

Sunday 15 July 2024 HC 2.1

Hymn - TIS 242 - Lord of the Dance

I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth.
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

Chorus

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,
but they would not dance and they would not follow me.
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John.
They came with me and the dance went on. *Chorus*

I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame.
The holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,
and left me there on a cross to die. *Chorus*

I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black.
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the dance and I still go on. *Chorus*

They cut me down and I leapt up high.
I am the life that will never, never die.
I'll live in you if you'll live in me,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he. *Chorus*

The Grace

of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you.
And also with you.

'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Lord have mercy on us, and write your law in our hearts by your Holy Spirit.

Sentence of the Day

Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah 1:17

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Jonah 1

¹The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” ³But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD. ⁴Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.” ⁷Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?” ⁹He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” ¹⁰This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.) ¹¹The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” ¹²“Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.” ¹³Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴Then they cried out to the LORD, “Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, LORD, have done as you pleased.” ¹⁵Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him. ¹⁷Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 139:1-12

¹You have searched me, LORD, **and you know me.**

²You know when I sit and when I rise; **you perceive my thoughts from afar.**

³You discern my going out and my lying down; **you are familiar with all my ways.**

⁴Before a word is on my tongue **you, LORD, know it completely.**

⁵You hem me in behind and before, **and you lay your hand upon me.**

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, **too lofty for me to attain.**

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? **Where can I flee from your presence?**

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; **if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.**

⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn, **if I settle on the far side of the sea,**

¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me, **your right hand will hold me fast.**

¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me **and the light become night around me,"**

¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; **the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.**

Ephesians 2:1-22

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. ³⁹ "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

This is the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

John 5:19-30

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" ³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. ⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" ⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

This is the gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

Sermon - Jonah 1 - Running away from God

Question Time

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the world and the church

Response: Christ Jesus, intercede for us, and in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

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.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Scripture Sentence

Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any one, so that your Father who is in heaven may forgive your trespasses. Mark 11:25

Prayer of Approach

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

The Confession

The Spirit of truth comes to convict us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. Let us open our hearts and confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Greeting of Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn - TIS 607 - St Francis's Prayer

**Make me a channel of your peace:
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your healing power,
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.**

Chorus

**O, Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love with all my soul.**

**Make me a channel of your peace:
where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
Where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's sadness, ever joy. *Chorus***

**Make me a channel of your peace:
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving to all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.**

Thanksgiving for Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. By his death on the cross, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin, and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise: **Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Holy Communion

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

The gifts of God for the people of God

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord. Grape juice is available.

Please come to the Communion Rail if you are able, observing appropriate social distancing.

After Communion

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and love. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in love and obedience that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you for ever.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen

Notices

Hymn - TIS 279 - The King or Glory Comes

Chorus

**The king of glory comes, The nation rejoices
Open the gates before Him, Lift up your voices**

**Who is the king of glory How shall we call Him?
He is Emmanuel The promised of ages *Chorus***

**In all of Galilee In city or village
He goes among his people Curing their illness *Chorus***

**Sing, then of David's son Our savior and brother
In all of Galilee Was never another *Chorus***

**He gave His life for us The pledge of salvation
He took upon Himself The sins of the nation *Chorus***

**He conquered sin and death He truly has risen
But, He will share with us His heavenly vision**

**The king of glory comes The nation rejoices
Open the gates before Him Lift up your voices
Lift up your voices**

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Sermon - Jonah 1

Today we are starting a new sermon series looking at the Old Testament book of the prophet Jonah. The Old Testament is full of interesting characters, and Jonah is certainly one of them.

It is always important to read the different parts of the Bible in their correct genre. The old testament has many different genres of literature: history, poetry, wisdom literature, prophecy and so on. The question we need to answer is what is Jonah's genre? You probably know that the book includes miraculous elements like Jonah being swallowed by a huge fish and surviving in its belly for three days. So, you might think it is some form of fiction, or perhaps allegory, a story with a symbolic meaning. To help us find out, an important question to answer is whether it is factual, and particularly if elements are verifiable from other sources. If it does, then this would give us a different idea of the book's genre.

To this end, it is interesting to find that it is likely that Jonah really did exist, and so the book is not just a story. Verse 1 of the book introduces us to Jonah son of Amittai, and interestingly, Jonah the son of Amittai also gets a mention in 2 Kings 14:25, which tells us that a fellow called Jeroboam restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Dead Sea, in accordance with the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hopher.

While it is not absolute proof, it does give a strong indication that Jonah really existed, and suggests that other details in the book are also true, including Jonah's survival, with God's help, in the belly of a large fish.

Another indication is that Jonah's character flaws ring true. Like all of us, and like most old testament characters, Jonah has his share of character flaws. I know I sometimes imagine that old testament prophets had this direct line to God, that he told them what to do, and they unerringly did it, but this is definitely not the case.

It is precisely what Jonah didn't do.

We're not told how God spoke to Jonah, but he was very clear about what he was to do. "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness

has come up before me." If Jonah were your idealized prophet, he would have headed straight for Nineveh. However, if you can see the map on the screen, you can see what he did. To be blunt, Jonah couldn't have headed any further away from Nineveh if he wanted to. Assuming he started in Gath Hopher, you travel 900km north-east to Nineveh, but Jonah set off for Tarshish ... which is in Spain (4000 km due west) - missing the mark by some 5500 km.

Jonah's mission obviously did not get off to a good start, but God is trying to set him in the right direction. He sends a storm that could swamp the boat, and this, unsurprisingly, panics the crew, each one calling to his own local god to save them. Jonah doesn't seem to be too fussed, and is sleeping in the back of the boat while the crew think the boat is nearly sinking!

It seems to me that this account parallels Jesus calling the wind and waves in our gospel reading this morning - in both cases, the crews feared for their lives, the main protagonist was asleep in the boat, and the storm miraculously subsides. With Jonah, it happens when he is thrown overboard, but with Jesus, when he simply commands the wind and the waves to be still. This points to the fact that Jesus is divine - God the Son, because, as Jonah's crew found out, only the one true God can control the storms.

Despite the way he had disobeyed God, Jonah faithfully proclaims his God, the Hebrew God to the crew on the boat. He proclaims the LORD, as the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land. Jonah was willing to suffer the judgment he deserved for disobeying God, and be thrown overboard. The crew promptly obeyed, and he found himself over the side of the boat, suffering for his disobedience of God.

The reality is that everyone deserves to suffer judgment for our disobedience to God. Some, like Jonah, will suffer it in this life, others can expect it at the Day of Judgement when Jesus returns.

However, just as God rescued Jonah from his judgement by sending the great fish, so he rescues us by sending his Son. Of course, never one to miss a chance, God not only saves Jonah's from shipwreck and drowning, he also saves them to eternal life, as they turned away from their pagan gods to Him, the one true God. As it says in Jonah, the raging sea grew calm, the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a

sacrifice to the LORD (that is Yahweh, JOnah's God's special name) and they made vows to him.

The chapter ends with Jonah caught in the belly of the fish for three days. In Matthew 12:39, Jesus said this would be the only sign given to a wicked and adulterous generation that asked him for a sign. He said no sign would be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.

So not only is the story of Jonah a warning to those who disobey God like Jonah did, to those who try running away from him, it is a sign for us. It points us forward to Jesus, the only true salvation.

In the weeks to come we will see that Jonah eventually does make it to Nineveh, he preaches and the Ninevites do repent.

Jesus says that his generation, and we ourselves, have sometime much greater than Jonah, someone who, like Jonah, spent three days in the world of the dead. Because of Jonah's preaching, the Ninevites believed, and they repented and turned to the one true God. They will rightly stand on the judgement day and condemn any other generation who has Jesus, far greater than Jonah, and yet fall to repent.

So, in conclusion, how will the Ninevites judge you? Will you have run away from God, into the belly of the fish, or will you be found obedient to God, empowered by the Holy Spirit of the resurrected Jesus Christ?