

**ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY OF ALL SAINTS' MARSEILLE**

**WITH AIX-EN-PROVENCE AND THE LUBERON**

**Sermon – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

**Zoom service**

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John 12.23. ***Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”***

Today we have so many ways and means of telling the time. The watch I wear has a solar panel face which cleverly charges the battery throughout the day. It also tells me the days of the week and the months of the year: such are the wonders of modern technology! Yet although displays of the time are all around us, the wearing of a watch is for many nothing more than a fashion accessory. I once stayed with someone who had a large display cabinet in his bedroom. It was full of very expensive watches, so he could wear a different one each day.

Jesus, of course, didn't have a watch or any other kind of timepiece. But he knew all about time. At the marriage at Cana, in the early days of his ministry, he told his mother, ***My hour has not yet come. John 2.4.*** When his teaching astonished the religious leaders in Jerusalem, their attempt to arrest him failed, ***because his hour had not yet come John 7.30.*** Again ***while he was teaching in the treasury of the temple, no one arrested him, because his hour had not come. John 8.20.***

But, in today's Gospel, Jesus announces the 'hour' *has* now come, ***“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified “*** How Jesus knew this can be found in two incidents, one of which precedes today's Gospel passage.

In the previous chapter, the raising of Lazarus had brought so many people to believe in Jesus that many Pharisees and other leaders of the Jewish community felt they had no alternative: ***So from that day on they planned to put him to death. John 11.53.*** In fact the reaction to the miracle of Lazarus was so great the authorities also plotted the death of Lazarus as well. *John 12.10-11.*

The second incident is seen in the opening of our Gospel passage: the arrival of the Greeks wishing to see Jesus. But what had they to do with Jesus's "hour"? How did they fit into the story? They were probably Greeks who had converted to Judaism as they had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. They approached Philip, who told Andrew, and they both **went and told Jesus John 12.22**. End of story. Despite this elaborate build up, we're never told whether they actually met Jesus, or came to any kind of faith in him. But their arrival emphasises the importance of the verse that precedes today's reading: **The Pharisees then said to one another, 'You see, you can do nothing . Look the world has gone after him!'** John 12.19.

The arrival of **the world** in the persons of the Greeks indicates that Jesus's 'hour' has come, his death is imminent. At the end of the reading Jesus says, **'Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world is driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people** (some ancient texts read "all things") **to myself. He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.**

Jesus was well aware of the time: he knew his 'hour' had come. And today our 'hour' has come as we move to the crucial part of our Lenten observance. Today is Passion Sunday when we go with Jesus to his 'hour'. Through Lent we have perhaps been focused on ourselves and our penitential life, but now we turn to Jesus and his Passion leading to the Cross. This is reflected in the seasonal aspects of our worship. The Invitation to Confession, Gospel Acclamation, specific Intercessions, Introduction to the Peace, Extended Preface in the Eucharistic Prayer and the words of the Blessing all now focus on the crucified Christ. And so should this be our focus as Lent now moves to its close and climax.

Passiontide calls us to go with Jesus, in his 'hour', through his suffering, death and resurrection. We are not just recalling and commemorating a long past historic event. Rather we seek to identify ourselves with the events of Christ's Passion. We do this in our worship, and this week in our Lent Study Group we shall go with Jesus to Jerusalem, and then in Holy Week reflect on all that happened leading up to the Cross. Next Sunday's service will see the full story in the long reading the Passion, this year from St Mark's Gospel.

Through his life death and resurrection Jesus changed and renewed humanity's relationship with God as foreseen in today's Old Testament reading from Jeremiah: **The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah . . . I will put my law within**

***them, and write on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be my people . . . for I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sin no more. Jeremiah 31.31,33 & 34.***

As Jesus comes to and goes through his 'hour' so it should be a life changing hour for us. Each year as we move through this 'hour', we should be moving on in our life with God. As we grow older so much changes in our lives, both physically, emotionally and spiritually. Our relationship with God is not something static. Our faith may be the foundation of our life and the way we try to live, but it should be ever-changing as with the rest of our lives. People often lose their faith because it fails to move on with their lives. It remains embedded in the faith they grew up in or when they came to faith through a conversion experience. For some people, as life moves on, their relationship with God gets left behind and God and his Church become an irrelevance.

Going with Christ through the 'hour' of his passion and death every year, and asking what this means for us at *this* stage in our lives, can help us to rise with the Risen Lord to a renewed life on Easter Day. We too can be resurrected in our relationship with God.

Amen.