

This Is My Son



Canonbie United & Liddesdale 12th January 2014

Order of Service

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Call to worship By Jordan

Come let us gather by the Jordan
Where God, in Christ, stands with us
Come, let us gather by the Jordan
To worship the Lord in word and thought
Come let us gather by the Jordan
And lift up our voices in song

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of kings!

Then cleansed be every breast from sin;
Make straight the way for God within;
Prepare we in our hearts a home,
Where such a mighty Guest may come.

For you are our salvation, Lord,
Our Refuge, and our great Reward.
Without your grace we waste away
Like flowers that wither and decay

Stretch out your hand, to heal our sore,
And make us rise and fall no more;
Once more upon your people shine,
And fill the world with love divine.

All praise to you eternal Son
Whose advent has our freedom won
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Spirit ever more

Approach

Clean Us

Lord God, Our Father in Heaven

You have called to us, down the centuries to come home to you

To live the the kind of lives you want us to lead

Your love is so persistent, so enduring

Refusing to break or crumble against the walls of indifference we throw up

In the life of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ you came to us

Came to call us home to you

To show us our true natures as children of God and we nailed him to a cross

Lord, your grace and forgiveness are so persistent; so enduring

Refusing to be exhausted by our falling away

By our repeated refusal to follow the ways you have shown us

So much so, that that very cross became a way for us to be washed clean

But like any parent who sees his child go out to play in clean clothes

You have seen us come back to you stained and soiled by the world

We have been spiteful and hurtful

We have been selfish and insensitive

We have said that charity begins at home, and let it end there too

Forgive us Lord

Wash our faults away: wash us us in Love:

We have seen poverty, and hoarded our wealth

We have seen injustice, and said nothing

We have seen the broken by the side of the road and have walked on by

Forgive us Lord

Wash our faults away: wash us us in Justice:

We have heard your word; but have not lived by it

We have called you Lord, but have often acted as if your weren't there at all

Forgive us Lord

Wash our faults away: wash us us in faith:

In the Jordan the Son of Man stood with us all

Let us, too be cleansed

Cleanse our hearts with love so that the world may see your love reflected
Cleanse our minds with justice so that we may speak your justice in the world
Cleanse our souls with faith so that we may follow your son

Address

From Galilee

Water flows from Galilee
By Jordan's banks, then out to sea
To who knows where?
Evaporating into air
To fall as rain on all the world
To quench the thirsty, cleanse the soiled
On fevered brow it brings relief
In church's font proclaims belief
That Son of God stood by side by side
By faltering folk in chilling tide
Where water flowed from Galilee
By Jordan's banks, then out to sea.

Address

My Son

Talk of Christopher, of the things that make me proud of him. Not that he's perfect of course. Nor was I when I was his age. But I like to think my parents have some pride in me.

None of us is perfect, but we should try to be a little better each day, trying to be like our Father - God. We probably won't ever be perfect, but for those times when we fail God, like the best of fathers, puts us back on our feet and helps us try again.

There is a redeemer,
Jesus, gods own son,
Precious lamb of god, messiah,
Holy one,
Thank you oh my father,
For giving us your son,
And leaving your spirit,
til the work on earth is done.

Jesus my redeemer,
Name above all names,
Precious lamb of god, messiah,
Oh, for sinners slain.

When I stand in glory,
I will see his face,
And there I'll serve my king forever,
In that holy place.

Reading(s): Isaiah 42:1-7

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

Acts 10:34-41

Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you

come to me?"

But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Hymn

CH4 457 All Hail The Power Of Jesus Name

All hail the power of Jesus' Name!

Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the royal diadem,

and crown Him Lord of all.

Crown Him, ye martyrs of your God,

who from His altar call;

Praise him whose path of pain you trod

and crown Him Lord of all.

Let every tongue and every tribe

Responsive to the call

To him all majesty ascribe

and 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 Lord of all,

And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17)

Water. We take it so much for granted. We turn on the taps and it's there, and it's only when there's a hosepipe ban that people start to notice it. Not that there's likely to be one of those in the near future. That tells you something about the weather in this part of the world - there are places where people have to walk miles every day to get a tub of water to drink and to cook, and we get up in arms when we're not allowed to spray gallons of the stuff on the ground.

Water - the most essential substance in the world. We use it for all the important things in life. We need it to stay alive. We use it to clean ourselves, to cool ourselves down, to prepare the food we eat. There is nothing as down to earth, nothing so symbolic of the basic necessities of life than water. That is why baptism is such an important symbol for us, and why the image of Christ being baptised is so significant. At his baptism Christ stood up to his chest, then immersed himself in the substance that is so necessary for the most basic essentials of life, in the nitty-gritty of life, if you like.

Water - a symbol not only of life, but of new life. Scientists reckon that life itself, on earth, began in the seas, and that we emerged from the water to fill this planet with new life. For the nine months a baby spends growing in its mother's womb it is surrounded and protected by water - it is literally born from water. There is nothing so symbolic of life - especially new life - than water. That's why baptism is such an important symbol for us and why the image of Christ being baptised is so significant. At his baptism Christ immersed himself in water, then emerged from that water to a promise of new life - not just for himself; but for everyone - new life for you, new life for me, new life for anyone willing to accept it.

When Jesus came to the Jordan to be baptised by John, John at first wasn't for going through with it. He knew who Jesus was and didn't think he was worthy to baptise him. Hold that thought - John didn't think he was worthy to baptise Jesus - but Jesus told him to get on with it.

See this business of “worthiness”. There is a strand of tradition in Christian where we’re encouraged to do ourselves down; to think ourselves ‘unworthy’, insignificant, as miserable sinners. Aye, well, there’s a place for that; but we have to put that in context. Our text this morning reminds us forcefully who Jesus was. When he came up from the waters a voice boomed from Heaven, “This is my son!”. This was the Son of God coming to be baptised. Why did he need baptised? Why did he have to go through this process usually associated with cleansing if he was sinless? And why at the hands of an ordinary human being like you or me?

Imagine the scene. The banks of the Jordan are crowded with ordinary human beings like you and me. Shuffling into the Jordan comes a steady stream of ordinary human beings like me; human beings who’ve made mistakes in their lives; human beings who’ve done things they regret and know were wrong. Give them a word - sinners. There, among that crowd of sinners, stands the son of God. John looks him in the eyes “I’m not worthy”; and Jesus says “Just do it”. “This is my Son” booms a voice from Heaven when he emerges from the waters. A forceful reminder of who Jesus was. The Son of God did stand aloof from human sin - he didn’t think himself so important that he would not submit to baptism by a man like John. The Son of God did not stand apart from humanity at all, or reject our faults and our weaknesses, our flaws and failings. The Son of God stood waist chest-deep in the waters of the Jordan, then immersed himself in that water, sharing it with that crowd of people who had come seeking new life. At that moment Christ immersed himself, not only in the Jordan, but in all humanity.

See this business of “worthiness”? Humility’s an important idea in Christianity, and I don’t want to criticise it; but when we’re being humble we must take care not to slip from thinking ourselves ‘unworthy’ to thinking ourselves ‘worthless’. We are not worthless - none of us. “This is my Son”, boomed a voice from Heaven. The Son of God stood chest deep in the Jordan with failed and flawed human beings like you and me. Who dares say that we are worthless? The Son of God submitted to baptism by a man who felt himself to be unworthy - just like we all do sometimes. Who dares say that we are worthless? The Son of God immersed himself in humanity, among sinners, among people who had not only sinned, but knew they had. People like you and me. Who dares say that we are

worthless? No - we have worth beyond measure, each and every one of us. God thinks we are worth sending his own Son to stand among us all, in the Jordan. God thinks we are worth sending his own Son to experience all the weaknesses and temptations that we experience. God thinks we are worth his own Son, dying on a cross for you, for me. We are loved beyond measure by God. That's got to be worth something.

Jesus stood beside humanity in the Jordan, embracing our faults and our sins, not rejecting them. "This is my Son" boomed a voice from Heaven when he emerged from the waters. A reminder that we are all God's children. All of us. I've said that we shouldn't regard ourselves as worthless - nor we should. I've also said humility's not a bad thing - nor is it. See the thing is, one of the great things about going from church to church as I do is that I've met lots of kind, decent, good people. But we all know, don't we, that we have dark places inside us. We have things about us we don't like other people to know about. The things that bring us to the Jordan. For most of us, though, our lives are pretty together.

There are those, though whose lives aren't together. There are people who are sometimes overwhelmed by their dark places. "This is my Son" boomed a voice from Heaven when Jesus stood with failed and flawed humanity in the Jordan and reminded us that we have worth in the eyes of God, that we are loved by God; that we are all - all of us - God's children. It's a reminder that the drug-addict too is God's child, and has worth in God's eyes. That the criminals in our prisons too are God's children, and have worth in God's eyes. That prostitutes, thugs, drunks, gamblers, fraudsters - all are God's children and have worth in his eyes. Jesus stands in the Jordan for them, just as much as for us, longing for them to step in with him.

"This is my Son" boomed a voice from Heaven. The Son of God stood with humanity in the Jordan - with you and me - to remind us what we are here for. We are called to be what we are meant to be - God's own children. We are called to new life each and every day. We are called to new life, turning away from our dark places that drag us down. The son of God stood with humanity to offer new life - new life where we are not chained to our failings and flaws, but are set free to soar as children of God. To love one another as brother and sister. To live lives filled with kindness, generosity of spirit and care for others - whoever they are;

whatever they may have done. To let the love of God fill us, transform us, shine inside us. To stand, with Christ, in the Jordan.

Lord we rejoice in the love you showed in your Son Jesus Christ. As we worship him, let us be changed by him, to show that same love to all we meet.

From Heaven you came helpless babe
Entered our world, your glory veiled
Not to be served, but to serve
And give your life that we might live
*This is our God, the servant king
He calls us now to follow him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the servant king*

There in the garden of tears
My heavy load he chose to bear
His heart with sorrow was torn
Yet “Not my will, but yours” he said

Come see his hands and his feet
The scars that speak of sacrifice
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered

So let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone him
Each other’s needs to prefer
For it is Christ we are serving

Intercession

For All Your Children

Lord we pray for all your children

Father of all, hear us

In the name of Jesus Christ who healed the sick
Regardless of the cause of their suffering
We remember all who are in pain
All those who are sick in mind or soul or body
All those frustrated by the pains and limitations of age
All those who are stressed out and broken by the strains of the world
The unemployed; the overworked;
We remember too those whose hurts are self-inflicted
Those addicted to drugs; those enslaved by alcohol

Lord we pray for all your children

We pray for healing

Lord we pray for all your children

In the name of our crucified Lord who prayed for his tormentors
We pray for the victims of violence
The beaten spouses; the abused children
The victims of robbery or rape; the families of those who are murdered
The casualties of war, huddling in makeshift hospitals or shattered homes
We remember the perpetrators of violence
Criminals, warmongers, bigots
For they need a change of heart and mind: a change of soul

Lord we pray for all your children

We pray for peace and love

Lord we pray for all your children

In the name of the Lord of all, born in a stable among the poor and despised
We pray for the victims of injustice

The poor and the enslaved
The exploited and the homeless
The outcast; those imprisoned for their faith
We remember the unjust
The slave-traders and the exploiters; the profiteer of poverty
For they need a change of heart and mind: a change of soul.

Lord we pray for all your children

We, the body of Christ petition you
Strengthen us, embolden us
To point to a day when division will be done away with
When pain will be gone; when violence will be forgotten
When injustice will be washed away
When the world is one - one family gathered by one father
May we live as if that day were already here.
Through Jesus Christ Our Lord

Offering

Into The Jordan

Lord God our father
Into the Jordan stepped your Son
To stand beside all your children
We thank you for that
And we thank you that you stand with us today
We thank you for your love
For the many blessings of life
Friends, family, song, laughter
In thanks we bring these offerings
We carry them into the Jordan
And ask you to bless them and to bless us
To rededicate them and to rededicate us
To your work in the world
To the building up of your church
To the bringing in of your kingdom

What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged:
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful,
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness:
take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy-laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Jesus is our only refuge:
take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
Take it to the Lord in prayer;
In his arms he'll take and shield thee;
thou wilt find a solace there.

Benediction

Children Of God

Children of God, the Lord will go with you
He stands with you always
Blessing you
Forgiving you
Love you
Bless all you meet - forgive them; love them
For you are children of God