

HAEBEA Home Worship – Second Sunday of Epiphany

17th January 2021 - Revd Cecil White

Bible readings: 1 Samuel 3:1-10, Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18, 1 Corinthians 6: 12-20, John 1: 43-51

To begin keep a moment of silence...

Gathering scripture Arise, shine, for your light has come;
and over you the glory of the Lord has dawned. *Isaiah 60:1*

Hymn: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDqeOOx9o_U

1. From all that dwell below the skies,
let the creator's praise arise.
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,
through every land, by every tongue.
2. Eternal are your mercies, Lord;
eternal truth attends your word;
your praise shall sound from shore to shore,
till suns shall rise and set no more.
3. Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.



Opening Prayer...

God our source and guide and goal: you have made us in your image and set us in a world full of beauty; you dwell in light unapproachable, yet you have come to be among us, full of grace and truth; you are the power from on high, coming in wind and flame to work your wonders in our midst. Gracious God, awaken us from sleep that we may worship you in spirit and in truth: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us confess our sins together and seek God's forgiveness...

Almighty God, we confess before you our own sin, the sin of the Church and the sin of the world, in which we share. We have not loved you with our whole being; we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves. In your mercy, forgive us when we turn from you; release us from the burden of our past, and remake us in your image and likeness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

'The Lord says: See, I am making all things new' (*Revelation 21: 5*).

Through him your sins are forgiven.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

The Lord also says: If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. *Mark 8:34*

Gospel Reading: St John 1: 43-51 - Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael

Reflective song: 'The Fig Tree' by the Berci Sisters <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrdYdxGKFo>

Thought for the Day...

Many of the episodes in the life of Jesus prompt a response. For countless Christians life is a response to the love of God through his Son. It comes, then, as little surprise, that during Christmas and Epiphany we have been responding to the great mystery of the incarnation. The mystery draws us to the manifestation of God's Son, and 'so, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led to thee'.

Last Sunday some of us remembered our Lord's baptism by John in the River Jordan and now we come to the calling of disciples, in this instance Philip and Nathaniel. Philip is key in bringing Jesus to Nathaniel's attention, but this doesn't appear to interest Nathaniel as he retorts somewhat dismissively: "Can anything good come from Nazareth"?

There is too much about this story to do it justice, but I highlight a couple of things about Nathaniel.

1. Nathaniel's scepticism: On hearing about Jesus, Nathaniel shows initial scepticism. He has already passed judgment on the people of Nazareth: 'Their type? Well, they're no hoppers. Nothing good has ever come out of Nazareth' (my paraphrase). May God forgive us when, with blind pride, we dismiss those of other towns, villages, countries or cultures as not worth listening to. We are all children of God, and we must show everyone a holy respect.

2. Nathaniel's faith: For all his disregard and initial scepticism, Nathaniel finally pays attention to Jesus as he (Jesus) honours his faith – the faith of a true Israelite (we can talk about the significance of the Fig tree another time). The faith that Nathaniel has is esteemed by Jesus as being important for the life of a disciple. Thus, a new believer is drawn into the fold because Jesus, one might say, takes the risk of believing in him. He wants Nathaniel on board.

Jesus wants you and me on board as we journey in ministry with him. Sometimes we can be humbled by the faith he puts in us: ' , calling: Follow me'.

Prayers of Intercession...

Let us pray for those particularly stressed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Let us pray for those charged with tough decisions in the government and the NHS.

We pray for those with Coronavirus and who are struggling in mind, body, and spirit.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all who are engaged in education: governors and managers, teachers and lecturers, students and all who learn. We pray also for ancillary staff.

Lord, grant to all strength and resilience.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the life of our neighbourhoods.

Wherever we find ourselves situated, may we be faithful witnesses to the call of Christ.

May we contribute to the life of our neighbourhoods with kindness and goodwill.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our church communities and for the HAEBEA Executive who lead our common life. Grant, O God, wisdom for all who lead our churches. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

And now as our Saviour taught us, so we pray: **Our Father...**

The Blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with us always. **Amen.**