



Trinity 5

The Benefice of Upper Wensleydale



Edition 17

'Church in the Home'

Sunday July 12th– Saturday July 18th

From the Vicarage

A thought for the week ahead



I remember the liberation and joy I felt the first time I understood that Christianity wasn't about a religion: it's about a **Relationship**.

Religion is our attempt to get closer to God. Faith in Jesus Christ understands and accepts God's heart and desire to be close to **us**.

Our Gospel reading reminds us that we are not meant to keep the things of God hidden in our lives.

Let's not talk about Religion – Let's talk about **Jesus**

Peri Dove



Promise of your word
<https://youtu.be/0DpSliiWkEM>



We have sung this a couple of times lately and it seems yet even more appropriate today. This song has the refrain “I will stand on every promise of your word “ as a declaration . Our psalm today describes the word as a “lamp to our feet and a light to our pathway “. It guides us close up for the steps we take and it guides us far in the future as His word gives us direction. Let him who has ears to hear ...let Gods word sink in deep and let’s declare it , stand on it , and not waver from it.

<p>From the breaking of the dawn to the setting of the sun, I will stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word. Words of power, strong to save, that will never pass away, I will stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word. For Your covenant is sure, And on this I am secure— I can stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.</p>	<p>When I'm faced with anguished choice, I will listen for Your voice, And I'll stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word. Through this dark and troubled land You will guide me with Your hand As I stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word. And You've promised to complete Ev'ry work begun in me— So I'll stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.</p>
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<p>When I stumble and I sin, condemnation pressing in, I will stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word. You are faithful to forgive that in freedom I might live, So I stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word. Guilt to innocence restored, You remember sins no more— So I'll stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.</p>	<p>Hope that lifts me from despair, love that casts out ev'ry fear, As I stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word. Not forsaken, not alone, for the Comforter has come, And I stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word. Grace sufficient, grace for me, Grace for all who will believe— We will stand on ev'ry promise of Your Word.</p>
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Lord thy word abideth <https://youtu.be/C3-dMvkZM-A>

This used to be a favourite of my Dads. The tune takes me back to many an evensong in a choir robe as an 11 year old (really yes !) I don't think I ever really valued the enormity of the words ... maybe I didn't linger long enough to translate the old language, but I look at them afresh now and see the incredible value in them. “Word of consolation ...message of salvation “. It took a good few more years before I realised that true salvation for myself but I'm so glad I did!

<p>LORD, thy word abideth, And our footsteps guideth; Who its truth believeth, Light and joy receiveth.</p> <p>When our foes are near us, Then thy word doth cheer us, Word of consolation, Message of salvation.</p> <p>When the storms are o'er us, And dark clouds before us, Then its light directeth, And our way protecteth.</p>	<p>Who can tell the pleasure, Who recount the treasure By thy word imparted To the simple-hearted?</p> <p>Word of mercy, giving Succour to the living; Word of life, supplying Comfort to the dying.</p> <p>O that we discerning Its most holy learning, Lord, may love and fear thee, Evermore be near thee!</p>
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Sunday July 12th Bible Reading:

Genesis 25:19-end, Psalm 119:105-112, Romans 8: 1-11, Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23



Click on this site, type in the reading you want and then listen to David Suchet read it to you.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/audio/suchet/nivuk/Gen.1>

Reflection

I suspect that if you are watching this on YouTube you also have a mobile phone. Even if you are reading this, having been sent it by e-mail, you will still have access to information technology. Just hold that thought for a while. I will come back to it.

There are well over 1,000 words in the scripture readings for this week. Of those, six leapt off the page. "Whoever has ears, let them hear" Of course, we all have ears or at least the ability to hear; with rare exceptions, we all have the ability to 'hear' these words. The question is; are we listening? Do we want to hear? I am reminded of the well know phrase, the source of which I am unable to trace, "There are none so blind as those who will not see". Equally, there are none so deaf as those who do not listen. I suppose the crux of the matter is that understanding cannot be forced on someone who chooses to be ignorant. The Gospel reading is a parable about how we came to faith, or for others, did so but drifted away or just didn't at all.

These past few months, this period in history, has been testing. It has in my own life, maybe for you too. My personal faith is based on evidence. Let us, for a moment, look at The Bible is a crime file. The seeds of evidence took root in me. I still have doubts, there are still things I don't understand but I reached a point where I had to make a choice. I spent years wiping my feet on the doormat. In the end I felt compelled to step forward in faith. The evidence was such that if I had to convict Jesus of being my Lord and my saviour, he was guilty. It was more difficult to disbelieve in God than it was to believe in God. The balance of evidence was overwhelming.

I am sure we have all got unbelieving friends. We have all had those conversations; "Well, if there is a God, why is there so much suffering? If there is a God, why this, why that? They have many questions we cannot answer but they seemingly will not move forward until we do. It is as though they have dug a trench from which they will not move. They cling whatever security their current position provides. They want convincing to the 'Nth' degree. Their questions often seem to distract from rather than address the issue: "Will my pet go to heaven?", "Don't all religions lead to the same thing?", "Religion is the cause of wars", "It's a crutch". Even if you could answer all their exhaustive questions, you wonder if they really, really would commit to a faith in The Lord.

Over the past few weeks I have engaged in many face-to-face and social media debates over the concept that the lives of black people matter. Again, the arguments seem to distract, distort and undermine the basic principal call for racial equality and social justice. Instead, we have arguments about statues, whether a particular historic figure was a racist, historic slavery, graffiti. Arguments to the Nth degree that tend to avoid the big issue.

How easily we can be distracted; thoughts lost as quickly as birds eat seed or having started to think about things easily persuaded by irrelevancies, like growth in shallow soil, or so easily persuaded by distorted argument, like a plant choked in thorns and thistles.

Easu was easily distracted. He had a birthright but his interests were elsewhere; hunting and an outdoor life. When he faced a test he did not stand up for what was right. His desire for food at one moment in time was greater than his birthright. Jacob, by contrast had his eyes and motives fixed, from birth it seems, clinging onto Easu's heel and later seizing his opportunity. He saw the big picture and aimed for the 'main prize'.

The Psalmist has no difficulties with the 'ifs' and the 'buts'; "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path", he says "I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws". He is focused on the headline and not a footnote in the small print. Paul, likewise in his letter to the Church in Rome says, "the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death".

So, what has this to do with mobile phones? Well, if you have one it would have come with a contract that you could not hope to fully understand. You simply would not have one if you waited until you understood all the terms and conditions. In response to a long standing friend and the myriad of questions he needed answering before accepting my position, that black lives matter I told him; it's like a mobile phone contract. You got totally bamboozled but at the end of the day you still bought the phone. We cannot argue away every 'what if' of racism with logic and fact. That is exhausting. At some point we have to step forward in good faith and say to black people "It is all very complex, but I see your pain and I know sometimes it is much harder for you because you are black than it is for me being white. I want to change that".

I regularly find something new in my journey of faith I do not fully understand. That does not disqualify my faith. In such matters, let us not be distracted by the thorns and thistles of life, let us find good, deep, rich soil. Let us focus and concentrate on the main thing, the important issue. As Paul said in his letter to the Philippians "One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus". **AMEN**

Graham DiDuca



Prayers



Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. Joshua 1 v 9

Dear Lord and loving Heavenly Father

Thank you for your promise to be with us, wherever we are. As the world, and our country in particular, comes out of lockdown, we need your guidance and comfort.

We pray for those who need your healing hand – those with active COVID 19 and those still suffering the effects of it, weeks after; those struggling with long term conditions, often having been made worse by either the anxiety or the delay in treatment during the crisis. We pray for all those families who have suffered a bereavement at this time, many of whom have been unable to grieve together, and in some cases unable to obtain closure through a funeral. We pray for those for whom the unlocking of the COVID measures is causing additional anxiety and concern. Lord let them know that you are close.

We pray for those who worked throughout the pandemic and carried on, risking their own health to ensure that things got done, whether that was as a member of the NHS team, the emergency services, as a Carer, delivery driver or other vital member of the community. Father strengthen them and be with them and let them know that they do your work in caring for their community. As their work patterns and demands change to fit the new post lockdown world, help them to adjust. Lord let them know that you are close.

We pray also for the world leaders, who have had to make major decisions affecting millions in their countries – making choices about options they never thought to make. Father give them wisdom, compassion and common sense. May they seek your guidance and that of the scientists to make the right decisions, at the right times, for the right reasons. May we all act in calm and measured ways, respecting the restrictions and the lifting of them. We think of all the other countries in the world where the virus cases are still rising rapidly – for South America, Africa and the Southern States of the USA. Lord let them know that you are close.

We pray for our own churches and the PCCs as we look to restart services and consider how the church of the future will look. Guide us to where we should use our energy and resources. May we not cling to the old from nostalgia but be inspired by your Word to fulfil our mission here in the Dales. We pray for Dave and Sarah, as they take some much-needed time off. Keep them safe in their travels. Please be with them, refresh them and fill them anew. Lord let them know that you are close.

During lockdown we learned again how to pull together as communities, how to ask how someone was and to care about the answer and to love our neighbours. Lord help us to keep hold of these things as the world changes again. Help us too, to continue to seek out the lost and the lonely, offering comfort and support where we can. We pray for the many visitors who have been returning to our dale, that they do so in a safe manner, and they receive a welcome. We lift to you all those who work in the hospitality industry, so affected by this situation and ask you to bless their businesses, accommodation and services and keep them safe. Lord let them know that you are close.

Never let us forget to be thankful for the many blessings and answers to prayer that we have had over the past few months and for your steadfast love and goodness to us.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

Stephanie Durrant

...This Sunday This Sunday This Sunday This Sunday This Sunday ...

Sunday July
12th

10:30am

Join us for
our Service of
Morning Prayer



To view this Sunday's service:

Visit the website

www.upperwensleydalechurch.co.uk

or our FaceBook page :

[upperwensleydalechurch-cofe](https://www.facebook.com/upperwensleydalechurch-cofe)

A – Z of God's Character

In last weeks message I asked if anyone might like to have a go at creating an A-Z list of the characteristics of God: Awesome, Bountiful, Compassionate etc. I have a couple of submissions – does anyone else want to share some more? Send to:office@upperwenben.org

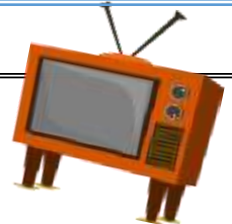
What might you think of for Q and X ?

Dave

TV
Radio

Worship on the BBC:

Tune into some of the services on TV and Radio.



Sunday: Radio 4 Sunday Worship 8:10 – 8:50am from South Wales Baptist College

Radio 3 Choral Evensong 3:00 – 4pm from Kings College Cambridge

Wed: Radio 3 Choral Evensong 3:30 – 4:30pm from Chichester Cathedral

Sunday BBC1 1:15-1:50 UK's Favourite Hymns with Aled Jones

