

Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit

Sunday Worship Sheet 28th July 2024

Our worship for this week was written by Howard Jackson,
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You may wish to have your Bible to hand. Please note the hymns are now at the back of the sheet for ease of printing. CCLI licence 556292

Introduction: During the recent General Election campaign, the integrity of politicians was questioned many times. Some of this was triggered by the actions or words of a small handful of candidates. But in many people's minds, their lack of integrity was applied to all politicians. We shall look at the consequences of one bible character's lack of integrity and attempt some conclusions.

Opening Prayer: "There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community." Lord, keep us from the temptation to do any one of these things. Amen. *Proverbs 6:16-19*

Hymn 1: 728 StF O God, you search me and you know me

Prayer of Approach: Come, let us worship. God, you made us. We come with lips of praise, with grateful hearts and ready minds to hear your word. Amen.

From Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary

Prayer of Adoration: God of hot days and warm nights: God of quiet hours and exciting days: God of rewarding work and relaxing leisure: God of holy days and holidays: We rejoice in your activity and receive your blessings. Amen.

From Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary

The Lord's Prayer:

Prayer of Confession: Gracious God, we need to be disciplined sometimes, unwelcome though it might be. We have to learn to face up to the consequences of our actions, pay the price of some folly, learn our lesson, pay our dues. We don't enjoy it any more than the next person but help us at such times to remember it's for our own good, the prescription designed to heal, not hurt, correct rather than castigate, discipline instead of punish. Though we do not relish the treatment, use it to make us whole. Amen.

From More Short Prayers for Public Worship.

OT Reading: 2 Samuel 11:1-17

Psalm: 14

NT Reading: Ephesians 4:14-25

Hymn 2: 724 StF As if you were not there

Gospel Reading: Luke 6:37-49

Reflection: It's no wonder that politicians have a bad reputation when the nation's leading politician told lies on several occasions. He got away with it over the alleged cost of Britain being in the European Union. He got away with it over the so-called work gatherings of civil servants and others in the garden of 10 Downing Street

when the rest of Britain was denied gatherings, being under COVID-19 lockdown. But his downfall came when he attempted to pull the wool over Parliament's eyes and the truth emerged.

Our Old Testament reading was an episode in the life of king David. This is a glaring example of a leader's truth and integrity deserting him when they were most needed. He was carried away by the sight of his neighbour Uriah's beautiful wife, Bathsheba, and carried desire into action. Unfortunately, Bathsheba became pregnant. And to cover up his deeds, one action led to another. In the end, David engineered his neighbour's death and then married his widow. Was there any way that David could be brought to justice? He had supreme authority in Israel. But God sent the prophet Nathan to set a trap for David. Nathan told David a story that paralleled his misdeeds and evoked an angry reaction, at which Nathan could point out that David had just condemned himself.

David was shaken to the core by realising his actions had contradicted his own sense of justice. But before David could respond, Nathan continued by telling him how God saw it. He reminded David what God had done for him in the past and that he was now ruler of Israel. Then *"Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you despised me."* 2 Samuel 12:9-10. David's response was wholehearted repentance. "I have sinned against the Lord". The love-child died soon after birth, but Bathsheba and David's second child became King Solomon. Perhaps some good came out of the dreadful misdeed.

Because of the importance of truth and integrity in private and public life, you might expect that St. Paul would include them in the list of Christian virtues in his letter to the Christians in Galatia. But honesty is not included. However, Paul assumes that Christians are honest. For example – (Ephesians 4:22-25) *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body."* That's clear enough – truth and integrity go hand-in-hand with being a follower of Jesus.

The Anglican Morning Service (1665) makes no bones about it, starting with the words; *"Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moves us, in sundry places, to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with a humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart;"* Clearly it is no use trying to mislead God or cover up our wrong thoughts, words or actions, because he knows everything. For a follower of Jesus. truth and integrity are essential. All our dealings with people are known to God. But they are also in the public domain. Our reputation is based on what we say and do. As Jesus said,

(Luke 6:43-45) *"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart."*

So it is the case that truth and integrity come from the good stored up in the heart. Let us rejoice that as followers of Jesus we can be trusted implicitly.

Pause for thought:

Prayer of thanksgiving: We thank you, Lord, for setting us high standards by which to live; rules for the good of ourselves and others. We praise you for those who try to live by your commands, especially those in leadership roles who should set an example, but who struggle just like the rest of us. We thank you for standards and a spirit of harmony that holds communities and families together, encouraging us to make sure no harm is done to anyone. We praise you, O Lord, for having our good always in mind. Amen.

From Roots on the Web

Prayers of Intercession: Let us pray to God for the world, that its peoples may have what they need: freedom; justice; security; peace. God our nourisher, we offer you our prayers and ourselves: Take us, bless us, use us.

Let us pray to God for the new leaders of our government that they may always speak with truth and integrity and act in the best interests of our nation's needs; health; wealth; confidence in the future. God our nourisher, we offer you our prayers and ourselves: Take us, bless us, use us.

Let us pray to God for humankind, that every man, woman and child may have what they need: food; shelter; medicine; education. God our nourisher, we offer you our prayers and ourselves: Take us, bless us, use us.

Let us pray to God for those who suffer, that they may have the help they need: healing; comfort; forgiveness; hope. God our nourisher, we offer you our prayers and ourselves: Take us, bless us, use us.

Let us pray to God for ourselves, that we may receive what we most need: faith; love; strength; wisdom. God our nourisher, we offer you our prayers and ourselves: Take us, bless us, use us.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

From Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary.

Collect for 9th Sunday After Trinity: Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

From Collects for Common Worship.

Hymn 3: Spirit of God, unseen as the wind

Blessing: Creator of light, the blessing of light be upon us - the blessing of daylight, the blessing of sunlight, the blessing of Christ light. Scatter the darkness from before us that we may walk as children of light.

From The Celtic Year.