



June 6th 2021

**Greetings in the name of our
Risen Lord Jesus Christ.
In this time of uncertainty,
we declare: Jesus is Lord!**

A Call to Action: The Gospel of Mark

Today we begin a new sermon series on the Gospel of Mark. Mark is the shortest of the four gospels, and was somewhat overlooked for centuries as it was believed that Matthew was the earliest gospel to be written, and that Mark had abbreviated it and produced a poor imitation. In recent years opinion has changed, and it's now widely believed that Mark's gospel is the earliest account of the life of Jesus. Most biblical scholars think that Mark was written around the time of the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in A.D. 70, an event alluded to in the text (Mark 13:2). The Gospel was written in Greek and, since Aramaic was used by Jesus and throughout Palestine, probably originated outside the country.

Why read Mark's gospel? Of course, each of the gospels has its own beauty and wonder, and they contribute together to a fuller picture of Jesus and his life and ministry. But there are two particular things about Mark's gospel which make it particularly significant to us at this time.

The first is that Mark's gospel is a gospel of urgency. Mark's favourite word is "immediately" (he uses it 41 times!), followed by the word "again" (25 times). The result of that is that the gospel has a sense of dynamism, and moving forward with some speed. NT Wright (In *"Mark for Everyone"* describes Mark as the *"shortest and sharpest of the stories about Jesus. Many people think Mark's gospel was the first to be written, and certainly it has all the zip and punch of a quick hasty story that's meant to grab you by the collar and make you face the truth about Jesus, about God, and about yourself."* As we come out of lockdown and look to the future, it's good to be reminded of the urgency of the call to follow Jesus and seek the kingdom of God.

But Mark's gospel, whilst urgent, isn't just about activity. It's also been described as *"a passion narrative with an extended introduction"* (Peter Bolt, *"The Cross From a Distance"*, p13). Why? Because midway through the gospel, Jesus turns towards Jerusalem and the cross. And the closer the cross looms, the slower and more detailed the story becomes, until by the Thursday before the crucifixion we have an almost hour by hour account of Jesus' suffering and death. For Mark, being a follower of Jesus isn't just about doing, but about reflecting and entering more deeply into the passion of Jesus – something which we need to do as individuals and a community as we reflect on the experience of the last 15 months.

Please do take time to read through Mark's gospel for yourself as we study it together in the coming weeks – and may we join with the Roman soldier standing by the cross who uttered the profound words, "This man really was the Son of God." (Mark 15: 39)

With my prayers and love, *Anita*

A Sonnet for St. Mark's Day: Malcolm Guite

A wingèd lion, swift, immediate
Mark is the gospel of the sudden shift
From first to last, from grand to intimate,
From strength to weakness, and from debt to gift,
From a wide desert's haunted emptiness
To a close city's fervid atmosphere,
From a voice crying in the wilderness
To angels in an empty sepulcher.
And Christ makes the most sudden shift of all;
From swift action as a strong Messiah
Casting the very demons back to hell
To slow pain, and death as a pariah.
We see our Saviour's life and death unmade
And flee his tomb dumbfounded and afraid.

Praying for the Persecuted Church: Afghanistan

The Tuesday morning prayer group requested that we commit to praying on a regular basis for the persecuted church, and last Sunday we prayed for Christians in North Korea. This Sunday we will pray for believers in Afghanistan. Open Doors UK writes: *It's very hard to know precisely how many Christians there are in Afghanistan, because they must keep their faith completely secret – but only a small number from a population of over 38 million.*

It is impossible to live openly as a Christian in Afghanistan. Leaving Islam is considered shameful, and Christian converts face dire consequences if their new faith is discovered. Either they have to flee the country or they will be killed. If a Christian's family discovers they have converted, their family, clan or tribe has to save its 'honour' by disowning the believer, or even killing them. Christians from a Muslim background can also be sectioned in a psychiatric hospital, because leaving Islam is considered a sign of insanity. As a secret Afghan believer writes: "How we survive daily only God knows. He knows because He has been kind to dwell with us. But we are tired of all the death around us." Please pray this week for believers there.

27th June: Ordinations

A reminder that John Ferguson and Nick Parish (our new curate) will be ordained in Derby Cathedral at 12 noon on 27th June. Sadly Covid restrictions mean that numbers at the service will be very limited, and only a couple of people from St. Peter's will be able to attend. However, the service will be live streamed and we encourage as many people as possible to watch the service online and to support them in prayer! We will therefore not be holding an 11am Zoom service that day. The 10.15 simple service of communion will take place in church as usual, and there will be an informal Zoom coffee and chat catch up for those who would like to join in at 11am (also a chance to pray together for John and Nick) followed by a break before the Ordination service begins at 12 noon. Please make a note of the date in your diary – and please pray for John, Nick and all those being ordained in the coming weeks as they prepare.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting: 13th June

It's hard to believe that it's the time of year again when we hold our hold our APCM! This year it will take place during the 11am Zoom service on 13th June. As usual, we will incorporate the meeting into our worship - a time when we look back with gratitude for all that has happened over the past year and look forward with faith and expectancy for all that is to come. What could be more fitting than to express that within the context of praising and thanking God!

One of the things that happens in the APCM is the important task of electing churchwardens and PCC members. As usual, notices announcing the meeting, along with election forms for churchwardens and PCC members are available in church, and will be taken down before the meeting. But this year, as not many people are coming into the church building, they are also available by email – please email Anita if you would like one.

For those who may not be sure of the processes, PCC members serve a 3 year term, and are nominated by those on the electoral (membership) roll. Churchwardens serve a 1 year term, but can be elected to serve another term, and are elected by those on the electoral roll as well as by anyone living in the parish.

This year we have 3 vacancies on the PCC. All nominations must be proposed and seconded (but don't forget to discuss this with the person concerned before the forms are filled in!) If you would like to know more about what being on the PCC involves, please have a chat to Anita or to any member of the PCC.

Prayer ...

In this testing time, do not hesitate to ask for prayer for any concern you have. We all face difficulties and challenges, but prayer makes a difference. In an emergency, call Bren (07967 183601), and she will ask those on the prayer chain to pray for you.

Sunday Service 10.15am: simple service of Holy Communion

Please book in by 12 noon on Friday. If you have internet access, booking is via the Eventbrite website, using this link: <https://stpetersderby.eventbrite.co.uk>. Alternatively please call the Church Office (01332 360790) and leave a message - we will book you in. Please tell us if you are coming with others from your household. We need to collect name, address and phone details and keep them for 21 days in case we have to provide a list of attendees for track and trace purposes.

Zoom Service: 11am Service of Holy Communion

Please join us for our worship on Zoom at 11am this Sunday, and please have bread/crackers, wine/juice to hand!

Joining details below!

On a Computer, Laptop, Smart Phone or Tablet: Click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/450891605?pwd=czNCTTJuaUJpQ3VlOVlnUm1zS0tKQT09>

Alternatively:

1. Open Zoom and select 'Join' or 'Join a Meeting'
2. Enter the Meeting ID: **450 891 605**
3. Select 'Join'
4. When prompted for the Meeting Password, enter **73837**
5. Select 'Continue' or 'Join Meeting' and you will be connected

By Phone – these are the numbers you must now use:

1. Pick any one of the numbers below (doesn't matter which), if one doesn't work, pick another: 0330 088 5830; 0131 460 1196; 0203 481 5237; 0203 481 5240; 0203 901 7895; 0208 080 6591; 0208 080 6592
2. Dial the number and when prompted for the Meeting ID press: **450 891 605#**
3. You will then be prompted for a Participant ID, just press **#**
4. Finally, you will be prompted for the Meeting Password, press: **73837#**
5. You will be connected and able to hear everything that is happening

If you have difficulty connecting please call Anita.

St. Peter's in the City Staff:

Acting Vicar/Associate Priest: Revd. Anita Matthews anita@stpetersderby.org.uk

Vicar's PA and Church Administrator
Vacant
office@stpetersderby.org.uk

Inside Out Project Worker: Wayne Haycock
wayne@insideoutderby.org.uk

Building Manager: Melvyn Wood
Kitchen Supervisor: Gillian Wood

Church Wardens: Tim Benson, Liz Runcorn

We are a community of faith, hope and love in the heart of the city
Follow us on Twitter: @stpetersderby; www.stpetersderby.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Link: Janet MacIntyre, 07828 280455. Please note that copies of the Safeguarding Policy are available in the Church Office or at www.derby.anglican.org/safeguarding

IN THE WEEK

The church office is closed until further notice, but telephone calls to the Office on 01332 360790 and emails to office@stpetersderby.org.uk will be monitored