

Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit

Sunday Worship Sheet for Sunday 12th September. Education Sunday.

Our worship for this week was written by Anne Jackson a Local Preacher.

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

Welcome to Worship on Sunday 12th September: Education Sunday.

The theme this year "A word in season" from Isaiah 50:4.

1 Hymn 319 StF. Christ, triumphant ever reigning, Saviour, Master, King!

Let us pray.

Father God. Thank you for welcoming us into your kingdom through the cross of Christ: A kingdom where the unforgivable are forgiven, the undeserving are rewarded, the unlovable are loved, and the wayward are rescued and transformed.

We come to worship with thankful, expectant hearts.

Thank you Father God, that you are longing to bless us, encourage us and transform us. Lord make us ready for your blessing.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen

Read Isaiah 50:4-5.

Isaiah 50:4 "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens me morning by morning. He awakens my ear to hear as the learned."

This is the key verse for Education Sunday 2021. Today we are being encouraged to see education in terms of encouraging people, helping people develop their full potential and make the most of their talents and opportunities.

So we will begin by giving thanks for all those who encouraged you, especially those who encouraged or mentored you were finding things difficult and in danger of giving up.

Please go right back to childhood, right up to the present day, and remember and give thanks for all those who have helped, guided or inspired you.

Let us join in a prayer based on our key verse.

Loving Lord, We give thanks that all wisdom and knowledge comes from you.

We pray for those who teach and those who learn. May they be eager to seek and use your wisdom. May they be open to the guidance of your Holy Spirit.

We pray for decision makers and those in authority in our schools and colleges. Give them wisdom and understanding as they adapt teaching programmes and examinations to take account of the disruption caused by COVID-19.

We pray for parents. May they be wise and understanding when children and young people are starting a new stage of their education. May they reflect your love and patience.

We pray for all learners young and old. May they recognise and take advantage of opportunities they are offered. We pray for those who, for cultural or economic reasons, the opportunity for learning is cut short or non-existent.

Using this prayer for guidance please pray for those people and situations you are aware of. [Teachers and learners known to you. Local & Methodist schools. Girls' education in Afghanistan, Opportunities in the developing world]

Read Psalm 78:1-7

We give thanks for the parents, prophets, preachers and publishers who have passed the glorious message of your love and salvation down to us through the ages.

Forgive us Lord that too often we have failed to inspire the next generation to commit their lives to you.

We pray for our loved ones. We long for them to share the joy, peace and purpose we have in you. May we have the opportunity to show them the reassurance knowing you gives us. Amen

Lord's Prayer.

2 Hymn 501 StF. Help me, O Lord, to learn the truths your word imparts,

Gospel Reading Mark 8:27-38.

Reflection

This is familiar story. One in which the disciples are on a steep learning curve.

They have been amazed by the things Jesus was doing and realised how special he was. As they are walking through the countryside Jesus asks them, "What is the word on the street? What are people saying about me?" "You are John the Baptist, Elijah or some other prophet" they reply. "What about you?" Jesus asks "What do you think?" Peter answers up immediately. "You are the Messiah". By Messiah, Christ, both meaning the anointed one, Peter was implying Jesus was the one the prophets had foretold, the one we have been praying for, the one we have been waiting for to solve all our problems and get us out of this mess.

It was a breakthrough revelation: You are the Messiah. Peter was praised for his insight and told it was a God-given revelation, there was no way he could have worked it out for himself.

However a second growth point follows. Jesus begins to teach the disciples something new. He tells them that the Messiah must suffer and be put to death. This is a totally new idea and a very unwelcome one, one they cannot accept.

Again Peter speaks up for the rest. He starts to argue with Jesus; the one he has just recognised as Messiah. Peter gets short shrift from Jesus who tells him he is no longer being guided by God. Now he is being influenced by Satan!

The disciples were on a steep learning curve. They now know that Jesus is the Messiah, the chosen one of God, but not the kind of Messiah they had been taught to expect; instead something new and frightening.

However it didn't stop there. Jesus then spells out for his disciples, and other followers, what this new information would mean for them. Not only will the Messiah suffer and die but anyone who wants to share in his work and be part of his mission must be prepared to do the same. That is an amazing challenge.

Today is Education Sunday. The text from Isaiah 50:4 encourages us to learn, learn from God, so that we are able to gently lead and guide others.

Mark has told us previously about Jesus' call to these men and how they immediately responded. Yet our Gospel reading is a pivotal moment of new knowledge and understanding.

In our Christian lives we also continually need to keep on developing our Christian experience and insights. In this story, new understanding was a result of direct revelation, direct teaching and challenge. So it is with us.

Just for a moment reflect on your commitment to following Jesus. Then think about times of revelation, teaching and challenge.

I started to make a list of other times when the disciples, especially Peter, experienced a significant step forward of their understanding and experience of God.

The resurrection and the empowering of the Holy Spirit are major events they all shared and were changed by. Experiences we too share; sometimes with others, often individually. We have different testimonies because God teaches us in different ways at different times.

Peter was given special privileges and special responsibilities. In the next chapter Peter, James and John had a wonderful religious experience seeing Jesus transformed. At the same time the other disciples were struggling and distressed because they could not heal a seriously sick child.

Maybe that's how you feel, working, struggling, while others seem to enjoy more reassurance in their spiritual walk. Remember those disciples also learnt an important lesson that day. After Jesus had healed the child they asked him why they had failed. He told them, "Only prayer can drive this kind out".

We grow, learn and develop our faith in different ways at different times sometimes by God-given revelation, sometimes by teaching, often by experience.

My plea on this Education Sunday is we continue to grow and develop spiritually. Pause and reflect for moment on your spiritual journey thus far and give thanks. Then commit yourself to further inspiration and insight.

Conclude with this prayer.

Day by day, dear Lord I pray: to see you more clearly, to love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

3 Hymn 563 StF O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;

May the love of Jesus sustain us. May the joy of Jesus fill us.

May the power of Jesus us be with us throughout the coming week. Amen

Hymn 319

- 1 Christ triumphant, ever reigning,
Saviour, Master, King !
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,
hear us as we sing :
*Yours the glory and the crown,
the high renown, the eternal name !*
- 2 Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth !
Power and majesty concealing
by your humble birth :
- 3 Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated,
victim crucified !
Death is through the cross defeated,
sinners justified :
- 4 Priestly king, enthroned for ever
high in heaven above !
Sin and death and hell shall never
stifle hymns of love :
- 5 So, our hearts and voices raising
through the ages long,
ceaselessly upon you gazing,
this shall be our song :

Michael Seward (b. 1932)

- 2 O let me feel you near me ;
the world is ever near ;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear ;
my foes are ever near me,
around me, and within ;
but, Jesus, now draw nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.
- 3 O let me hear you speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will ;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control ;
Lord, speak, and make me listen,
O guardian of my soul.
- 4 O Jesus, you have promised
to all who follow you,
that where you are in glory
your servant shall be too ;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end ;
O give me grace to follow
my master and my friend.

John Ernest Bode (1816–1874)

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Hymn 502

- 1 Help us, O Lord, to learn
the truths your word imparts,
to study that your laws may be
inscribed upon our hearts.
- 2 Help us, O Lord, to live
the faith which we proclaim,
that all our thoughts and words and deeds
may glorify your name.
- 3 Help us, O Lord, to teach
the beauty of your ways,
that all who seek may find the Christ,
and make a life of praise.

William Watkins Reid (b. 1923)

Hymn 563

- 1 O Jesus, I have promised
to serve you to the end ;
Lord, be for ever near me,
my master and my friend ;
I shall not fear the battle
if you are by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if you will be my guide.