

29th June, 2025

The paper-version Service



St Andrew's
Church



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks
Responding to God's Love



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's

Service.

Opening Prayer: 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.**

Hymn:

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You
Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up
Shining' in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You
Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up
Shining' in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy

To see You high and lifted up
Shining' in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy

To see You high and lifted up
Shining' in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy.

The Sermon by Andrew Walters.

Read Isaiah 61:1-11 and Matthew 28:16-20 – The Purposeful Life.

Lord Heavenly Father, come by your spirit and give ears to hear and hearts to receive the word that I've meditated on from you in Jesus' name. Amen

Wow, you can imagine being there, looking in the eyes of the risen Jesus. But some still had doubts. I will attempt to unpack what Jesus is saying here to his disciples, and then I would like to give some examples or tools to help us do what Jesus is commanding of his disciples and, of course, us.

I will of course will be using the bible to help us. As you know, the bible is a collection of writings with the spirit of God running right through. I see the bible as God's story. Please think of it as a play for a moment. Act one: creation. Act two: Israel. Act three: Jesus in the middle. Act four: Church. Act 5: the end. I will be moving through these as we go. As you can see, our first reading is from Isaiah Act 2 and the second reading was from act 3.

If looking into Jesus' risen eyes wasn't enough for some (verse 17), then I thought we'd start with his authority (verse 18). Jesus in the bible is referred to as the "Last Adam" or the "second Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:21-22) for since death came through a man the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all died so through Christ all will be made alive. Paul adds in Romans 5:20-21, the law was added so that the trespasses might increase but where sin increased grace increased all the more. Just as sin reigned in death so also grace reigned through righteousness to bring eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

So Paul started in act one, creation, with Adam then to act two with Israel with Moses' law and then act three to Jesus. I find it fascinating to find all these threads running through these acts of the play. If I can impart anything from this talk it would be to share the love of studying the scriptures. Here we see Jesus, the risen Jesus, sending out with the holy spirit (act 5- the end times, a glimpse of what is to come, literally heaven on earth).

He has made the way, the waymaker. We make disciples and baptize with the Spirit, teaching them to obey everything they have commanded you.

Everything he has commanded, love God with all your heart, mind and all your soul. Matt 22:37 and John 13:34-35 says a new command I give you, love one another as I have loved you. By this, as will know that you are my disciples.

We are not alone in this. Disciple making and evangelizing, baptizing. Frightening stuff, when you're alone. Our first reading, Isaiah 61:11, this is the

scroll Jesus was given when he first returned to Nazareth (Luke 4:18) the spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the prisoner and recovery of sight to release the oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

The people of Nazareth thought they knew who Jesus was because that was where he grew up. But Jesus was fulfilling all of the messianic prophecies and as these disciples are in Jesus, as are we, those who believe in him as the risen lord. There it is, our target audience, pretty wide-ranging. These are who we are to make disciples of. Crucially, the spirit is given.

It is given as we well know. In John 14:20-21, on that day you will release that I am in my father and you are in me and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my father and I too will love and show myself to him. There we are in him, Jesus, and Jesus is in the father, we just turn from our old selves and love him. The bible calls it repentance. Turn from what separates us from him.

To love our neighbours, the thing that for me the Lord has taught us is to meet people where they are. Engaging in conversation, finding out their worries, hopes and dreams. Test the water, so to speak. Tell where your hope is but tread carefully as you don't want to appear a religious nutter that you're redeemed and made righteous and are lording over them. You don't want to be a salesman but just be honest and sincere and the spirit of the Lord will give you discernment.

I was talking to a neighbour of where I was working. She thought I was calm and laid back. We have had a number of conversations outside of this particular job. I told her that I did get anxious and I know when I am because I get a pain in my chest (all is checked, all is okay!) I said I find that to pray is the best answer because when I do I hand it over and it goes. She said she did the same but didn't seem to want to go any further so I left it. The Spirit of our Lord will move if she responds or not but a seed is planted. Street Pastoring has given me lots of opportunities, especially at the Isle of Wight music festival this weekend. For me, the purpose of the church is to bring hope. Arguing amongst ourselves can destroy that. Unity is what is needed. My colleagues in street pastoring are from all denominations and we just want to show using words if we can the hope found in his resurrection and prayer. The face, the words the image we see is made real by your spirit a little of heaven on earth to the end of time. Please Lord Jesus. Amen.

2nd Sunday after Trinity: *Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you. Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer: *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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: July 16th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: June 25th and July 23rd at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at
<https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>