



## Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June, St Peter's Day Ananias of Damascus

### PREPARATION

#### Welcome and Prayer

Leader We come from scattered lives to meet with God.

Let us recognise His presence with us wherever we are right now

*Silence is kept*

As God's people we have gathered

**All let us worship together**

#### Hymn How great thou art

O Lord my God,  
When I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the works  
Thy Hands have made;  
I see the stars,  
I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout  
The universe displayed.'

*Then sings my soul,  
My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art,  
How great Thou art.  
Then sings my soul,  
My Saviour God, to Thee,  
How great Thou art,  
How great Thou art!*

And when I think,  
That God, His Son not sparing;  
Sent Him to die,  
I scarce can take it in;  
That on the Cross,  
My burden gladly bearing,  
He bled and died  
To take away my sin.

*Then sings my soul...*

When Christ shall come,  
With shout of acclamation,  
And take me home,  
What joy shall fill my heart.  
Then shall I bow,  
In humble adoration,  
And there proclaim:  
"My God, how great Thou art!"  
*Then sings my soul...*

### Introduction to St Peter's Day and theme

#### Opening Activity - Trust

#### Confession

Leader Jesus, we come to you sorry for our sins,  
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength,  
and not by the power of your resurrection.  
In your mercy, forgive us.

**All**      **Lord, hear us and help us.**

Leader      Like Peter we have denied you  
through what we have said and how we have acted.  
In your mercy, forgive us.

**All**      **Lord, hear us and help us.**

Leader      We have too often lived for this world alone,  
and not for Your kingdom.  
In your mercy, forgive us.

**All**      **Lord, hear us and help us.**

**Absolution** – *hand washing. As you say these words wash your hands with soap and water or hand gel*

Leader      May the Father of all mercies  
cleanse us from our sins,  
and restore us in his image  
to the praise and glory of his name,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All**      **Amen**

**Collect** (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Trinity)

Leader      God our saviour, look on this wounded world  
in pity and in power; hold us fast to your promises of peace  
won for us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

**Hymn** ~ **Dear Lord and Father of Mankind** (*played by Matthew Rickard*)

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,	till all our strivings cease;
forgive our foolish ways;	take from our souls the strain and
reclothe us in our rightful mind,	stress,
in purer lives thy service find,	and let our ordered lives confess
in deeper reverence, praise.	the beauty of thy peace.

O sabbath rest by Galilee,	Breathe through the heats of our
O calm of hills above,	desire
where Jesus knelt to share with thee	thy coolness and thy balm;
the silence of eternity,	let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
interpreted by love!	speaking through the earthquake, wind,
Drop thy still dews of quietness,	and fire,
	O still, small voice of calm.

## Bible readings;

### *Genesis 6:9-22 Read by Claire Lee, All Souls'*

<sup>9</sup> This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. <sup>10</sup> Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

<sup>11</sup> Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. <sup>12</sup> God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. <sup>13</sup> So God said to Noah, 'I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. <sup>14</sup> So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. <sup>15</sup> This is how you are to build it: the ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. <sup>16</sup> Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. <sup>17</sup> I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. <sup>18</sup> But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark – you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you. <sup>19</sup> You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. <sup>20</sup> Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. <sup>21</sup> You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.'

<sup>22</sup> Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

### *Acts 9:1-19a (Summarised version) – read by Rob Moore, St Peter's*

Saul did not believe in Jesus, and it was his job to find Jesus' followers and put them in jail. One day he set off for a town called Damascus, looking for Christians to arrest.

Suddenly, a bright light shone down from Heaven. Saul fell to the ground and heard a voice coming from nowhere.

"Saul. Why are you persecuting me?"

"Who are you?" asked Saul.

"I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. Go to Damascus and you will be told what to do next"

Saul got to his feet but found that he could not see. His travelling companions were also confused and led him to Damascus. Whilst in Damascus, Saul spent his time praying.

Meanwhile, Jesus spoke in a vision to a man who lived in Damascus called Ananias and told him to go to the house where Saul was staying and place his hands on Saul's eyes so he could see again.



Ananias was shocked, because he heard Saul was in Damascus to put Christians in jail, but God told him he had chosen Saul to tell people about Jesus. So Ananias went to find Saul and placed his hands upon him. He said:

“Brother Saul, Jesus himself has sent me here so that you will see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit”

Suddenly Saul could see again. He was baptised and given something to eat. After this, Saul changed his name to Paul, and went to the synagogue to preach that Jesus is the son of God.

**Sermon by Rev Sam Waako** 'Not everyone can be Paul (But everyone can be Ananias)'

This week we continue with our sermon series, looking at some of the 'ordinary and extra ordinary' characters in the Early Church through the book of Acts. And this week, we look at Ananias, who is not to be confused with the Ananias we looked at a couple of weeks ago, who with his wife Sapphira lied to the Holy spirit, or Ananias the high priest who Paul appeared before at the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

The Ananias am referring to is the 'Ananias of Damascus' who makes a very brief appearance in scripture in our Acts text today, and after fulfilling God's errand, he disappears from the pages of scripture as quickly as he had appeared. Which means, apart from his small act of trust and obedience in the Acts text, that leads to a significant change in launching the career of the most influential of the Apostles, we don't know much about this Ananias; we don't know if he was young or old, what he did for a living, whether he had any special education or training, whether he had any special gifts.. we don't know. What we know is that he was an ordinary follower of Jesus like any of us, who was ready when the Lord called his name.

Acts 9.1-19 is a popular passage, especially because of the drama surrounding Saul's conversion experience. But the part that is often passed over is that that Ananias plays in this drama, which this week reminded me of another person in recent history who played a significant role but only got the recognition he deserved after his death in 2006.



I'm talking about Peter Norman, a name I suspect many might not be familiar with. Peter Norman was the third person in what is considered to be one of the most iconic images of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, taken at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico. Time Magazine considers this image to be "perhaps the most iconic sports photograph ever taken." But this image would never have had the same impact it had on raising awareness of racism in sport and the

discrimination African Americans were facing at that time in America, if Peter Norman had chosen not to stand on that podium that day with Tommie Smith and John Carlos who were the architects of this silent but powerful protest.

Peter Norman had a choice not to be a part of the silent protest when Smith and Carlos informed him of what they planned to do ~ but he chose to,

and in his own words he says to the two men, "I will stand with you." But the consequences of this act were not kind to Peter unlike the other two Americans who went on to be Heroes especially in their native America. Peter Norman was shunned by even his own country Australia; he was never chosen again to compete in the Olympics even after qualifying for the 1972 Olympics in Munich. Sadly, his small but significant role on that day slowly but surely begun to be recognised after His death in 2006. His status as a hero in the American civil rights movement was further enhanced by a record-breaking documentary done on his life in 2008 called 'Salute.'

You could say Ananias was faced with similar consequences. Just like Peter Norman might have had an idea of what his actions would lead to (am sure not to the extent it turned out) Ananias was well aware of Saul's reputation...as the number one persecutor of Christians. In fact, at this point, he had been on his way to Damascus to arrest any Christians he could find and take them to Jerusalem, where many would end up in prison or lose their lives. I have a feeling when God commanded him to go to Saul, he might have asked himself questions like; What awaits me if I go to Saul and his people? What will my fellow Christians especially in Damascus think of me having any associations with this man?

And so, like many of us am sure would have done, Ananias initially points out the 'problem' to God, effectively telling God how big this problem is. Ananias humanly shows weakness by highlighting how big the problem is and momentarily forgets how Big God is, compared to the problem.

Understandably Ananias was a little nervous about the call. And so he was apprehensive at best and fearful at worst. But the thing is, God knew exactly who Saul was and gave Ananias the assurance that He was still in control. And fortunately for Ananias, when it came to it, he chose to believe and trust in the presence and power of God, and so he went. And we know the rest of the story concerning Saul, now Paul.

Ananias' role in the drama of acts is small, yet very significant. In him we see a man who wavered when he heard God's voice, yet despite his initial hesitation, he was faithful and obedient. And God went on to use Ananias to further His purposes in launching Paul's career. Ananias small act of obedience led to a great harvest for the kingdom.

And the biggest lesson we can learn from the story of Ananias is that, small acts of obedience that are premised on the word of God, even when they seem contrary to reason, and even when they seem to challenge what seems so plain, can have great significance. Our perspective is so small but God's perspective is so big and wide.. he sees what we can't see. We just need to rely on Him, on His word, on His voice, trusting that he will lead us all the way.

We are not all called to be Paul or like Noah in our Genesis reading. We are not all going to be the one at the front, the one leading the crowd, the one who is recognized for their impact. But all of us are called to be Ananias. Just

ordinary people, like Ananias, like Peter Norman, doing small acts of trust and obedience and leaving the rest to God.

This means approaching every single interaction, no matter how common or ordinary it might seem to be with the same words that characterize Ananias and other heroes in the bible we read of:

“Here I am, Lord.”

### Hymn      **Trust and obey**

When we walk with the Lord  
in the light of His word,  
what a glory He sheds on our way!  
While we do His good will,  
He abides with us still,  
and with all who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey,  
for there's no other way  
to be happy in Jesus,  
but to trust and obey.*

Not a shadow can rise,  
not a cloud in the skies,  
but His smile quickly drives it away;  
not a doubt nor a fear,  
not a sigh nor a tear,  
can abide while we trust and obey.

*Trust and obey . . .*

Not a burden we bear,  
not a sorrow we share,  
but our toil He doth richly repay;

not a grief nor a loss,  
not a frown nor a cross,  
but is blest if we trust and obey.

*Trust and obey . . .*

But we never can prove  
the delights of His love,  
until all on the altar we lay;  
for the favour He shows,  
and the joy He bestows  
are for them who will trust and obey.

*Trust and obey . . .*

Then in fellowship sweet,  
we will sit at His feet,  
or we'll walk by His side in the way.  
What He says we will do,  
where He sends we will go,  
never fear, only trust and obey.

*Trust and obey . . .*

Words by John Henry Sammis  
Music by Daniel Brink Towner

### Creed

**Leader**      We say together in faith  
**All**          **Holy, holy, holy Is the Lord God almighty,  
who was, and is, and is to come.**

**All**          We believe in God the Father, who created all things  
**For by His will they were created and have their being**

**All**          We believe in God the Son, who was slain  
**For with His blood, He purchased us for God, from every tribe and  
language, from every people and nation**

**All**          We believe in God the Holy Spirit  
**The spirit and Bride say, 'come!'**  
**Even so come, Lord Jesus! Amen**

This time @home – Sue Harvey, St Peter's

Prayers – Kay Dodds, St Mark's

Heavenly Father, it is our joy and our privilege to come together in prayer this morning. Despite the method of our gathering, we are confident that you will hear our concerns and meet our needs when we pray in faith.

Uppermost of those concerns, continues to be Covid-19 and the impact it has had and continues to have on our world, our country and ourselves.

We express our sorrow for lives lost, hopes dashed and futures marred. We pray for those who have lost loved ones before their time and we ask that You be with the bereaved as they come to terms with their loss. We pray for those who are worried about the security of their jobs at this time. We give thanks for the many keyworkers who have cared for the sick and dying and those who have enabled our society to function. Now that the pandemic is easing, we pray that the stress they have endured may be replaced by Your peace. We pray for those who feel particularly disrupted, whose life events and celebrations have been cancelled or postponed, and those whose hopes and dreams for the future feel uncertain. We pray this morning for those in our parish who are unwell: Mary & Bob Baker, Eileen & Peter Bliss, Barbara Lanaway, Trevor Lloyd and Mary McAvoy.

We pray for world leaders, both internationally and closer to home, for wisdom and clarity and a vision of community beyond national borders. May the glimpses of a kinder society that we have seen during this time be made reality and may our wonder at the beauty of Your creation, so present with us at this time, become a commitment to the stewardship of the earth and the well-being of our environment.

We pray for Your church and give thanks that through Your Spirit, it has seen a time of fruitfulness as it reaches out to people who may not normally feel able to visit our buildings. May we find ways to maintain that contact and enable people to be welcomed into the fellowship of the church. We give thanks to Jonathan and the whole ministry team who have used their many gifts during this time to enable services to take place and parish life to flourish.

We take a moment of quiet to savour the gift of Your grace in our lives.....as we look forward to our future together, may we, like Noah, be credited with righteousness, and like Ananias, be able to respond to the prompting of Your Holy Spirit, so that from our ordinary lives, extraordinary things may happen.

Merciful Father

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

And now to conclude this time of prayer, let us join together in saying the prayer which Jesus himself taught us



## The Lord's Prayer

**All** 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

Notices see Notes and News

## Hymn King of love and grace (Guardian)

King of love and grace	<i>Love will find me</i>	All Your promises will
My guardian	<i>Goodness and mercy</i>	stand
All my hopes and fears	<i>Will always follow</i>	Forever
Are in Your hands	<i>You go before me</i>	You're my defender
I'm in Your hands	<i>My Guardian</i>	<i>You go before me . . .</i>
Where You go I'll go	When I hear You say	You are God our great
Show me the way	Trust and obey	defender
Every step I take	I will walk by faith	Strong in love forever
Be now my guide	And not by sight	faithful
God on my side	God of my life	We are Yours
<i>You go before me</i>	So let Your kingdom	and we will trust in You
<i>You're there beside me</i>	come	
<i>And if I wander</i>	Your will be done	

## Closing Prayer and Blessing

**All** In darkness and in light, in trouble and in joy,  
help us, heavenly Father, to trust your love,  
to serve your purpose, and to praise your name;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Leader The Lord bless you and watch over you,  
the Lord make his face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you,  
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace;  
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be with you always.

**All** Amen

Worshipping ▶ Loving ▶ Sharing ▶ Growing

