

## Bangor & Holyhead Methodist Circuit

### Sunday Worship Sheet 15<sup>th</sup> September

Our worship for this week was written by Howard Jackson,  
a Local Preacher and Member at St. John's Bangor.

**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:** In today's gospel reading, Jesus asks the disciples who people think he is. We will be reflecting on what their answer means.

**Opening Prayer:** Lord, when we look around and see the wonders of creation we are moved to sing about your generosity towards us. May we be eternally grateful for what you have given us and how you continually guide us. Amen.

**Hymn 1:** 65 StF Sing of the Lord's goodness

**Prayer of Approach:** God of grace and truth, we come to you in awe and wonder, for you are the source of all wisdom and understanding. You have given us your Word of truth that teaches us your will and your ways. Help us to worship you in spirit and in truth, to listen to your Word with humility and obedience, to receive your grace with gratitude and joy, and to share your love with honesty and kindness. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen. *From Roots on the Web*

**Prayer of Adoration:** We will bring to you our praise this and every day, in sacred places and working places, in the songs we sing and the whispers of our heart. For you are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, rich in mercy, abounding in love. You have blessed us through our lives and we will bring to you our praise this and every day. Amen. *From the Act of Prayer*

**The Lord's Prayer:**

**OT Reading:** Isaiah 50:4-9

**Psalm:** 116:1-8

**NT Reading:** James 3:1-12

**Prayer of Confession:** Merciful God, we confess that we have misused our tongues, which you have given us as a gift. We have spoken words that hurt, deceive or destroy others. We have remained silent when we should have spoken up for justice or peace. We have violated your law of love. Forgive us, O God. Help us to tame our tongues and to speak with wisdom and grace. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who died for us and rose again. Amen. *From Roots on the Web*

**Hymn 2:** 334 StF Praise to the holiest in the height

**Gospel Reading:** Mark 8:27-38

**Reflection:** A question for you to answer. Jesus: who do you think he is? You may have been taught the correct theological answer, but that is based on what someone else thought, many centuries ago. The question is "Who is Jesus to you, personally?" It is interesting to read in today's Gospel that initially Jesus asked the disciples who were people saying he was. So he received someone else's opinion

in response. But then Jesus asked what they themselves thought. Apparently, only Peter had his own opinion and came out with it. You are the Messiah.

Then Jesus warned them not to talk about it. He went on to quote some of the scriptures which predicted the Messiah would experience rejection leading to execution. But there was good news as well. The Messiah would come alive again in three days. That was evidently not the kind of Messiah that Peter was thinking of and told Jesus so. But Jesus put him right on the matter. If that was what God had decided, only Satan would try to spoil his plans.

Let's return to the question of who Jesus is to you personally. What is our relationship with him? Perhaps we think of him as God, part of the Godhead. Maybe we regard him as a friend, like I do, guiding our thoughts and actions through life. If help is needed, we can think about Christmas church services. There are many readings from the Old Testament taken as prophecies of God's son being sent to Earth for our benefit.

One in particular is Isaiah chapter 53 which speaks of Israel's suffering through conquest and exile in Babylon, referring to the people of God as a man – "he". The man, known as the "Suffering Servant", has been identified as Jesus because of the nature of the sufferings described.

Another well-known Christmas reading is Isaiah 7:14 *"The Lord himself will give you a sign. A young woman will conceive and give birth to a son who will be called Immanuel."* However, this is an extract from a prophecy about a military threat. The conception, birth and weaning of a child is a pictorial description of the timescale for the threat to be resolved.

Our New Testament reading from the letter of James starts with a warning to teachers to be careful what they say. They will be judged more strictly than the rest of us. Having been warned, I am being very careful what I say about who Jesus was and is. The New Testament contains some important ideas about who Jesus really is. Amongst the notable ones are Gospels picturing God giving him the title "Son of God". Mark 1:10-11 describes Jesus being baptised by his cousin John in the river Jordan *"Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'"* Mark 9:7 comes from an account of Jesus with Peter, James and John on a mountain with Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah, *"Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!'"* The first chapter of John's Gospel echoes those words *"Listen to him"* when it describes Jesus as the embodiment of God's word in human form.

St. Paul's letter to the Christians in Phillipis, chapter two verses 5-11 is usually interpreted as portraying Jesus as the "Second Adam". Like Adam in the creation story, even though he was made in God's likeness, unlike Adam, he did not think of having equality with God. On the contrary, being no more than a man, he took the role of servant, and his humility made him obedient – even as far as being crucified.

Therefore, God exalted him and gave him the name (Son of God) superior to all others so (vv10-11) *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

Whatever our own thoughts about who Jesus is, there are plenty of ideas to go on – Jewish Messiah, God’s Son, Redeemer, Saviour, Lord, Word made flesh, Suffering Servant, Priest and King, teacher about God’s kingdom, friend. The trap to avoid is to imagine there is only one answer. Is that too confusing? Remember, it’s what he means to us personally that counts.

***Pause for thought:***

***Prayer of thanksgiving:*** To some you are comfortable words in times of sorrow or need to others, a teacher dying for what he believes. To some you are nothing more than a purveyor of magic tricks. But to us you are this world’s creator, this world’s saviour, the breath of life sustaining us each day, to whom we raise our hearts and souls in ever grateful thanks. Amen.

*From the Act of Prayer*

***Prayers of Intercession:*** God, our wisdom and our truth, we bring you our words; the words of those in authority: words that legislate; pass judgment; persuade; make promises. Word of life, take our words: and speak through them.

God, our wisdom and our truth, we bring you our words; the words of those expressing care: words that comfort; heal; bring hope; make affirmations of love. Word of life, take our words: and speak through them.

God, our wisdom and our truth, we bring you our words; the words of those who follow Christ: words of faith; compassion; commitment; reaching out in reconciliation. Word of life, take our words: and speak through them.

God, our wisdom and our truth, we bring you our words; the words of those who tell others of your gospel: words of friendship; witness; invitation; offering salvation. Word of life, take our words: and speak through them.

In the name of Christ, your Word made flesh. Amen.

*From Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary Volume 1*

***Collect for 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity:*** O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*From Collects for Common Worship*

***Hymn 3:*** 319 StF Christ triumphant, ever reigning

***Blessing:*** May the Lord Jesus of Bethlehem be born in you. May the Lord Jesus of Galilee speak to you. May the Lord Jesus of Gethsemane strengthen you in times of trial. May the Lord Jesus of Calvary support you, even in suffering and death. May the Lord Jesus of the empty tomb grant you life in all its fullness. May the Lord of heaven and earth help your life bring honour to his name, now and always. Amen.

*From More Shorter Prayers for Public Worship*

## Hymn 65

1 Sing of the Lord's goodness, Father of all wisdom,  
come to him and bless his name.  
Mercy he has shown us, his love is for ever,  
faithful to the end of days.  
*Come then, all you nations,  
sing of your Lord's goodness,  
melodies of praise and thanks to God.  
Ring out the Lord's glory,  
praise him with your music,  
worship him and bless his name.*

2 Power he has wielded, honour is his garment,  
risen from the snares of death.  
His word he has spoken, one bread he has broken,  
new life he now gives to all.

3 Courage in our darkness, comfort in our sorrow,  
Spirit of our God most high ;  
solace for the weary, pardon for the sinner,  
splendour of the living God.

4 Praise him with your singing, praise him with the trumpet,  
praise God with the lute and harp ;  
praise him with the cymbals, praise him with your dancing,  
praise God till the end of days.

Ernest Sands (*b.* 1949)

## Hymn 334

1 Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
and in the depth be praise ;  
in all his words most wonderful,  
most sure in all his ways.

2 O loving wisdom of our God !  
when all was sin and shame,  
a second Adam to the fight  
and to the rescue came.

3 O wisest love ! that flesh and blood,  
which did in Adam fail,  
should strive afresh against the foe,  
should strive and should prevail ;

4 And that a higher gift than grace  
should flesh and blood refine,  
God's presence and his very self,  
and essence all-divine.

5 O generous love ! that he, who came  
as man to smite the foe,  
the double agony for us  
as man should undergo ;

6 And in the garden secretly,  
and on the cross on high,  
should teach his followers, and inspire  
to suffer and to die.

7 Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
and in the depth be praise ;  
in all his words most wonderful,  
most sure in all his ways.

John Henry Newman (1801–1890)

## 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 Saward (*b.* 1932)