

Mission Sunday ~ The Clouds



Welcome and Opening Prayer

Hymn 201 Guide me O thou great redeemer

Guide me, O thou great redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth
flow;
Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:

Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and
Shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's
destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs and praises, songs and
praises,
I will ever give to thee.

Opening activity

Confession

God our Father,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins.
For turning away from you,
and ignoring your will for our lives;
Father, forgive us:

All save us and help us.

For behaving just as we wish,
without thinking of you;
Father, forgive us:

All save us and help us.

For failing you by what we do,
and think and say;
Father, forgive us:

All save us and help us.

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you
by temptations in the world about us;
Father, forgive us:

All save us and help us.

For living as if we were ashamed
to belong to your Son;
Father, forgive us:

All save us and help us.

Assurance of Forgiveness

May the God of all healing and forgiveness
draw us to himself, and cleanse us from all our sins
that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Collect; (4th Sunday after trinity)

Gracious Father, by the obedience of Jesus
you brought salvation to our wayward world:
draw us into harmony with your will,
that we may find all things restored in him,
our saviour Jesus Christ

Interview ~ Mike and Safaa Cloud (Mission partners)

In preparation for our Mission Sunday service this week, I had the wonderful privilege to interview both Mike and Safaa Cloud about their Ministry in Morocco and Egypt to which this service is dedicated to. Because of the time difference between the UK and the US, I felt sorry for them as they had to wake as early as 6am for this interview, whereas it was only 12/1pm here. Although Mike and Safaa currently Live in Texas US with their four grown up children, their ministry is in Morocco and Egypt, where they have centres that provide early intervention children's physical therapy especially for children with cerebral palsy. Currently they have 13 centres in Morocco and 10 centres in Egypt. Mike informed me that they were recently invited to open another centre in Alexandria Egypt this Summer

Talking to Mike and Safaa, it was very clear and very encouraging to hear stories of lives changed and the growth of God's Kingdom in this part of the world. But a lot still has to be done. Lots of prayers and lots of resources, especially financially are needed to keep all these centres running with the added challenges from Covid-19. They really do appreciate all the support through prayer and finances they have received from the Parish over the years, and they hope to one day come and visit.

Offering for the Clouds ~ Ways to give

- https://stpeterwoking.org/Groups/299769/Giving_to_the.aspx
- Cheque to 'Parish of St Peter Woking' and send to parish office
- Set aside cash in envelope and drop off at church

Song I'm Gonna Jump Up and Down

I'm gonna jump up and down
Gonna spin right around
I'm gonna praise Your name forever
I'm gonna shout out loud
Gonna deafen the crowd
I'm gonna send my praise to heaven

I will run this race and I will never stop
I'll follow Jesus till the day I drop
I can do all thing through Christ who strengthens me
When you've got such a lot
When you've got not a lot
WHAT? BE HAPPY!!!

Bible readings

Deuteronomy 14. 22-29 ~ Sarah Thomas

²²Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year.
²³Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always. ²⁴But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the Lord your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the Lord will choose to put his Name is so far away), ²⁵then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the Lord your God will choose. ²⁶Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish.

Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice. ²⁷And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own.

²⁸At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, ²⁹so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

Acts 9.36-42 ~ Acted out by parish youth group

³⁶In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas), who was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. ³⁸Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

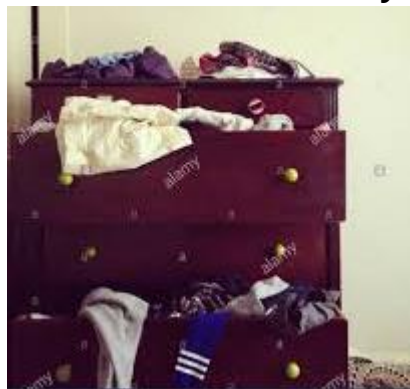
³⁹Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

⁴⁰Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive. ⁴²This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

Sermon ~ Rachel Johnson

New life: Tabitha's story

I have a problem with my clothes. And it's the same problem I have with this jar of maltesers - I have too many of them - too many t-shirts to fit in my drawer, too many dresses I never wear, too many



odd socks with long lost partners. I wonder how many of you have the same problem. But if you grew up in WWII, like my mum, you wouldn't have had this problem because clothes were rationed. You only got enough clothing coupons for one completely new set of clothes a year. So if my grandma had had a wardrobe full of dresses that didn't quite fit she'd have cut them up and made summer frocks for my mum. If these maltesers were your clothes you might only have half a jarful.

And if you were a poor widow living in Israel 2000 years ago you might only have owned one dress, one shift, one cloak. If your wardrobe was like my jar of maltesers it would be looking pretty empty. What would you do when your clothes wore out and your cloak was too threadbare to keep you warm in the winter? How grateful would you be if a woman like Tabitha, who we heard about in today's reading, brought you and all your neighbours each a whole new set of clothes – robes and shifts she'd sewn herself out of cloth she bought with her own money? How much would you love a woman like that? How sad would you be if she died?



Now you might be thinking that Tabitha's an ordinary woman, just like your Grandma, good with a needle, probably a dab hand at baking apple pie and cookies. But Tabitha's not ordinary she's extraordinary. Let me tell you why.

To start with, Tabitha's the only individual woman in the Bible described as a disciple. Of course, there are faithful women who followed Jesus, and there are women described as apostles and prophetesses and leaders and teachers. But Tabitha is the only one called disciple. So we know she's faithful, obedient, devoted to Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit. And we see how she puts her faith into action by making clothes for the poor. In James 2 it says –

“What good is it to say that you have faith if your actions don't prove it? But someone will say, “One person has faith, another has actions.” My answer is, “Show me how anyone can have faith without actions. I will show you my faith by my actions.” (James 2:14,18).

You know how if you add heat to a kettle of water you get steam? James is saying that if you add faith to a person you get actions – good works. That's the effect faith has on us. Last month we heard how the actions of Ananias, Sapphira and Simon the Sorcerer betrayed their lack of faith in Jesus. But last week Sue told us about how she's been sewing scrubs for NHS workers and earlier we heard how Mike and Safaa are devoted to helping disabled children and their families. Two examples of faith in action, just like we see with Tabitha.

The next extraordinary thing about Tabitha is that she has two names. Now when people in the Bible are given two names it tells you something important about them. Tabitha's two names are actually the same name in two different languages; Tabitha in Aramaic – the common language of the Jews – and Dorcas in Greek. We saw a few weeks ago that there was some tension between the Jewish and Greek members of the church. But Tabitha is named in both languages. So it seems likely that she truly belongs to both groups. In his letter to the Galatians Paul writes about the unity of the church:

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:28).

Unity is such a beautiful thing and something we desperately need today, in the church, in our communities, in our world. I wonder if Tabitha plays an important role in uniting the different parts of her church, simply by loving and caring for people who are different from her.

Finally, Tabitha's extraordinary because she's resurrected. When she dies the disciples in Joppa are so grief-stricken that they send for Peter, probably just looking for him to comfort and encourage them, because it's not like Peter has a track record with resurrection. But Peter has heard something from God, so he prays over Tabitha – and God resurrects her!

I think we tend to take the Bible's resurrection stories too lightly. We're so accustomed to the resurrection of Jesus that we forget what a miracle resurrection is. If we look across the whole Bible there are very few resurrection stories – there's a smattering of widows' sons, Lazarus, Jairus's daughter, the young man who fell out of a window – and Tabitha. Well the people of Joppa don't take resurrection lightly; Tabitha's story is so incredible that people from all over the city turn to Christ. So in her life Tabitha reveals God's love and in her death and resurrection she reveals God's power.

You know, this story is chock full of new life. Tabitha receives new life spiritually through her faith in Christ. She receives new life physically through her resurrection. She brings new life and hope to the widows she makes clothes for. She brings new life to the community by building unity. Her resurrection brings new life to many people in Joppa who put their faith in Christ. And her story, recorded for us by Luke, continues to bring new life to people today

as it reveals God's love and power at work in an extraordinary woman.

Could you be a Tabitha?

Her story might seem extraordinary, out of reach – resurrection is rare after all – but each one of us could live a life as extraordinary as hers if we just start by loving God with all of our being, and let his love overflow through our words and actions.

Hymn 892 More love, more power

*More love, more power
More of You in my life
More love, more power
More of You in my life*

And I will worship You,
with all of my heart
I will worship You,
with all of my mind
I will worship You,
with all of my strength
For You are my Lord

The Peace

Jesus says: 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'

John 14.27

The peace of the Lord be always with you

All And also with you

Let us offer one another a sign of peace

Prayers of intercession ~ Nicola, Laurent and family

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and
forever. Amen.**

Notices (*See Notes & News*)

Hymn 857 I, the Lord of sea and sky

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard My people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin,
My hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness
bright.
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?
I have heard You calling in
the night.
I will go Lord, if You lead me.*

*I will hold Your people in my
heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have born my peoples pain.
I have wept for love of them,
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of
stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My word to them,
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord....

The Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you,
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face towards you
and give you peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Worshipping ▶ Loving ▶ Sharing ▶ Growing

