

St Andrew's – God's Church in Chilton Moor & Fencehouses

Hymns of Worship and Praise for Today

46 At the name of Jesus v 1,2,3,4,7

379 O Lord hear my prayer

111 Do not be afraid

531 We hail thy presence glorious

164 Go forth and tell

Wednesday 3rd August

1:30pm Holy Communion. St Andrew's Chilton Moor

News

Coming up on 5th November (afternoon or evening but exact time to be confirmed) we'll be hosting our deanery confirmation service at St.

Andrew's Chilton Moor. People choose to come to confirmation for a variety of reasons. Some because they have found faith for themselves and want to take on the promises made for them at baptism. Others like me because we want to say we've now found a home within the Church of England and we want to commit to being part of this.

It's a public way of confirming your faith. It's done with friends around you. The candidates I've supported through confirmation have sometimes been nervous but have always enjoyed the experience.

Confirmation is a special church service in which a person confirms the promises that were made when they were baptised. If you were baptised at a christening when you were a child, your parents and godparents made these promises on your behalf. As a young person or adult, you may be ready to affirm these promises for yourself and commit your life to following Jesus Christ. At a confirmation service, you make these promises for yourself. Your friends and family as well as the local Christian community will be there to promise to support and pray for you.

The local bishop will lay their hands on your head and ask God's Holy Spirit to give you the strength and commitment to live God's way for the rest of your life.

We'll be looking to start confirmation preparation in the Autumn, with two separate groups running if needed, one for adults and one for young people. If it's something you think could be for you do have a chat with Tony, Christine or myself.

Also on 15th September there will be a pilgrimage which will be following the Angel's way. Journeying with a replica of the Lindisfarne gospels and Cuthbert's coffin. This is to celebrate the Lindisfarne gospels going on display at the Laing gallery. The route will join us passing from Finchale into Lumley. Leaving Christ Church at about midday and on into Chester-le-Street. We're invited to join the pilgrimage for as far as we wish. I think I'll be joining on the journey down the hill into Chester-le-Street where I've offered to help carry the coffin. It's a nice walk and there's no restriction on numbers so if you would like to do just join us on the day.

There is more information on the routes generally on the visit Durham website, including details of the way of learning which takes you past St. Andrew's.

Remember, we're here for you if you want to talk or are struggling with anything. Any problems or if you know someone who would like a visit from clergy give us a ring Tony is on 5120587 and I'm on 3882228.

Grace and Peace, John, Tony and Christine

We are now well into the section of Luke's Gospel, known as the "travel narrative" where Jesus has set his sights on Jerusalem and spends about ten chapters getting there. Jesus has a lot to say in these chapters, much of it unique to Luke's Gospel.

Some of Jesus' best-known phrases, those pithy sayings that would certainly make it into a Jesus bestseller, *Helpful Advice for Busy Christians*, are found in the gospel reading for this week. The challenge, of course, is how to use these verses as more than memorable words.

Meaning in Context

While the section begins with "Do not fear, little flock," these words of encouragement might be better heard as the conclusion to Jesus' previous sayings. Jesus has just pointed out the lilies of the field that grow because of God's care, the ravens for which God provides. In other words, "do not fear" is not an out-of-the-blue optimistic statement, pie-in-the-sky platitude, but one grounded in the claim that God's faithfulness extends to the entirety of God's creation. At this time in his ministry Jesus would be thinking about what his disciples needed to hear. Not advice, not memory verses to be tested on later, not proverbs or history, but words that when heard again, when the disciples are sitting around wondering what to do, they might look up and say to each other, "Remember when Jesus said...?" And the words they remember Jesus saying will not just be words from way back when Jesus was around, but words that continue to impress, inspire, uphold, and matter.

Luke's portrait of Jesus and his presentation of the kingdom of God is rooted in the attention to and care of the entirety of what God has created and continues to create. We might remember the fact that Luke traces Jesus' genealogy back to Adam, the first man. Luke's birth narratives (John and Jesus) uphold the creative gift of giving birth, through unexpected means as Elizabeth and Mary.

There is a remarkable thread that runs through this Gospel and its second volume, Acts: the ongoing creation and creative activity of God, for unexpected individuals, for communities, for a world beyond our imagining.

More Tips for Living

It would be easier to understand this passage if we just had one short and sweet mantra from Jesus. So, what do we do with several such tips for Christian living? You could pick one and that would be a very good option. So, choose one of Jesus' phrases in this passage that could just be perceived as helpful advice and work it in its entirety, how it has an impact on our lives as faithful disciples, what God is up to, and so on.

We are only three chapters into the travel narrative. It makes sense that Jesus consoles his followers not to fear and follows with the promise of God's kingdom.

That is where it starts, right? The certainty of God's favour, revealed, lived, died, raised, and ascended in Jesus. It is only after this promise that we can imagine any kind of concept of what our treasure might be. Given the choice of treasure first, we are likely to put our hope in achievements, acquisitions, and assets. Yet, when the lack of fear precedes our fear-driven desires for possessions, purchases, and procurements we might actually be able to imagine treasures beyond self-driven determination, self-assessed success, and self-obsessed security.

Being ready for Jesus' second coming is less about any actual time and place and more about imagining Jesus' activity in the world, when and where you least expect it or imagine seeing it. In other words, waiting around, waiting for instructions, is not going to cut it. Fear, treasure, and being prepared is **the** pattern for discipleship. Being without fear, knowing the source of your treasure — that is, your identity, your worth — makes it possible to be prepared for and an actual participant in God's kingdom. **Amen**