

Apart but Together Worship

Hornsea URC Sunday 28th February 2021 – Lent in plain sight: CROSS



Welcome

Welcome to the 3rd in our series Lent in plain sight, this week focussing on the cross.

Opening Prayer



Father God

We come before you today to offer you our praise and worship
Please grant that we may be sincere of heart

If we come doubting our own worth and faithfulness to you
Remind us of those moments when we have been agents of your love
Those simple gestures, a smile, a touch, a helping hand
Which shared something of the Gospel message with those we have come alongside

If we come full of our own goodness and righteousness
Remind us what pleases you
Bring us down to earth again, so that we are not raised above others
But among all your people where your work is done

May our praise and worship be pleasing to you
Let us not offer you prayers that have little meaning
Let us not praise you today then go out to live our lives which express little of your goodness
May we come with open hearts and open minds ready to be challenged by your word
AMEN

Hymn : In Christ Alone – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Lord's Prayer

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 trespassers as we forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory
Forever and ever
AMEN

Reading Mark 8 vs 31-38

Jesus Speaks about His Suffering and Death

³¹ Then Jesus began to teach his disciples: "The Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. He will be put to death, but three days later he will rise to life." ³² He made this very clear to them. So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But Jesus turned around, looked at his disciples, and rebuked Peter. "Get away from me, Satan," he said. "Your thoughts don't come from God but from human nature!"

³⁴ Then Jesus called the crowd and his disciples to him. "If any of you want to come with me," he told them, "you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me. ³⁵ For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for me and for the gospel, you will save it. ³⁶ Do you gain anything if you win the whole world but lose your life? Of course not! ³⁷ There is nothing you can give to regain your life. ³⁸ If you are ashamed of me and of my teaching in this godless and wicked day, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Hymn : The Power of the Cross – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Reading Luke 22 vs 39-45

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

³⁹ Jesus left the city and went, as he usually did, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples went with him. ⁴⁰ When he arrived at the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation."

⁴¹ Then he went off from them about the distance of a stone's throw and knelt down and prayed. ⁴² "Father," he said, "if you will, take this cup of suffering away from me. Not my will, however, but your will be done." ⁴³ An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.

⁴⁴ In great anguish he prayed even more fervently; his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

⁴⁵ Rising from his prayer, he went back to the disciples and found them asleep, worn out by their grief.

Address

Today we are looking at the iconic cross, the image central to our faith. Just what does the cross mean to us today?. What lies behind this object?

It is something we wear which tells others our beliefs and personal preferences, something we have in our homes and church. We are often asked to "Take up your cross" what does this mean, and what do we have to do to carry this out?

Lots of questions hopefully we can look to answer some of these today

Firstly we are being ask to deny ourselves, to put aside our personal ambition, let go of our individual agenda. Three very difficult things because we all have things we want or we think we want, things we want to happen and can influence by our actions. This can often happen subconsciously

But this does not mean it is impossible, we can change our lives, and live by a trinity of 3 things, kindness, faithfulness, and humbleness, and a definite need for us to sacrifice our own desires for the sake of others. At this point we are asked to face challenges within our own families and within the church. Situations that test our resolve, and make us think about what we should do.

Example1 family divisions and arguments when we are faced with options to forgive, to put personal feelings of resentment aside, or let pride get in the way

Example2 living with illness, our own and the demands that puts on those who care for us, and the changes this brings to relationships.

Example3 having hardship, and accepting feelings of inadequacy.

We may also find ourselves in a situation where we wrestle with a decision to speak out against something we believe in, and know that to do so may put us in a difficult position, sometimes threat to life. The solution to this may appear simple, but history and up to date cases show that brave people stand up and take the consequences.

For example, Russian political leader Alexa Navalny, having possibly been poisoned by the Russian state, returned to Russia knowing he would be arrested when he arrived, for him his cross was of challenging what was happening in the country and to the people.

Brave or misguided? I would suggest brave and committed

Let us share a short prayer

Lord Jesus you denied yourself, took up the crucifixion in Jerusalem, and journeyed all the way to crucifixion in Jerusalem.

We confess we resist self denial, we refuse to take up the cross that requires sacrificial love. We fail to follow then your way challenges our comfort and safety. During this season of repentance and reflection, help us to move closely more willingly, more nearly imitate you

AMEN

Another very important aspect when we see the cross and particularly the crucifix are our emotions we experience and just what we see.

Do we see :

Weakness, defeat, humiliation, publicly shown to be suffering?

This of course was used by authorities as a warning to others who may challenge societies.

But in a way does seem cruel, it could be said that God sacrificed his only son in this way and made him do his will. But if we approach this and look at it from an alternative way think outside the box,

From a place of suffering and weakness, brokenness there is a **route to Glory, freedom which can only be found in Christ. A place of hope and inspiration for a better life.**

Does the image of Jesus on the cross make us feel this?

Do we see a leader and saviour?

Does suffering and vulnerability and a sacrifice of love demonstrated become a picture of power and faith, and a witness to the saving power of the cross.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus pioneer and perfecter of our faith, we thank you for refusing to give up on us and on the world. You gave up your very life for our sake, pouring yourself out completely so that even the cross could be transformed into a means of life and grace. We seek now to have a faith encouraged by the promise of seeing God face to face and joining in worship with our witness
AMEN

I would suggest that we are being shown that to make ourselves vulnerable, to recognise our brokenness is in fact a way forward where we can alter our approach to life, and more importantly recognise that knowing our weakness can make us strong and focused.

Lent can be a time of denying ourselves some thing we embrace in our life, but it can be a way of understanding just what is important and an opportunity to review our life to be part of Gods perfect love, to be shared with other in his name.

Prayers of intercession



Lord Jesus,

I come to you today and thank you for the privilege of praying for others. I've been the recipient of others' prayers so often, I understand how powerful intercessory prayer can be. I ask you first to cleanse my heart and show me if there is any unconfessed sin in my own life so that my prayers for others will not be hindered. I thank you that through your name, I can come boldly before you and pray with confidence, according to your will and know that you hear me.

I lift up those in my neighbourhood, in my town, and in my church. Begin with those who follow you, and help them influence others for good. Let them be salt and light, pointing others to you. Deepen their love for you and for the people around them. Guard them from hypocrisy or from giving in to temptations that could harm the cause of Christ. Raise up leaders who will serve you faithfully at all costs. Turn the hearts of fathers toward their children, and families toward you. Help them to exemplify

your values, and make them bold in their faith. Strengthen my own family, and those closest to me, Lord. May our love for you help us to love and forgive others and make a difference in our world.

I pray for teachers, for students, and for all those in authority and leadership, both locally and throughout the world. Give them your mind, and surround them with godly counsellors who will exercise integrity and work for justice, morality, and freedom. Help them to esteem you, not dismiss you.

I pray for the lost, the hurting, the lonely, the sick, the bereaved, and those who are imprisoned—behind both visible and invisible walls. Send your comfort, your peace, and your calming presence to those who are without hope. I remember those in our prayer book and those on our heart – draw close and bring peace in each situation.

Protect the defenseless, and hold them close to your heart. I pray for labourers to tell the good news of Jesus to people around our world. Jesus, my heart cries out for persecuted believers, too. Make them brave, and give them your powerful protection. I pray you will bring swift justice to those who want to destroy the innocent and those who carry your name. Bind the power of Satan, and strengthen believers everywhere.

So many needs, Jesus, but you are adequate for every need.

Your name is powerful, and your power is great. So it's in your name that I pray—and believe.

Amen

Hymn 3 : Brother Sister Let me serve you – [CLICK HERE TO WATCH/LISTEN](#)

Blessing



May we look to our lives and serve you in every way we can,
and live under the humility of the cross,
May the father, son, and Holy Spirit be with us all and those we pray for today. Amen