

# Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 16 March 2025 - The Second Sunday of Lent

**Lectionary Readings** (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Genesis 15.1-12, 17-18, Psalm 27; Philippians 3.17 - 4.1; Luke 13.31- 35

## Homily

**Today's homily has been written by the Revd Jennifer Totney, Director of Contextual Training, Westcott House**

'Today and tomorrow and the next day'

As we reach the second Sunday of Lent, I wonder if you are counting the days? Perhaps you have given something up for Lent, and are counting the days until you can have chocolate or coffee, or check your social media accounts. Perhaps it has felt like a long winter, and you are counting the days until the clocks change. Perhaps there is a date in your diary - a celebration approaching, or when you are expecting some news.

When we are looking forward to something, we tend to be counting down the days, longing for that moment to arrive. Jesus' counting of the days in our gospel reading points to the journey he is making, the journey towards Jerusalem. 'Today and tomorrow and the next day, I must be on my way.' Yet Jesus' longing is not specifically about reaching the destination. He is not so much concerned about his own arrival, but about relationship and community. His longing is for people. 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often have I desired to gather your children as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.' Jesus longs to offer connection and protection, for people to respond to his call.

*Today, and tomorrow and the next day*

Such longing and looking forward might suggest that the present moment does not matter. Is Lent only about the looking ahead to its end? Yet Jesus is clear in his response to the Pharisees who warn him about present danger, that he will continue his ministry of healing and liberation today. The future, whether it is to be longed for or to be feared, should not mean that we do not pay attention to the here and now. The disciplines of Lent, whether giving something up, or taking something up such as prayer, or reading the Bible, or a Lent course, are about drawing us back to ourselves and to God. They are a way to focus on our relationship with God in the midst of all the distractions we too easily find. They help us to notice the presence of God in our daily lives and respond to him.

*Today, and tomorrow and the next day*

This does not mean we close our horizons. Perhaps surprisingly, by being rooted in the moment, we open ourselves up to the possibilities of the future. Jesus talks about both continuing his work where he finds himself and being on his way. Paying attention to the

here and now does not mean Jesus is not also looking ahead. He knows that his ministry of healing is part of his journey towards Jerusalem, part of the opposition he is encountering from Herod, from the Pharisees, from the authorities of his time. He knows all too well what is to come - that Jerusalem will be the place of his passion and death.

As we reconnect in the present moment with God during Lent, we may well find ourselves being drawn into God's future, for us and for the world. This may not always be an easy journey. Lent can be a time to acknowledge the pain and brokenness in our own lives and in our world. It can be challenging to offer healing in a broken world, to offer a different vision of living. Jesus laments that the children of Jerusalem are not willing to be gathered under his wings. In a complex world, it can be tempting to keep our eyes down and not to contemplate the future. But as we pay attention to God's presence, so often God stirs up in us a desire for his future. When we slow down to notice the fragility of creation, to see the inequalities in our communities, or to recognise God's image in those around us, we begin to see the possibilities of transformation.

Today and tomorrow *and the next day*

Jesus words offer us a new way of looking at those longings, at our hopes and our fears. The work that Jesus has begun will be completed on the 'third day.' Jesus can see beyond the present threat that the Pharisees try to warn him about, beyond the suffering and death that await him in Jerusalem. The 'next day' is the day of resurrection. Lent is an opportunity to nurture the longing for ourselves and all people to be drawn under the wings of God's love. We long for Easter not just as the end of our Lenten disciplines, when we can have that chocolate or coffee, but as the fulfilment of the deep desire of our hearts. It is in the dawning light of the third day that we can look beyond the fears and challenges of the tomorrow we might imagine, to the future that God calls us towards. A future in which all our longings are transformed in his love.

So, as we continue our journey through Lent, '*today and tomorrow, the next day*', we are reminded to pay attention to each day, to stand firm where we are. We are encouraged to look to tomorrow, to express our hopes for the future. And we are also invited to look up, to cultivate longing for that which is beyond, for all that God draws us into through his love.

Then we will be able to cry out, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' This call recognises Jesus coming in our midst. This is a cry not only for the crowds of Palm Sunday, but for every day. As we meet Christ in our worship, in our daily lives, in our communities and homes, we recognise our longings deepened. And it is a cry for the third day, the day Christ finishes his work, and all our longings are fulfilled.

### ***Ways to Engage all Generations***

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt or I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt when \_\_\_\_\_ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why \_\_\_\_\_ said \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

Talk about how you are marking the season of Lent.

- I wonder what your hopes are for tomorrow and the next day and the future?
- I wonder what you long for?
- I wonder what God longs for you?

Draw a picture of a mother hen and her chicks

- I wonder who is gathered under the wings?
- I wonder how it would feel?

### ***Suggested intercessions***

Lord, in this season of Lent,  
inspire your church with a deeper longing to follow Christ on his journey towards Jerusalem.

We pray for all who lead and serve the church;  
for Bishop Dagmar and all who minister locally.  
Keep us firm in faith and expectant for his coming.

**R/**

Lord, as we marvel at the beauty of the stars of the sky,  
stir in us a longing to care for your creation.

As we see division and conflict around the world,  
stir in us a longing to work for peace.

As we pay attention to those who are oppressed and marginalised,  
stir in us a longing to bring about freedom and justice.

**R/**

Lord, we pray for our community.

For our neighbours, for all who live and work here.

Help us this Lent to pay attention to those around us.

Guide and inspire us to support and uphold one another in love.

**R/**

Lord, we pray for all who long for healing of body, mind or spirit.  
For those who have lost hope, those who are disappointed or discouraged;  
For all in prison, and those in fear for their lives.  
For those on our hearts, and all who have asked for our prayers.  
Gather them under your wings. Grant them strength and protection, comfort and healing.  
**R/**

Lord, we remember those who have died.  
As we give thanks that our citizenship is in heaven,  
comfort those who mourn,  
and bring us with all who have gone before us  
to your third day of resurrection joy.  
**R/**

### ***Suggested hymns/songs***

As the deer pants for the water  
Dear Lord and Father of mankind  
Jesu, lover of my soul  
Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
The God of Abram praise  
To be in your presence

### ***Activities to accompany the service***

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.com/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>  
(weekly@lectionary resource)