

Second Sunday in Lent 13 March 2022

Welcome

Call to Worship - 'It is good to praise the Lord  
and make music to Your Name,  
O Most High.  
To proclaim Your love in the morning  
and Your faithfulness at night.'  
(Psalm 92 v 1 - 2)

**Hymn 153 - Great is Thy faithfulness**

Great is Thy Faithfulness O God my Father  
There is no shadow of turning with Thee  
Thou changest not Thy compassions they fail not  
As Thou has been Thou for ever wilt be

*Great is Thy faithfulness, Great is Thy faithfulness  
Morning by morning new mercies I see  
All I have needed Thy hand has provided  
Great is Thy faithfulness Lord unto me*

Summer and winter and spring-time and harvest  
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above  
Join with all nature in manifold witness  
To Thy great faithfulness mercy and love  
*Great is Thy faithfulness . . .*

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide  
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow  
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside  
*Great is Thy faithfulness . . .*

Thomas O.Chrisholm (1866-1960)

Prayer and Lord's Prayer (debts)

Lord God, we praise and honour Your Holy Name.

We proclaim Your love in the morning  
and Your faithfulness at night.

You have made us glad Lord, by all that you have done,  
we sing for joy at the work of Your hands.

All that you have done is great Lord.

Let us exalt Your Name forever.

You are our Rock in times of trouble.

We can always rely on You.

You reign as our King.

You are robed in majesty and armed with strength.

You are completely trustworthy and will never let us down.

Today we gather together in Your Name

To bring You our worship

To learn from Your Word

To pray for those around us and those far away.

Forgive us Lord for the times we have let You down

For those times when we thought only about ourselves  
and what we wanted.

Lord, we are sorry for these times

Help us to learn from the mistakes we have made

And to put into practice the ways in which You are calling us to live.

Help us always to look to Jesus Your Son

and learn from Him how to serve You and others  
in our daily lives.

Receive now our offerings as we bring them to You

in thanks for all that You are

and all that You continue to do in our lives

and in the lives of others.

Use our gifts as You see fit

And hear us as we pray together  
in the words which Jesus has taught us:

(Lord's Prayer - debts)

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.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom the power and the glory,

for ever. Amen

**Old Testament Reading - Isaiah 61 v 1- 3 (New International Version) - Donella McCann**

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,

because the LORD has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

to proclaim freedom for the captives

and release from darkness for the prisoners,<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor

and the day of vengeance of our God,

to comfort all who mourn,

<sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion—

to bestow on them a crown of beauty

instead of ashes,

the oil of joy

instead of mourning,

and a garment of praise

instead of a spirit of despair.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,

a planting of the LORD  
for the display of his splendor.

### **Hymn 277 - Hark the glad sound! the Saviour comes**

Hark, the glad sound! The Saviour comes,  
The Saviour promised long;  
Let every heart exult with joy,  
And every voice be song!

He comes, the prisoners to relieve,  
In Satan's bondage held;  
The gates of brass before him burst,  
The iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken hearts to bind,  
The bleeding souls to cure;  
And with the treasures of his grace  
To enrich the humble poor.

The sacred year has now revolved,  
Accepted of the Lord,  
When heaven's high promise is fulfilled,  
And Israel is restored.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,  
Thy welcome shall proclaim;  
And heaven's exalted arches ring  
With thy most honoured Name

Scottish Paraphrases, 1781

### **Prayer - (Fan Heafield)**

Ashkirk linked with Ettrick and Yarrow linked with Selkirk

God of creation, God of the parted seas and the miracle birth, the empty tomb and the risen King.

Help me to see myself as part of your story.

Wash away any shame or fear that is holding me back, declare over me again that I am a new creation in you, Lord. Show me the areas of my life where I need to prune, so I can walk in greater freedom with you.

Lord, for out of your love you have made all things

You come to us and give yourself to us. Help us to be aware of your love in our lives

And to give ourselves to you in love and in doing your will.

Lord as you live in us let our lives show your love. We remember all Christians who are being persecuted or have to suffer scorn or tragedy. We pray for all who witness you through danger and opposition.

Loving God, we pray for the people of the Ukraine, for all those suffering or afraid, that you will be close to them and protect them.

We pray for world leaders, for compassion, strength and wisdom to guide their choices.

We pray for the world that in this moment of crisis, we may reach out in solidarity to our brothers and sisters in need.

May we walk in your ways so that peace and justice become a reality for the people of Ukraine and for all the world.

Lord, we remember all the places where people are suffering from tyranny and lawlessness. We pray for all who are oppressed or used by others. We ask your blessing on all who strive for justice, freedom peace and fair trade.

Lord, may our homes reflect the love we share,

Keep us sensitive to the needs of others, may we be ready to take our share of the work in our homes.

We remember before you all who feel unloved and unwanted.

We ask your blessing upon all who are without shelter or are refugees

And we pray for all who are suffering from broken trust.

Lord of light, we ask your blessing upon all who are struggling with darkness and fear. We remember those who have been involved in accidents or in acts which are misunderstood.

We pray for all who are confused and anxious about what is expected of them and ask that their commitment to your message and love is reinforced.

Loving God, how lavishly you pour out the costly gift of your grace upon us.

Fill our homes and our lives with the fragrance of your love, so that we may show your glory and serve your people.

Blessed Father, of the most expensive gift all, help us to learn from you.

May we, who are so adept at catering for our own wants,  
make ourselves more vulnerable to the needs of others.

Let us live unselfishly and more sensitively, that we may spread love's fragrance  
wherever the odour cynicism and despair hangs in the air.

Through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen

### **HYMN 375**

1. Fairest Lord Jesus,  
ruler of all nature,  
O thou of God and Man the Son;  
thee will I cherish,  
thee will I honour,  
thou my soul's glory, joy, and crown.

2. Fair are the meadows,  
fairer still the woodlands,  
robed in the verdure and bloom of spring,  
Jesus is fairer,  
Jesus is purer,  
he makes the saddest heart to sing,

Fair are the flowers  
Fairer still the sons of men  
In all the freshness of youth arrayed  
Yet is their beauty  
Fading and fleeting  
Lord Jesus, Thine will never fade

3. Fair is the sunshine,  
fairer still the moonlight,  
and fair the twinkling starry host;  
Jesus shines brighter,  
Jesus shines purer  
than all the stars that heaven can boast.

**Bible Teaching** - 'Jesus is anointed by an unnamed woman' Matthew 26 v 6 - 13 (GNB)

On this, the second Sunday in Lent, we look together this morning at one of the people whom Jesus meet on His way to the cross.

An unnamed person, whom He encountered in a very memorable and unforgettable way.

Now often when we think of Jesus, we think of Him being surrounded by men - the 12 disciples.

But here it is a woman whom Jesus encounters. And women played a very big part in Jesus' life.

Writing about this, one Biblical scholar states:

“Although the threat to their safety may have not been so great, the women around Jesus nevertheless put the men to shame when it came to standing up for Him before others and living out their faith.”

In Mark's Gospel, he tells us that it was Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James & Joseph, Salome, and many other women who looked on at a distance when Jesus was crucified.

Matthew tells us that it was Mary Magdalene and 'the other Mary' who sat at the tomb when the stone was rolled over the entrance and Jesus was buried. And that it was the same two Marys who went to the tomb on Easter Sunday.

And now we have the story of an unnamed woman and how she showed her love and commitment to God's only Son.

**READ: MATTHEW 26 v 6 - 13 from the Good News Bible.** 6 Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon, a man who had suffered from a dreaded skin disease. 7 While Jesus was eating, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar filled with an expensive perfume, which she poured on his head. 8 The disciples saw this and became angry. "Why all this waste?" they asked. 9 "This perfume could have been sold for a large amount and the money given to the poor!"

10 Jesus knew what they were saying, and so he said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? It is a fine and beautiful thing that she has done for me. 11 You will always have poor people with you, but you will not always have me. 12 What she did was to pour this perfume on my body to get me ready for burial. 13 Now, I assure you that wherever this gospel is preached all over the world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Now Jesus was in Bethany, just a few miles from Jerusalem. Bethany was the home of His good friends Martha, Mary and Lazarus. He was at the home of another friend called Simon, known as Simon the Leper in some translations.

The assembled company was enjoying a meal together when suddenly this unnamed woman enters the room. She is carrying an alabaster jar, that is a jar made of soft white translucent marble-like stone. In the jar is a very expensive perfume, some translations call it pure nard, a precious ointment imported from India, possibly an heirloom handed down from one generation to the next. The perfume or ointment would be sealed in the stone jar to prevent evaporation and the long neck of the jar broken to release it.

This morning we will look together at this very important story.

We will look ask and hopefully answer the following questions:

WHAT DID THIS WOMAN DO?

HOW DID THE DISCIPLES REACT?

HOW DID JESUS REACT?

And as we go along we will see WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU & ME TODAY?

So, first of all, WHAT DID THIS WOMAN DO?

She came up to the table at which Jesus was reclining and eating, broke open a jar of perfume and poured it over Jesus' head!

Now if someone did that today there would be an outcry. It would be seen as an act of violence and aggression and not one of kindness and love - like someone breaking an egg over someone else's head.

But we need to look at this in the context of the times. Pouring oil, perfume or ointment over someone's head was known as 'anointing.' To anoint is to pour ointment over.

Our Old Testament reading from Isaiah 61 talked about the Lord's anointing of the One to come. Psalm 23 says: 'You anoint my head with oil.'

David, himself, was anointed as king by the prophet Samuel, using a ram's horn filled with oil, a symbol of God's Spirit being poured out upon him.

The Hebrew word 'Messiah,' which is the same as the Greek word 'Christ,' means 'The Anointed

One.'

So when this lady was pouring this expensive perfume or ointment on Jesus' head, she was acknowledging that Jesus was The Messiah, The Christ, The Anointed One!

Anointed by God the Father Himself, chosen to be the King of Kings, just as David before Him had been chosen and anointed as king.

This perfume was a sign of who Jesus really was, a sign for all to see!

It was saying: 'You are The Messiah, You are The Christ, You are the One chosen and anointed by God for a special purpose - to save us and bring us back to God!

Now how much of this she fully understood, we just don't know. But she firmly believed that it was the right and appropriate thing to do for Jesus, so that is why she behaved as she did.

Jesus was Someone very, very special to her and she wanted to show it.

Here's a few extra of questions to ponder:

How special is Jesus to YOU?

How can YOU show Him how special He is?

Are YOU prepared to acknowledge Him and your love for Him before other people, people who may mock and ridicule you?

Are YOU prepared to give up something in YOUR life, something you count as precious and hand it over to Him?

Perhaps there is something which you have felt is holding you back in your Christian life.

Something that you know deep down, is preventing you from growing in your faith and needs to be sorted out?

Something that you are struggling with?"

It may be a certain lifestyle which you have become accustomed to, but which you know as a Christian is just not right.

Think about it. Pray about it and let God tell you what you need to hand over.

Whatever it is, it needs to be given over to Jesus. No matter how precious or vital it is to you.

Because **HOWEVER** precious or vital it may seem, Jesus is **FAR MORE PRECIOUS, FAR MORE VITAL** and He wants you to experience that and experience more of **HIM!**

Often as Christians, we are reluctant to let go of certain things in our lives, because we like these things, we enjoy these things. But if God is telling us to hand them over so that we can enjoy

Someone infinitely better, then surely it's a 'no-brainer!'

How much is Jesus worth to you?

‘Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature.

O, Thou of God and man the Son

Thee will I cherish,

Thee will I honour.

Thou my soul’s glory, joy and crown.

How much is Jesus worth to YOU?

How precious is Jesus to YOU?

Is He worth more than that thing in your life He is asking you to hand over?

Is He more precious to you than that earthly and temporal thing?

Then do as this lady did - GIVE IT TO JESUS!’

Our second question is this: HOW DID THE DISCIPLES REACT?

Verses 8 & 9: They became angry. ‘Why all this waste’ they asked. ‘This perfume could have been sold for a large amount and the money given to the poor!’

They were annoyed, very annoyed. But look at what it was which annoyed them!

It wasn’t ‘How dare she do this to Jesus.’ It was ‘What a complete waste of money!’

They didn’t think about Jesus and they didn’t think about this lady. They only thought about the waste of money!

THEY wouldn’t have squandered and wasted such a valuable commodity. THEY would have sold it and given the money to the poor!

How very noble and righteous of them!

They just didn’t understand this woman’s faith and commitment to her Lord and Master.

In their eyes she had done something stupid and silly. They may even have thought, in their misogynistic ways - ‘how typical of a woman!’

THEY, as men, chosen by Jesus to be disciples; they would have done something much more sensible and practical!

Now how often do we think like that? Be honest!

How often do we criticise the way someone else does things?

How often do we, as Christians, criticise the way another, Christian WORSHIPS the Lord, PRAYS to the Lord, OBEYS the Lord, GIVES to the Lord or the ways in which others DON' T do these things?

How often do we say to those around us: 'That's all wrong, you're taking it too far, you're being too holy? Or, as the disciples did: 'That's too much! I would have done it so much differently and so much better!'

Who did the disciples think they were?

Who do WE think we are?

Is our way right and the other person's wrong?

Do we always think that THEY can learn from US and that WE cannot learn from THEM!

The disciples should have known that what this woman was doing was a beautiful thing for the Son of God - but they didn't!

They were concerned only about the physical, the practical, the waste of money - and not about the SPIRITUAL, the SACRED, the HOLY, the LOVE and DEVOTION she was showing to Jesus!

So let's be careful, let's be on our guard, not to fall into the same trap. Let's not be too quick to judge the actions or inactions of another; but THINK about that other person carefully, EXAMINE what they are doing, take time to REFLECT upon their actions and WHY they are doing a certain thing, so that WE may learn from THEM!

And as was often the case, the disciples needed JESUS to put them straight!

This leads us on to our third question:

HOW DID JESUS REACT?

Verses 10 - 12 - 'Why are you bothering this woman?

It is a fine and beautiful thing that she has done for Me.

Do not worry about giving to the poor, you will have plenty of opportunity to do so - but this lady had only ONE opportunity to do what she has done - and she did it for Me!

What she did was to pour this perfume on My body to anoint Me for burial.'

This lady did the right thing. She used her precious perfume in the right way and for the right purpose.

This unnamed lady had proclaimed Jesus as The Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God, the King of kings.

She had prepared His human body for burial.

She demonstrated her belief IN and her love FOR Jesus Christ!

And so let this unnamed lady encourage you and me to do the same.

To show OUR belief in Jesus and OUR love for Him!

We might be laughed at for so doing, we might be ridiculed, we might be persecuted.

Our motives might be misunderstood. What we do may be mocked by those around us.

The sacrifices we make for Jesus might be seen as a waste of time, a waste of effort, a waste of our talents, a waste of our money and so on.

But let's not listen to those people who may say and think such things.

Let's listen instead to what JESUS says about what we should do for Him, for His Kingdom and for His Church!

I pray that the Lord Jesus may look directly at each one of us and say:

'It is a fine and beautiful thing that you have done for Me.'

As we proclaim, by our worship, our deeds, our service, our speech, our faith, our devotion, our lives:

Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature.

O, Thou of God and man the Son.

Thee will I cherish,

Thee will I honour.

Thou my soul's glory, joy and crown.

I will offer up my life

In spirit and truth

Pouring out the oil of love

As my worship to You

In surrender I must give

My every part

Lord receive the sacrifice of a broken heart.

### **Hymn 130 - Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim**

1. Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,  
and publish abroad his wonderful name;  
the name all-victorious of Jesus extol;  
his kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.
  
2. God ruleth on high, almighty to save;  
and still he is nigh, his presence we have;  
the great congregation his triumph shall sing,  
ascribing salvation to Jesus our king.
  
3. Salvation to God who sits on the throne!  
let all cry aloud, and honour the Son:  
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,  
fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.
  
4. Then let us adore, and give him his right:  
all glory and power, all wisdom and might,  
all honour and blessing, with angels above,  
and thanks never-ceasing, and infinite love.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788) Reproduced from *CH4 CD-ROM edition, number 130*

**Benediction** - ‘And now may  
the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Love of God  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with you all, now and forevermore.’

(3 fold Amen)