



Opening Words (Psalm 19:7-8)

The Law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes.

Hymn: StF 628, Faithful One
(Brian Doerksen - lyrics)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PjSO5lhIOM>

Faithful One, so unchanging,
Ageless One, you're my rock of peace.
Lord of all I depend on you,
I call out to you again and again.
I call out to you again and again.
You are my rock in times of trouble.
You lift me up when I fall down.
All through the storm your love is the anchor,
my hope is in you alone.

Brian Doerksen (b. 1965)

Let us pray together

Faithful One, we gather again in an act of Worship at home. You have been with us all these months, through the storm of Covid and you truly have been our anchor. We put our hope and trust in you. Whatever we face in the future, we do not face it alone. Your Holy Spirit is with us to pick us up again, set us on our feet, and we go forward in and with the love of our precious Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Scripture Numbers 11: 4-6, 10-16, 24-29
Mark 9: 38-50

Reflection

We have just about finished the October – November preaching plan and my hope is that it is yet another sign that the Church is starting to move back towards what people seem to be referring to as “the new normal” although I’m not sure how anything can be new and at the same time normal. I can’t remember any time in life that is anything like the experience we’ve all just shared, and the pandemic has reached far beyond people being infected with the virus. There is an argument at the moment, which is asking the question, “is Covid to blame, or Brexit?” particularly in the light of the labour in this country at the moment.

We seem to be experiencing the same kind of thing in Church circles. As we start to plan our way forward, we seem to be short of key people. Making the preaching plan is difficult, because we’ve lost seven preachers and two ministers, plus we have people that are still shielding, or taking fewer appointments. We are finding the same in Churches, some people haven’t come back to Church, meaning that we are more stretched than ever.

The reading from Numbers reminds us that Moses was struggling with the excessive workload and in this part of the book we see the solution to the problem was to gather a group of workers around him. It seems to me that over the years the Church has done an excellent job, creating a labour-intensive institution and prior to the pandemic I found myself surrounded by worn out people, overwhelmed by the work involved in running the Church.

Saint Mark in his writing makes the alarming suggestion that we should cut off parts of the body that are causing us to sin and I remember being taken to task after a school assembly a few years ago by a teenage lad who claimed that the Bible was teaching religious mutilation. Maybe I’m guilty of watering the Gospel down, but my interpretation for the modern Church is that we should be careful of what we commit ourselves to and should be careful not to overburden people.

Challenge

- Can you think of any events you have been involved in where it has felt good to be part of a team working together?
- We often talk about being team players, which teams are you a part of, not just in Church and not only in sports, are you a leader, or a follower? How can you play your part better?
- Is your Church a team, where most people play their part, could you make one small change, that could make the Church where you belong more effective?

A time of prayer

We represent God, the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour. We pray today for those struggling in the aftermath of the pandemic with mental health, bereavement, economic downturn, and ... (name your situation). We have lost family members and friends, and as a nation we have lost any economic stability we thought was possible. May we be salt to those around us. **In the name of Christ.**

We pray for the results of global warming throughout the world: forest fires, mud slides, flooding, higher than usual temperatures, and much more. May we be salt to those around us. **In the name of Christ.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: StF 372 [Come Down O Love Divine \(Tune: Down Ampney - 4vv\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

Come down, O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

Let holy charity
mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become my inner clothing;
true lowliness of heart
which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

O let it freely burn
till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
and let thy glorious light
shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

And so the yearning strong
with which the soul will long
shall far surpass the power of human telling;
for none can guess its grace
till we become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling

A prayer of blessing

Peace to you - to all who walk in Christ's ways. **Amen.**