

## Worship 16/01/22

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome St John's to this the second Sunday of Epiphany, where we reflect upon Jesus turning water into wine and the Spiritual gifts we the body of Christ are given.

### PRAYER FOR TODAY – THE COLLECT

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen.

### HYMN: O Jesus I have promised to serve

1 O Jesus, I have promised  
To serve thee to the end;  
Be thou forever near me,  
My Master and my friend;  
I shall not fear the battle  
If thou art by my side,  
Nor wander from the pathway  
If thou wilt be my guide.

2 O let me feel thee near me!  
The world is ever near:  
I see the sights that dazzle,  
The tempting sounds I hear.  
My foes are ever near me,  
Around me and within;  
But, Jesus, draw thou nearer,  
And shield my soul from sin.

3 O let me hear thee speaking  
In accents clear and still,  
Above the storms of passion,  
The murmurs of self-will.  
O speak to reassure me,  
To hasten or control;  
O speak, and make me listen,  
Thou guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, thou hast promised  
To all who follow thee  
That where thou art in glory  
There shall thy servant be.  
And, Jesus, I have promised

To serve thee to the end;  
 O give me grace to follow,  
 My Master and my friend.

## **READINGS: Mike Ward**

### **1 Corinthians 12 :1-11 NIV Concerning Spiritual Gifts**

**12** Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore, I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

### **John 2:1-11 NIV Jesus Changes Water Into Wine**

**2** On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

## **REFLECTION**

Our two readings today reflect upon spiritual gifts and Jesus's first public ministry turning water into wine.

I find it interesting that it was Mary, Jesus's mother who encouraged him to change the water into wine. Like all good mothers she recognised the gifts her son had and encouraged him to use these gifts for the common good.

I don't think it was all about ensuring the guests could all get drunk, though turning water into wine might be a good party trick for any celebration!

No, it was about ensuring the wedding organisers, were not publicly embarrassed about the lack of provision for their guests. Indeed, in that time, running out of wine, could even leave the bridegroom's family open to legal claims! And like all that Jesus did, it was done well, the best wine.

This shows us a Jesus who is meeting all the needs of people. So for our Gospel writer John, to describe this miracle as the first sign of Jesus's glory, he is really emphasising, Jesus can meet our every need.

I am sure we all as Christians can recall occasions when our every need has been met. The person who stopped to help when my car broke down on a lonely country road, the person we just "happened" to bump into who said just the right word of encouragement although they knew nothing about our internal state. Finding just the right food at a reduced cost when times are hard.

We all have many instances of these kind of events, yet do we always recognise them as the provision of a loving God? I believe these kinds of things happen to all peoples, yet for those who do not know God or Jesus they remain simply "happy coincidences".

Indeed, in our reading from Corinthians, we are told that, "no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. So it would seem that it is the guidance of the Holy Spirit that leads us all to the recognition of when God is working in our lives.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he is emphasising that different gifts are given to different people for the common good.

Furthermore, God gives to each and every believer different gifts and ministries. Yes that is right, we all have something God calls and empowers us to do, for the common good.

There is no hierarchy here of someone being more special than another person. All these gifts are given by the Holy Spirit and all have merit and a part to play in the building of God's Kingdom.

Paul describes a few of these gifts, such as knowledge, perhaps the practical application of wisdom, the knowing what to do in a particular situation.

Faith, well all believers have some but perhaps people like Billy Graham or Mother Teresa had more than most. Gifts of healing, I think this includes practical healing, say a gifted surgeon as well as spiritual healing.

Paul goes on to talk about gifts of prophesy, miracles, discernment between spirits (i.e., is this from God or some other source?). And of course the gift of tongues and their interpretation.

This list is not exhaustive in 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 10, we are told. "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms".

In this church I have seen so many of these gifts being used. I hesitate to make a list because I am sure to miss someone out there are so many! Some things people may not recognise as gifts from God, like at a recent ECC meeting where Robin put forward a paper on a very complex issue in such a way that we could all understand clearly the implications, and Tim chaired and articulated these issues with such clarity. Julie puts together videos for church, amongst many other things, and also has a precious role in fostering and loving orphaned cats! Paula brings such creativity to many things, and there are people who come out at night to open and lock the church for users.

These are only a small sample of the many gifts people bring to St John's, and this reflection would be far too long if I mentioned everybody's contribution! But that is the point it is every body's contribution that makes this part of the body of Christ work.

So let us each begin to recognise the things we can do, the things we feel prompted to do to help one another. If you feel a stirring inside that says yes I quite would like to be say one of the people who delivers the flowers, or is good with chatting with people, or has a sense that there's some gifting you have but don't know how it can be used, then come speak to Adele, myself, Steve or Paula and we will help your gift to flourish.

Let us remember what Paul taught, "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work". Amen.

### **HYMN: Holy Spirit We Welcome You / Chris Bowater**

Holy spirit, we welcome you  
Holy spirit, we welcome you

Move amongst us with holy fire  
As we lay aside all earthly desire  
Hands reach out and hearts aspire  
Holy spirit, holy spirit, holy spirit, we welcome you

Holy spirit, we welcome you  
Holy spirit, we welcome you

Let the breeze of your presence blow,  
That your children here might truly know  
How to move in the spirit's flow.  
Holy spirit, holy spirit, holy spirit, we welcome you

Please accomplish in me today  
Some new work of loving grace I pray  
Unreservedly have your way  
Holy spirit holy spirit holy spirit we welcome you

Please accomplish in me today  
Some new work of loving grace I pray  
Unreservedly have your way  
Holy spirit holy spirit holy spirit we welcome you

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION: Julie Horton**

God our Father, you made each one of us and every good thing comes from you; all that we have and all our skills and talents are your gifts.

We pray for your church throughout the world, and for your people here at St John's. Lord, please guide us as a church and as individuals, as we seek to serve you and to serve our neighbours and community, both in what we do as a church and in what we do in our daily lives. Thank you that you have a plan for each one of us. Equip us to do the things to which you are calling us. May we always use the gifts you have given us rightly, to do your work.

Giver of all good things,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those whose calling is to govern or to work in public services. May they seek the wellbeing of those they lead and serve. Give them the wisdom and the courage to take good decisions; and for those whose hours of work are long or whose responsibilities weigh heavily on them, we ask for strength and peace.

Giver of all good things,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who teach and those who study, and especially for those in education who are struggling as a result of the pandemic. We think of students and schoolchildren whose learning has been disrupted: may they be enabled to learn what they need to learn, and to deal with the pressures that the current situation is causing. We pray for teachers, lecturers and other staff whose workload has increased, or who are covering for absent colleagues, or trying to teach their students despite many difficulties. Lord, give them all strength and wisdom, and relief from stress; may they find that you are with them and ready to help them carry the load.

Giver of all good things,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those we know who are carers or in caring professions, and for all who work in healthcare or as caregivers, especially those who face risks at work because of COVID. We ask that you will protect them from illness, give them strength when they are weary, patience and compassion in their dealings with others, and insight in the decisions they have to make.

Giver of all good things,  
**Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are unwell at present, whether because of Covid or for other reasons. In a moment of quiet, we remember those known to us who are ill or who have other needs. (Silence)

Lord, bring healing and comfort; let them know your loving presence with them and support them in the ways that you know they need.

Giver of all good things,

**Hear our prayer.**

We say together the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen**

**HYMN: All Heaven Declares The Glory of the Living Lord. (Noel Richards)**

All heaven declares  
The glory of the risen Lord.  
Who can compare  
With the beauty of the Lord?  
Forever He will be  
The Lamb upon the throne.  
I gladly bow the knee  
And worship Him alone.  
I will proclaim  
The glory of the risen Lord,  
Who once was slain  
To reconcile man to God.  
Forever You will be  
The Lamb upon the throne.  
I gladly bow the knee  
And worship You alone.

**BLESSING**

**May God Bless you and keep you and make His face to shine upon you and give you His peace. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

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