 3 For us baptized, for us he bore
His holy fast and hunger sore;
For us temptations sharp he knew,
For us the tempter overthrew.
- 4 For us to wicked men betrayed,
Scourged, mocked, in crown of thorns arrayed;
For us he bore the cross's death,
For us at length gave up his breath.

- 5 For us he rose from death again,
For us he went on high to reign;
For us he sent his Spirit here
To guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.
- 6 All honour, laud, and glory be,
O Jesus, virgin-born, to thee;
whom with the Father we adore,
and Holy Ghost, forevermore.

Meter: LM

O Love How Deep!

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Opening Voluntary:

OLD HUNDRETH (Holy Communion)

Louis Bourgeois (c.1510 – c.1561)

Source: Hymnal: Genevan Psalter, (1551)

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ST HUGH (Shorter form Service of the Word)

Edward John Hopkins (1818 – 1901)

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Ah Holy Jesu How Hast Thou Offended?

Based on an 11th Century meditation

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O Love How Deep!

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Closing Voluntary

Little Prelude and Fugue #1 in C (BWV 553)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 -1750) – BWV 553. One of the eight little preludes and fugues attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach but probably written by a pupil, Johann Tobias Krebs or Johann Ludwig Krebs. Performance © 2018 Richard M S Irwin. Certain Rights Reserved.

CAMBERWELL

John Michael Brierley (b. 1932).

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