

**Passion Sunday  
(29<sup>th</sup> March 2020)**

**Call to worship:**

*Throughout God's world this day, Christian voices join together as one to proclaim  
God's Word through scripture, prayer and song.*

**Our sisters and brothers in all lands and countries join us in proclaiming the Word  
of God.**

*In Christ's love there is no East, no West, no North, no South, but only one Spirit of  
hope, love, and peace for all.*

**Praise be to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

As we physically and spiritually gather this day through the means of Social  
Media, let us be mindful of the fear and dread that sweeps through the people our  
world as a result of COVID-19.



In **Isaiah 41:10** we read about God's help to Israel in time past, and through the  
same scripture let us hear from God today his message to us all who would listen to  
him:

***"I brought you from the ends of the earth and called you from its farthest corners. I  
said, 'You are My servant.' I have chosen and not rejected you. Do not fear, for I am  
with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; I will surely  
help you; I will uphold you with My right hand of righteousness."***

Jesus came to serve humankind, and on this **Passion Sunday** as we think about the  
ultimate price that Jesus paid to bring about a right relationship between God and  
ourselves by the complete giving of Himself, let us be filled with passion, compassion  
and an attitude of servanthood as we reach out in his name to others and our world  
that is in much need of him.

We join together in worship through song **828 in Mission Praise.**

The music and words of all our worship songs today can be found by clicking onto  
the YouTube links.

**Filled with compassion for all**

creation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxx0EN6Bqdc>

**Let us pray:**

Lord, we confess your right to exercise your sovereignty over the whole of your creation and over every part of our lives.

But from the very beginning we have used our free will to please ourselves and not you, to live for our own ends and not yours, and to spoil our relationship with you and each other.

We confess that we have fallen short of living lives that bring you glory. There is no way that, in our strength, we can put our world or our lives in order again.

Lord, by the power of your Holy Spirit, forgive us, cleanse and renew all things. For the glory of your name. Amen.

**We share together in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray:**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the divine and human natures are united so that He is truly and properly God, and truly and properly man. A beautiful worship song that helps us to be mindful of this is **465 in Mission Praise**. Let us bow down and worship the Lord Jesus Christ, for this is our God.

**Meekness and majesty** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1OZKzXNTRM>

**Family time: It is finished!**

In life we often make plans and have tasks that need completing, however sometimes things happen unexpectedly which take us by surprise, and then other

things take over which means some things end up being left unfinished.

Jesus had an extremely difficult task to do when he lived on this earth. He was to be the one who would reconcile God and humankind by living a totally perfect life and

then by offering himself as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus didn't give up - he finished the job. When he died on the cross he accomplished everything he had set out to do. Jesus did everything needed to make us completely acceptable to God. We didn't have to do the work ourselves. We can have confidence in his dying words: "It is finished." The work we have to do is to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.



John 6:29 in the Bible says, 'Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."' (New Living Translation - NLT)

John 3:16 in the Bible also tells us that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (New International Version - NIV). We are reminded of this as we turn to the following hymn:

### How deep the Father's love for us

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcT05G1oeJw>



In a short while we will be specifically thinking about the Bible verse found in Luke 9:51 *“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem”*. To help us in our thoughts, let's share together through watching and listening to a 15 min dramatisation of the whole of **Luke chapter 9**. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ-Yz-YxXEo>

Just before we come to reflect on God's Word, let us listen to and meditate upon the song written by Stuart Townend - **Oh, to see the dawn ...**

#### **The power of the cross**

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

**Biblical reflection:** We now come our Bible reflection for today, *“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem”* (Luke 9:51).

The greatest part of Jesus' ministry was in Galilee. The gospels of Matthew and Mark both focus on Jesus' Galilean ministry, which lasted at least eighteen months and may have been interrupted by brief visits to Jerusalem.

Luke, however, focuses on the last period of Jesus' ministry of approximately six months, consisting of a “later Judean ministry” and followed by a “Perean ministry” before the days in Jerusalem immediately preceding his death.

In Luke 9:51, we find the defining moment of Jesus' ministry. This verse identifies the time that Jesus left Galilee as the major field of ministry and turned southward - a decision that set him squarely on his journey to the cross.

In giving consideration to Luke chapter 9 and specifically verse 51, let us briefly focus our attention on 3 areas:

The Mission;

The Decision;

The Dedication.

## 1. The Mission.



Although Jesus was a great teacher, this was not his primary mission. Jesus taught the crowds, and he spoke as no other person has ever spoken. His wisdom was far greater than anyone who had ever come to the world or has ever come since his day. Jesus used some teaching and learning material that existed at the time, but he gave his individual touch to it. He spoke with authority, not simply as someone reciting the opinions of others.

Jesus also worked miracles. He did supernatural things to help those who were weak and needy and also to show his power. Every part of his life was a blessing to others and an example of how people should live. Yet the mission of Jesus from the very beginning was to die.

Jesus did not come so much to preach the gospel as he came in order that there might be a gospel to be preached. Everything in his ministry pointed toward his passion. It was necessary for him to live a perfect life so that he might be the Lamb of God without spot or blemish. The life itself however, was not the sin offering. The Scriptures do speak of our “being saved by his life,” but this does not refer to the initial experience in salvation by which we become justified in God’s sight through the death of the Saviour of the world. It refers to the process of growth whereby we are saved daily from the “power” of sin rather than to the original experience in which we are saved from the “penalty” of sin.

It is the death of Jesus that makes atonement for sin, ‘at - one – meant’ with God, and makes it possible for us to find redemption, being both bought and brought back to God through his own blood. This was the supreme purpose of Jesus’ life, and his mind was on the cross from the beginning of his ministry.

## 2. The Decision.



One of the most important things we face in life is our decision as to 'when' we will do something.

Jesus felt it was necessary to have an extended ministry in Galilee before his final clash with the religious authorities at Jerusalem. If Jesus had stayed in Galilee, he never would have been crucified. He was so popular in Galilee that the people wanted to make him a king. They wanted to force him to become a political messiah and lead them in rebellion against the Roman government. However, Jesus sought during his entire Galilean ministry to instruct the people in this section of Palestine concerning the spiritual nature of God's kingdom and kingship in their lives.

It was also for this very reason that at certain periods of time Jesus withdrew with his disciples for special "in-depth teaching and learning sessions" so that they might fully understand this too. The first came when he felt that he had instructed them sufficiently and must leave them on their own. He wisely stayed away from a lengthy stay in Judah, where Jerusalem was located, during this period of instructing the people in Galilee.

The visits there to the religious feasts were brief. His premature death would have interfered with the plan that Father God had for him. Timing is very important in our lives, and Jesus had the exact time planned when he would leave Galilee and concentrate on the provinces of Judah, Perea, and later the city of Jerusalem itself. As has already been stated, one of the most important things we face in life is our decision as to 'when' we will do something. We so often forget that God's time is perfect time concerning his plan for our lives with regard to whatever lies ahead. That is why we should put our complete faith and trust in him whatever the cost.

### 3. The Dedication.



Dedication means complete surrender to a cause. Once Jesus 'set his face toward Jerusalem' he never looked back. Although he realised it meant his death, we see in his decision the complete surrender of a spotless soul. Everything that happened previous to Luke 9:51 was under the influence of the cross.

Throughout the rest of the gospel, we are reminded that the destiny of Jesus was Jerusalem, where he would confront the religious leaders. There Jesus would be rejected and would be put to death on the cross. Jesus accepted the divine all important requirement which God had placed upon his life and he did it voluntarily. God was in charge of his life, and he was completely surrendered to Father God's purpose for him.

Jesus was not a helpless victim of circumstances. He made the choice deliberately. He was fully aware of all that was involved, but he also knew that by giving his life he would in reality realise it most completely. This is the true meaning of dedication.

In the Old Testament, the word *dedicate* or *consecrate* comes from a root that means "to cut off" and has the further meaning of "to separate for a special purpose." This is the true nature of dedication.

When we are dedicated to God, we are cut off from the rest of the world and separated completely unto him for holy living and unselfish service.

What a change we would see in the world if each one of us would surrender to God completely and say, "My time, my talents, my money, my enthusiasm - all that I have is yours to be used completely in your service."

#### **Conclusion:**

How dedicated are we to the cause of Jesus Christ? And what will be the cost as we steadfastly set our face toward that which God requires of us on this Passion Sunday? Jesus never turned back. What will you do?

We reflect on the words of the song, 'If crosses come' and as we do so let us each one make our personal response to God:

#### **If crosses come**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMxVW2AYHbA&feature=youtu.be>

On this Passion Sunday, let's join together once again through focussing on the cross and 'The Passion of Jesus Christ' for us all.





**When I survey the wondrous cross**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G6eT05eKwG0>

**Passion Sunday Prayer:**

Lord, we praise you for life, and for the way you make life new. We praise you for the way you open our eyes to see the wonder of your world and our ears to listen to the song that creation sings to your glory.

We thank you most of all for your Son Jesus Christ.

We praise you that through him you change our hearts, our minds and our lives. On this Passion Sunday we remember his life of goodness, his healing, his teaching and his love for everyone.

We remember his death on the cross for us.

We praise you that though to the onlooker he seemed to be defeated, he was the one who won.

Those who hated and rejected him believed they had defeated him, but he was the one who was victorious.

We praise you that your love will never be defeated and your concern will never come to an end.

We praise you for those who have loved their neighbour and for those who have brought hope to many.

We thank you for those who told us about Jesus and went on telling us until we finally listened.

Forgive us that we find it so easy to give up and give in;

That we are willing to follow Jesus only until he wants us to carry a cross.

Forgive us and keep us faithful to him, so that our lives may be filled with his victory day by day, every step of our way.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

**We now come to our time of Intercessory Prayer:**

Father, we pray for the whole church, which you called into being through your son. We are aware that it was always your intention that your church should be a blessing to all people everywhere.

We ask that by your Holy Spirit your church may be daily renewed and empowered for the task for which you gave it life.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray Father, that we and all our fellow Christians may be ready for any sacrifice, and any action, any declaration that will clearly demonstrate faith, hope and love to



our neighbourhood, our family and our friends, and to those with whom we work and those we meet on the journey of life each day.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for Christians who have trusted you, and for whom obedience has brought sorrow and loss; for those who, as an act of discipleship, have felt led to involvement in feeding the hungry, seeking the lost, healing the broken or enabling the defeated.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who, because they know God has made them his special people, they do all they can to make others feel special too; for those who care for the sick and dying; for those who care for others whose lives and emotions are in need of health and healing.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those whose faith has lost meaning, whose worship is all ritual and empty words; for those who are no longer aware of God's presence, his power or his love; for those who only see the hurt and the pain and the darkness of this life. We ask that they might see the joy and the goodness and the light of Jesus Christ in the lives of his people.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those we know who have been reduced to despair; for those whose joy has been crushed by the indifference of others; for those who have suffered great grief, who are left numb by sorrow and loss; for those still overwhelmed by the separation death brings from someone they loved and who loved them.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for ourselves. In the face of all life's uncertainties at this moment in time, for sorrows, hurts, disappointments, failures, anxieties and fears, we ask that the assurance of Jesus Christ's presence, power and love may give us strength, hope and faith.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

In the name of Jesus Christ, who claims us as his special possession.

**Amen.**

We bring this time of worship to a close with the following hymn:

**Christ triumphant ever reigning** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5Xz9V-6JPA>

**The Grace:** Wherever we are, whatever the time, let us unite together in sharing the words of the Grace taken from 2 Corinthians 13:14: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, this day and forevermore. Amen.