



**Church at Home 16
for Abridge
Sunday 28th May 2020
Trinity 3**



*'If anyone gives even a cup of cold water
to one of these little ones,
who is my disciple, truly I tell you,
that person will certainly not lose their reward'*
Matthew 10:42

As this week's church-at-home sheet is being written, the plans for easing the lock-down are being revised and it is looking likely that both social distancing will be reduced and a number of other aspects of life can slowly return to normal. Understandably a number of us are still erring on the side of caution, but nevertheless the news is encouraging. Plans for **an open air get-together** for our local church congregations are progressing, so please do keep the date and time free, namely **Sunday 12th July**, with a picnic in the grounds of St Mary's at 4.00 pm and a service at 5.00 pm which will include a farewell to Nick, Crystal and the boys.

Today's Gospel reading is very short, just the final two verses of Matthew chapter 10, but they are two verses packed with encouragement and challenge. They form the last part of the instructions Jesus gave to his disciples who had been sent out on mission. Matthew records Jesus' words in such detail because they are guidelines for all of us, who since Pentecost are also sent out to bring the reality of the Kingdom of God to our neighbours and into our communities. **Include a glass of water on your focus table this week.**

Many of us have particularly missed celebrating communion together over these last 4 months. In today's Gospel, Jesus offers us some helpful (and maybe surprising) insights into other ways in which we can both recognise and receive the presence of Jesus sacramentally.

Before we sing, read or pray, pause to remember and name those who would normally be sitting alongside you in church this morning. We are separated physically but nevertheless united by our love and prayers through the Holy Spirit given to each one of us.

Gracious Father, as we settle ourselves for worship,
Your word reminds us that we are not alone.
But that we join the countless, invisible host of those
Who are also praying to you at this time.

Loving Lord, as we settle ourselves for worship,
Your truth reminds us that it's not just us in this place,
But that we join in the glorious worship of heaven that never ceases,
And which surrounds our feeble words with a chorus of praise.

Holy Spirit of God, as we settle ourselves to worship,
Your presence reminds us that it's not just this moment,
But that we step into a place both in and beyond time,
Where all who have gone before and all who are yet to come
Sing of you, talk with you and rest in your love.



Suggested songs and hymns: [As we are gathered Jesus is here](#), [Jesus is Lord](#), [Rejoice the Lord is King](#)

As you look back over the past week, open your life to God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ, as you pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me a sinner

Rejoice that we have 'salvation through the forgiveness of sins' by joining in with [Come on let's celebrate](#)

Here are today's set readings:

Genesis 22:1-14 – The challenging story of Abraham being asked to choose between his longed for son Isaac and obedience to God. *Has your faith ever been put to the test? How did God provide?*

Psalms 13 – A cry to God from the depths of despair. *Are your prayers as honest as this? How has God answered you?*

Romans 6:12-23 – Paul is honest about the inner battle we all have to do the right thing but also about the danger of presuming on God's forgiveness. *What does it mean to you to be set free from sin?*

Matthew 10:40-42

These two verses repay reading through several times. Can you put what Jesus is saying into your own words? What is Jesus saying here that surprises you? What puzzles you? What encouragement is there here for those of us who are missing 'receiving Christ' through the sacrament of bread and wine?

Maybe The Message paraphrase of these verses will help your reflection:

We are intimately linked in this harvest work. Anyone who accepts what you do, accepts me, the One who sent you. Anyone who accepts what I do accepts my Father, who sent me. Accepting a messenger of God is as good as being God's messenger. Accepting someone's help is as good as giving someone help. This is a large work I've called you into, but don't be overwhelmed by it. It's best to start small. Give a cool cup of water to someone who is thirsty, for instance. The smallest act of giving or receiving makes you a true apprentice. You won't lose out on a thing.

To help you explore the Gospel further, there is a **reflection sheet** and also **all-age activities linked to the Genesis passage**, that you might like to use, if you have access to the internet. You can find these resources on the websites of the two churches and here are the links: www.lambournechurch.com
www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org

For our prayers, let us remember:

- The government and its advisors as they plan how the lockdown should be eased
- People whose mental health has been badly affected by the lockdown and those who care for them
- Key workers who continue to put themselves at risk to save lives. You may know of some by name for whom you can pray.
- Those we know who are in hospital or waiting for treatment
- Those in other countries coping not only with the virus but also ongoing civil wars, famines and injustices, and, as is the case for some Christians, facing persecution
- Our own county as it seeks a just way forward concerning issues surrounding race prompted by the unlawful killing in America

Add any particular people and situations that The Holy Spirit brings to your mind as you have been praying and then say our family prayer, **The Lord's Prayer**.

End your time of church-at-home by saying out loud the words of **The Grace**, reaching out your hands to include in your imagination all those you know and love, who live here in the village and beyond

Final hymn suggestions: [Brother let me be your servant](#)



Please pray for: wise decisions about reopening churches and the final Lambourne assembly on Joshua tomorrow taking place via Zoom

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