

## Service Transcript

### 7<sup>th</sup> June 2020

We worship God, the God of glory, the awesome God most high – say this prayer together

*If my lips could sing as many songs as there are waves in the sea:  
if my tongue could sing as many hymns as there are ocean billows:  
if my mouth filled the whole firmament with praise:  
if my face shone like the sun and moon together:  
if my hands were to hover in the sky like powerful eagles  
and my feet ran across mountains as swiftly as the deer;  
all that would not be enough to pay you fitting tribute.  
O Lord my God.*

We celebrated Pentecost Sunday last Sunday and the end of the 10 days of prayer as part of Thy Kingdom Come – but hopefully you have not stopped praying for your five people you will persist and persevere in prayer.

We want to share stories of how God has blessed us and touched the lives of the people you have been praying for – email prayer email address, or one of the elders – and we will see how best we can share your story with the church - one of us or you can share the stories in a service or prayer meeting.

We still have the pandemic with us and with it we can wonder where God is, has he been taken by surprise? God is still moving, God is still working out His purposes

Video made by OM workers from around the world. God is working despite the Coronavirus

OM video – God is still moving

“I know the God that I trust and I know that He is capable of doing great things out of this situation.” God is still moving, God is still working out His purposes. How we need Him, how the world needs Him.

And in trust we come and pray for the world – focussing on the effect of Coronavirus on the desperately poor and vulnerable – to help us

Information from Tearfund – they’ve set up an emergency appeal  
These are difficult times for us all. We’ve seen in our own country the devastation that coronavirus can cause. The virus is now threatening to spread among some of the world’s most vulnerable communities. Tearfund local church partners are on the frontline around the world, and they need your prayers.

- Pray for churches around the world to be the hands and feet of Jesus, shining his light in their communities through prayer and action.
- Lockdown means that many people are not able to earn an income, pushing people further into poverty. They face serious food shortages. Ask for God's provision for families in need.
- Pray for communities where social distancing is difficult or even impossible, such as refugee camps. Pray for God's hand of protection upon these people.
- Pray for the millions of people around the world who do not have access to basic healthcare.

Lord hear our prayer

None of us is as close to God as we should be. He longs for us to come closer to Him; in Him are the forgiveness and grace that we need

Song: Lord have mercy.

### **Confession Prayer**

Lord have mercy.  
*Christ have mercy.*

We thank you Father for Jesus, because we see embodied in Him Your love, grace and mercy. Father we have to admit, as we have just sung, that so often we forget how amazing your promises are, when we look at the world around us and see all the problems and issues of our society and of the world. We can be fearful, anxious, troubled, angry, sad, hopeless; filled with doubt; reliant on human thinking and expectation even though we should put our trust in You.

Thank you that the song gave us opportunity to recognise that that isn't what you have made us in Christ, and we confess our sins and transgressions to you this morning.

Take a few moments to bring our own words of confession before God in the silence

We say  
Lord have mercy.  
*Christ have mercy.*

Thank you, Father, that in Jesus we find full forgiveness because your grace shines like a beacon in the night as we reflect on our lives. And we trust and follow you. As we come to communion this morning, help us to understand again what you have called us to in Jesus as we break bread and drink wine and remember His broken body and shed blood, and fill us anew with Your Spirit and fill us too with the hope and promise that we now have. We ask this in Jesus' name.  
*Amen.*

## Sermon: The Anointed One

We are called to bring hope to a world that is being shattered and needs to change. We've been told that after the pandemic that the world will never be the same again. Will it? Or will it return to "normal." And if it is different, will it be any better than what we already had? What's the key to a future full of hope?

This is not the first time in the history of the world that society has been dragged through difficult circumstances and people have asked the same question. Hundreds of years before the coming of Jesus, the Jewish people received these words of hope as they suffered the trauma of the destruction of their land. They are from Isaiah 61:1-3 and Carl is going to read them to us.

READING ISAIAH 61:1-3

*The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me,  
because the Lord has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty  
instead of ashes,  
the oil of joy  
instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise  
instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
a planting of the Lord  
for the display of his splendour.*

The nation of Judah was torn apart by invaders, first the Assyrians and later the Babylonians. Society was breaking down, becoming marked by poverty, fear, inequality and injustice. The nation called out to God for help against the invaders, with prayer and fasting, but they were not prepared to address the issues that lay at the heart of their crumbling society, for which they were collectively responsible. Here's a few verses from Isaiah 58:3-9 as the people prayed and fasted before God. I'm reading from The Message:

*"The bottom line on your 'fast days' is profit.  
You drive your employees much too hard.  
You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight.  
You fast, but you swing a mean fist.  
The kind of fasting you do  
won't get your prayers off the ground.*

*Do you think this is the kind of fast day I'm after:  
a day to show off humility?  
To put on a pious long face  
and parade around solemnly in black?  
Do you call that fasting,  
a fast day that I, GOD, would like?*

*6-9 "This is the kind of fast day I'm after:  
to break the chains of injustice,  
get rid of exploitation in the workplace,  
free the oppressed,  
cancel debts.*

*What I'm interested in seeing you do is:  
sharing your food with the hungry,  
inviting the homeless poor into your homes,  
putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad,  
being available to your own families.*

*Do this and the lights will turn on,  
and your lives will turn around at once.*

*Your righteousness will pave your way.*

*The GOD of glory will secure your passage.*

*Then when you pray, GOD will answer.*

*You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.'*

They were a society that lacked basic justice and care for its citizens. If they expected God to act, then they had to take responsibility for their wrongdoing and put it right.

A few moments ago we did a prayer of confession, recognising our failings as individuals. It is one thing to be penitent, but it's another to be repentant. Sorry doesn't mean much unless we change course and put wrong things right. The Jews wanted change but they did not address the sins of the nation. The country was laid waste by Nebuchadnezzar and the brightest and best sent into exile.

When you come before God, He knows your motives, so never say sorry if you are not willing to change and allow His Spirit to change and work through you. He knows your thoughts so it's self-delusional to think you can fool Him.

But God had another solution for the Jews. He was going to raise up a leader who was going to be someone who would deal with inequality and injustice. Here is the opening sentence of Isaiah 61 again: *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.*

Anointing someone with olive oil is mentioned in several contexts in the Bible. In this context it was a means of showing that God was setting apart someone for an important role, particularly kings and prophets – Saul, David, Solomon, Jehu, Elisha, even a foreign king, Hazael. The anointed one was empowered by the Spirit of God. And this is the

context of Isaiah 61 – The Spirit of God was empowering someone to do the specific work of establishing equity, freedom, and care for all.

Because of the age in which the prophecy was given, one could argue that it may have seen a fulfilment in post-Exilic times through Joshua and Zerubbabel's leadership, or Nehemiah a little later who re-established Judah as a much more just society. However, the last 10 chapters of Isaiah are concerned with God blessing, and being worshipped by the nations. From the time of this prophecy up until the time of Jesus, a bigger picture was being seen by the Jews.

This was describing an Anointed One who was going to come and establish a society and world that was characterised by justice, freedom and equality. This was the expectation and the desired end, for rule by the anointed King who would bring true greatness to Israel again. "Anointed One" in Hebrew is the word Messiah, translated into Greek as the Christ.

It's no surprise that in Luke 4 we find Jesus proclaiming this anointing for Himself. In the next few weeks we will see what the implications of these words had to Jesus and for his followers today.

I have heard this question several times in the past weeks: "where is God in all this coronavirus pandemic?" There has been an upsurge in prayer. Where is God, where is Jesus? I'll tell you where He is. He's right amongst our society and amongst the nations, visible to all. Where?

He's visible to all as the Church. We are the body of Christ and Jesus is the Head. Never ask where Jesus is. He's where His people are. He's where His Holy Spirit dwells.

Last Sunday's service had a song by Robin Mark which had the refrain based on Isaiah 61 which said: *For the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon us. This is the year of the Lord!* You may think it's a bit presumptuous that Christians should appropriate these words that applied to Jesus for themselves. But it isn't. We are the body of Christ. We are part of Him.

Therefore His anointing is our anointing, His mission is our mission and the Holy Spirit works His purposes through us.

And here is the challenge of this morning's service – what are WE doing about it?

The coronavirus pandemic has brought into sharp relief the divisions of UK society. As we have begun to get a fuller picture of how coronavirus has affected the population. We know that as a respiratory ailment, Covid most seriously affects the elderly and those with certain medical conditions, but it has been found to be more disproportionately prevalent amongst the poor, the disabled, and the black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. It has served to emphasise many of the underlying divisions and injustices of our society which need to be addressed.

On the subject of injustice, we have all been horrified by the situation in America this week resulting from the death of George Floyd, which have served to underline the divisions and

injustices of that country. A picture that saddened me was this one: Donald Trump standing with a Bible in front of a burnt-out church, peaceful protesters having been tear gassed and shot at with rubber bullets to move them out of the way for Him to have this photo opportunity. In my view he represents the antithesis of what the Anointed One, the Messiah, Jesus stands for. And he has the nerve to hold up the Bible which states in Micah 6:8 *He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.*

What's that got to do with us? The Spirit of God is on us to do the work of King Jesus: to uphold the values of the Kingdom Jesus was heralding and which we now herald – or should be heralding. We are, or should be, the evidence of the physical presence of God on earth. This is what we are, and need to take our responsibility at a time of darkness – actually we need to do it all of the time; we must seize the moment and bring Good News, because if we don't, people don't see Jesus.

So how can we practically make a difference in the post-coronavirus world.? I have put a link to an article by Andy Glover in the notes for this morning. He suggests the church has opportunities to change in three ways to address the new situation.

*The opportunity to pray like never before.* I think we've worked that one out already. But as Thy Kingdom Come has taught us, we need to pray and care. Let's continue praying! Jesus didn't just spend all night praying to His Father, He went out in the power of the Spirit and made a difference.

*The Opportunity to be the Church.* Because we can't use our buildings, we can no longer do church, but we now have an opportunity to be church. People come to Christ when they see His mercy, love and grace in action. It doesn't need a church building to do that. Here's a story from Saudi Arabia where people are not free to worship and witness legally. How can anyone Christian a difference there? Here's a video. Christians together can make a big difference to when they work together, through church fellowships or in communities or nationally. Individually we can make a difference in showing care to our friends and neighbours. Through our relationships we can bring hope. Let's pray that we do.

*The Opportunity to Innovate* Andy Glover's final point is that we have an opportunity to innovate. We have been forced to innovate already, to use technology and methods that we possibly dismissed previously. What can we take from these past months to make a difference? That's going to be our challenge as a church as we leave lockdown over the next few months. Was what we had, so good that we just want to go back to it, or does it need to change in the light of the months of lockdown? What have we learned?

Let's allow the Spirit to inspire us to see the possibilities that have been thrown up, to learn and adapt and extend the Kingdom.

Let's Pray:

Father, you know our hearts and our minds. Thank you that You have called us to be your people in Christ. Thank you that we have been anointed by Your Spirit as Your Church to

bring Good News to a world who so desperately needs to have the hope that only following Jesus brings.

As we look at the awful situation in the US at the moment, we pray that you will raise up sensible church leaders and politicians who will bring fractured communities together, value every life, particularly black lives and seek the common good rather than favouring some and not others.

As we come to communion now, help us to focus and be encouraged by what Jesus has done and give Him glory.

We ask this in His name

*Amen*

**Communion:**

As we come around as it were The Lord's Virtual Table this morning, we come to remember the Anointed One who by His Spirit anoints us to do His work.

We come before Him as men and women who have been delivered from the power of sin and death because of His broken body and shed blood.

Some one once said that "Jesus didn't come to only *preach* deliverance or even to only *bring* deliverance. Jesus came to *be* deliverance for us."

Let's listen to a well-known song that reminds us of how He delivered us:

*Song: When I survey the wondrous cross*

(Prayer by Rhiannon)

Lord Jesus, thank you that you loved us so much that you were prepared to become one of us in order that we may be delivered from sin and death. As we eat the bread and drink the wine, may you help us to realise afresh how great your love is for us. It is love so amazing, so divine that demands our soul, our life, our all. Please help us to do your will in the power of your Spirit, to bring good news to our generation.

We ask this in Your name

Amen.

Let's hear the words of invitation that Jesus makes to all His disciples from 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

Let's break bread and drink wine together. We will receive and consume both then have a short time of personal reflection afterwards.

### *Fellowship Prayers*

For our prayers this morning I'm going to pray in a number of categories and leave a space to name those you know before the Lord

Thank you for pleasure of being able to see friends and family again.

We pray for:

For those who have recently lost loved ones – recently & last year

For those who are ill known to us

For those who continue to be isolated

For those who are estranged from other members of their families

Please lift up those you know personally before the Lord as we pray.

*Closing Hymn The Lord's my Shepherd (and I will trust in You alone).*

### Blessing

Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

### **For Reflection and Discussion**

1. In the Isaiah 58:3-9, what was so wrong with the way the people of Judah were behaving? Surely every society has the poor and disadvantaged?
2. Mark referred to the Robin Mark quote where he states *the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon us*. Take a look at 1 John 2:20, 27. How does the anointing of God make a difference in this passage.
3. What other meanings can anointing have in our witness and ministry as God's people. Look at: Matthew 6:17, Mark 6:13, James 5:14.
4. What can we learn from the following that may be relevant to us as God's people? Leviticus 8:12, Exodus 28:41, Psalm 105:15, Psalm 45:7.
5. Take time to reflect on the anointing God gives His church today. How might that help to shape our thinking as we explore our future ministry as a church after lockdown?