



**Church at Home 25  
for Abridge  
Sunday 30th August 2020**



*Seek the Lord and the strength God gives.  
Always seek the Lord, remembering  
the wonderful things God has done*  
**Psalm 105:4-5**

This Sunday afternoon is **our Church Picnic** at 3 o'clock at St. Mary's. Do come and join us, if you're able. There will be activities for everyone alongside our time for picnicking, culminating in a short act of outdoor worship. And next week is busy too: up at Stableford Abbots there is **an animal blessing service** and picnic also at 3; while in the village at the Evangelical Church at 5:30, there is a short **service of welcome** for Martyn and Ruth, who are taking up leadership there - numbers are limited, so do let us know if you plan to come.

**This Sunday's Bible readings include:**

**Exodus 3:1-15:** At the burning bush God calls Moses to rescue the people of Israel. God meeting with Moses in the outdoors will be the Bible story for our outdoor worship this afternoon.

**Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26:** The Psalmist urges us to praise God for all that God has done, giving thanks for the people God has called to serve him down the years.

**Romans 12: 9-21:** Paul spells out what it means in practice to take up our cross and follow Jesus.

**Matthew 16:21-28:** This is the second half of last week's Gospel conversation between Jesus and his disciples, and in particular Jesus and Peter. Jesus begins to explain what it will mean for him and for us if we want to be his followers.

On your focus table you probably already have a cross, but today can you find another cross, or even make a simple one from everyday objects in your home or garden?

**Before we sing, read or pray,** pause to remember, name and pray for those who are in church this morning and others who you know are at home but who are part of our church family. Some of us may be separated physically but nevertheless we are all united by our love and prayers through the Holy Spirit given to each one of us.

**Suggested hymns:** [O worship the King](#) ; [Lift high the cross](#) ; [Take up your cross piano only](#); [I have decided to follow Jesus](#) ; [Will you come and follow me](#)

**Saying sorry:** In Paul's letter to the Romans, he urges us 'not to let evil overcome you, but overcome evil by doing good' (verse 21). It is all too easy to give in to despair and discouragement, letting ourselves become disagreeable or even disrespectful towards others. In today's story, Jesus calls us to follow him, and choose *to cross out* these attitudes in us and live as Jesus did. As we say sorry for not doing this, let us make a recommitment to denying ourselves and taking up our cross as his disciples.

Pause

Receive God's forgiveness afresh through Jesus Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to pour out God's love into our hearts.

[Lord we lift your name on high](#)

## First thoughts on today's Gospel

This chapter of Matthew is generally considered a turning point in his Gospel story of Jesus. They are literally still at a high point in the country, in the far north, and after this begins the long journey south towards the cross at Jerusalem. Simon Peter has recognised how special Jesus is - God on earth, come to rescue the world - but of course has no idea yet what this was going to mean. And why should he? Rescuing the world by dying as a criminal on a Roman cross, took everyone by surprise, despite the many prophetic clues and hints throughout the Old Testament. Peter, who a few verses earlier was 'the rock', now becomes a stumbling block to Jesus's plans by his outburst. He is in danger of getting in the way of God's rescue plan and so is sharply rebuked as speaking as an enemy of God not an ally. The passage ends with the call to take up our cross - what a startling image this was for people then who were sadly used to watching criminals drag their own torture equipment to the place of their execution. We may be in the middle of summer here but this is a stark reminder of the fact that Good Friday and Easter lie at the heart of our discipleship.

*I wonder what new aspect of this reading has struck you afresh today?*

*I wonder what it means for you this week to 'take up your cross and follow Jesus'?*

*I wonder what Jesus means by 'deny yourself' in order to gain everything worth having?*

*I wonder what it means to be concerned about your soul more than your body or your possessions?*

*I wonder how Simon Peter felt after that stinging rebuke and how he rediscovered that Jesus still loved him?*

To help you explore the Gospel story further, there is a **reflection sheet** and also **all-age activities** 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](http://www.lambournechurch.com) [www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org](http://www.abridgeevangelicalchurch.org)

**For our prayers**, let us remember:

- The staff and children of Lambourne School as they start term this week after a 6 month break, with all the challenges of 'class bubbles' and the many new protocols to observe.
- Our leaders as they work out how best to handle spikes and fresh outbreaks of the virus here and abroad, and all those on the quest for an affordable vaccine for all.
- For those we know who have lost jobs in this pandemic and who are seeking new employment in this difficult economic climate.
- For those we know who are sick, at home or in hospital, and those whose lives have been turned upside down during this crisis.
- For the migrants in northern France, who are longing for safety for their families; and for those seeking to help people in the developing world who are even worse affected than us in the UK by this pandemic.

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.

**Church Leaders Contact details:**

**Roger** - 01992 815 838

**Keith** - 020 8504 9186

**Martyn** - 020 8989 7455