



## **Second Sunday of Epiphany**

In our worship today we see Jesus gathering his first five disciples. They come in response to either the call of Jesus to “follow me” or the invitation of someone they know to “come and see”. Let us join together in wonder to worship God who reveals his Son to us, as Lord of all nations on earth.

The Lord be with you  
**and also with you**

**Hymn:** In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found,  
He is my light, my strength, my song;  
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace,  
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!  
My Comforter, my All in All,  
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! – who took on flesh,  
Fullness of God in helpless babe.  
This gift of love and righteousness,  
Scorned by the ones He came to save:  
Till on that cross as Jesus died,  
The wrath of God was satisfied –  
For every sin on Him was laid;  
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,  
Light of the world by darkness slain:  
Then bursting forth in glorious day  
Up from the grave He rose again!  
And as He stands in victory  
Sin’s curse has lost its grip on me,  
For I am His and He is mine –  
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,  
This is the power of Christ in me;  
From life's first cry to final breath,  
Jesus commands my destiny.  
No power of hell, no scheme of man,  
Can ever pluck me from His hand:  
Till He returns or calls me home,  
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

*Stuart Townend & Keith Getty Copyright © 2001 Thankyou Music*

### **Confession:**

Our loving God knows and understands us better than we do ourselves. God sees our weaknesses and failures and is always ready to forgive us when we repent of our sins. So let us turn to God now in hope and faith.

Lord, you search us out and know us. You discern our thoughts from afar.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord, you trace our journeys and our resting places and are acquainted with all our ways.

**Christ, have mercy.**

There is not a word on our lips, but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon us,  
pardon and deliver us from all our sins,  
confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,  
and keep us in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### **The Collect:**

Eternal Lord,  
our beginning and our end:  
bring us with the whole creation  
to your glory, hidden through past ages  
and made known  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

### **A Reading from the New Testament:** Revelation 5:1-10

**5** Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; <sup>2</sup> and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" <sup>3</sup> And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>4</sup> And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found

worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>5</sup> Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

<sup>6</sup> Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup> When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> They sing a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll

and to open its seals,

for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God

saints from every tribe and language and people and nation;

<sup>10</sup> you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving<sup>[c]</sup> our God, and they will reign on earth."

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Gospel Reading:** John 1:43-51

<sup>43</sup> The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." <sup>46</sup> Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." <sup>47</sup> When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" <sup>48</sup> Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." <sup>49</sup> Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" <sup>50</sup> Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

This is the gospel of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

**Reflection:**

Pre COVID receiving invitations to social events was part of our everyday live, not so at the moment but hopefully one day in the not-too-distant future that will become part of our everyday living once more. However, in more normal times as well as invitations to various social events we are also invited to other things, for instance, to go for a health check, to have our eyes tested, to join the local gym, to become a member of the local slimming club, to attend promotional events and so the list goes on. We are promised that doing or joining these things may well be life changing for us. These invites come through our doors, via text, email and even our television screens, if not on a daily basis then almost certainly weekly.

Many that we might receive we disregard or bin without giving any thought to whatsoever, they just don't interest us and we carry on our lives unaffected by them, but then, just very occasionally, something about the invitation makes us stop and take a second glance.

Today's reading from John's gospel is about an invitation, a life changing invitation and is given by Philip to his friend Nathanael. When Nathanael is told by Philip 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael is far from impressed, rather disdainful and highly sceptical in his reply, laughing in Philip's face he says 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' He mocks, possibly using the words of a local proverb, since the people of Nazareth were universally despised. Nathanael comes from Cana, a village up the road from Nazareth – and he is quite clear about the likelihood of God giving anything of value to his local rivals. If God is going to give something special, it will come in a special way, not from a carpenter's shop up the road, may well be part of Nathanael's thinking. Philip doesn't try to argue his friend out of his prejudice, but rather shares his own experience of Jesus and issues the invitation –'Come and see'.

This invitation to Nathanael is very different from the call to the other disciples. Jesus did not directly call Nathanael to be one of the twelve, he called Philip. It sounds from the gospel reading as though Jesus actively sought out Philip to invite to his inner band of apostles, just as he had deliberately invited Andrew the previous day. In the other three gospels, Jesus calls people from their work to follow him, but here in John's gospel Jesus calls the disciples of John the Baptist to change their religious allegiance in order to follow him.

Some of you may even be thinking, 'Who is this Nathanael?' because he is very rarely heard of or spoken about by this name. Nathanael is not mentioned in any other of the three gospels, but is thought to be Bartholomew of the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke and also of Acts, it is important to make this link.

Philip is key in bringing Nathanael to Jesus and despite his scepticism Nathanael tags along with him to meet Jesus expecting his prejudices to be confirmed. Jesus however, surprises him by taking the initiative and welcoming him saying, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!' This is a compliment: all Israelites knew of the deceit of the patriarch, Jacob who stole his brother's blessing, they knew too that only one in whom there is no deceit could serve the Lord.

Nathanael is taken aback, because Jesus tells him he saw him sitting under the fig tree where Philip found him. He is instantly aware that this was much more than a clever display of clairvoyance. He was conscious that Jesus actually knew him through and through, even though they had never met before.

This was enough for Nathanael. He did not bother to ask questions or to hedge his response with a fall-back position in case he went wrong; he gave himself wholly to Jesus.

As soon as Jesus spotted Nathanael he saw a young man who was straight and honest and upright, someone who might be outspoken in his views but who bore no malice and who would be a loyal and faithful supporter and Nathanael became exactly what Jesus had foreseen.

Nathanael came to faith through his friend. Philip did not urge him or cajole him into following Jesus, but merely shared his own excitement and invited Nathanael to see for himself. Philip did no more; Jesus did all the rest. As soon as Nathanael met Jesus for himself, he believed.

As Christians, all we are required to do is to share our excitement about Jesus and invite our friends to come with us. This does not have to be an 'in your face' experience but a gentle coming alongside and letting them see how we live our lives that makes them want to ask the question. One of my prayers each morning is that 'My love of you may radiate from my very being and touch the lives of all those I meet each day'.

Once they meet Jesus for themselves, they too may believe, for Jesus does all the rest. Jesus can see the potential within every person and can bring that potential to fruition. But he needs us by our words and actions to say 'Come and see.' Amen

### **The Creed:**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came  
down from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and  
the Virgin Mary and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven and is seated  
at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the  
living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the  
Son, who with the Father and the Son is  
worshipped and glorified  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and  
apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the  
forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen**

**Intercessions:**

Blessed are you, Lord God, creator of all life. We thank you because we are wonderfully made. You have given us the gift of communication, eyes to see, ears to hear and lips to speak. Teach us not only to speak to you but to listen, to be quiet in your presence and know that you are God.

Lord, hear us:

**Graciously hear us.**

We pray for all who listen to you in prayer that they may speak to us of your word. We ask your blessing upon the leaders of our churches, upon pastors and counsellors, upon all who are called to listen to the needs and troubles of others.

Lord, hear us:

**Graciously hear us.**

Guide the leaders of the nations in the ways of justice and peace. Keep our ears open to the cry of the poor and the oppressed; let us always be sensitive to the needs of others. We pray for relief agencies and all who are working to relieve suffering.

Lord, hear us:

**Graciously hear us.**

Lord, in our homes help us to listen to each other with undivided attention. Teach us to be sensitive to the various calls for us to share and care for each other. We ask you to protect our homes and loved ones.

Lord, hear us:

**Graciously hear us.**

We remember before you all whose voices are unheard, people who feel neglected or unwanted. We pray for the lonely and those who have no helpers. We remember also all who are ill at this time, especially those suffering from Coronavirus. Giving thanks for the hard work and dedication of our medical staff. We lift to you all those known to us who are in need of prayer this day and all those named on our prayer list Karen Beale, Joy Johnson, David Mullen, Kim Johnstone, Marion & Brian Dethridge, Julie, David Clegg, Ron White, Christina, Angie Skinner, Seamus McGeoghan, Edna Jones, Doris Healey, Freddy, John, Tatiana Crosby, Terry Coburn and Jean Hawes.

Lord, hear us:

**Graciously hear us.**

We rejoice that you hear us and offer us eternal life. We pray for our loved ones departed and for all who have served you faithfully on earth. We remember those who have died recently John Watts, Angie Barnes, Joan Nicolson, Gladys Pile, Iris Brown, Brian Jones and Janet Rolfe. May they find peace in the kingdom of God, where the true light shines. We remember those whose anniversary of death occurs in January Annie Long, Alexandra Chapman, Brian Short, Jessie Bizzell, James Leader, Amy Salvage, Thomas Humphrey, Carol Richardson, Ursula Clark, Eileen Cook and Ann Sharman.

Merciful Father

**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Hymn:** All Hail the Power of Jesu Name

All hail the power of Jesu's name;  
let angels prostrate fall;  
bring forth the royal diadem and  
crown him, crown him, crown him,  
crown him Lord of all.

Crown him, ye martyrs of your God,  
who from his altar call;  
extol the Stem of Jesse's Rod, and  
crown him, crown him, crown him,  
crown him Lord of all.

Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,  
ye ransomed of the fall,  
hail him who saves you by his grace, and  
crown him, crown him, crown him,  
crown him Lord of all.

Hail him, ye heir of David's line  
whom David Lord did call  
the God incarnate, man divine and  
crown him, crown him, crown him,  
crown him Lord of all.

Let every kindred, every tribe  
on this terrestrial ball  
to him all majesty ascribe and  
crown him, crown him, crown him,  
crown him Lord of all.

O that with yonder sacred throng  
we at his feet may fall  
join in the everlasting song and  
crown him, crown him, crown him,  
crown him Lord of all.

*Edward Perronet (1726-1792)*

### **The Blessing:**

May God the Father,  
who called you to follow his Son, our Lord Jesus,  
reveal to you through the Holy Spirit the fullness of God's majesty and glory.  
And as you walk in the footsteps of Jesus,  
may you know yourself to be loved, protected and redeemed.  
And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us all, this day and evermore.

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord

**Thanks be to God. Amen**

### **Acknowledgements**

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