

Sunday 23rd March 2025: Third Sunday in Lent

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.

Theme for today is “Healing and wholeness”

Lent liturgy

Give us this day our daily bread to give our soul rest.

In a fast-paced world that seems never to rest or sleep, in an internet world of immediate response...

Give us this day our daily bread to give our soul rest.

Let us find that calm centre, that stillness and rest, that moment of comfort, refreshment and peace...

Give us this day our daily bread to give our soul rest.

To find meaning and purpose, to see the way forward, with you as our pillow in the moment of tiredness.

O Lord our God, on this Lenten journey, **let us rest in the knowledge of your peace and your calm. Amen.**

Hymn StF 51 H&P 66

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my father

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: ‘The first commandment is, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

The second is this, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.’
‘I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.’

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Prayer:

Lord, you are steadfast in your love and infinite in your mercy; you welcome sinners and invite them to be your guests. We confess our sins, trusting in you to forgive us.

Silence

We have yielded to temptation and sinned: Lord, have mercy.

We have turned from our neighbours in their need: Christ, have mercy.

We have resisted your word in our hearts: Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and keep us in life eternal.

Amen.

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 248 H&P 136

I heard the voice of Jesus say

Bible readings:

2 Kings 5:1-14

Luke 14:1-6

Reflection

Brought to us by Jacky Woor, one of our Local Preachers.

Of late I have been a bit hampered with doing anything that requires two good hands. You see I had my right shoulder replaced on 23rd February and have strict instructions to keep my right arm in a sling. Easy you might think, but being mainly right-handed, not so easy. That has led me to thinking about occasions in the Bible when instructions are given that appear quite simple, but they are not taken up easily.

Looking at the story of Naaman in the second book of Kings – simple enough instruction, go and wash in the river seven times. But Naaman was a proud man, and he thought this very demeaning, especially if he was seen by anyone else whilst doing this. The simplest of things actually became a barrier. How often do we find that, because something is easy to do, it really isn't that relevant?

Note it took a nudge from someone who knew Naaman well to get through to him. If you were asked to do something that could have meant danger, could have even risked your life, you would have been ready and willing to do so. Then Naaman was ready to do the simple instruction and became healed.



And so, we come to the story of Jesus healing on the Sabbath. Simple enough, there was a need, the man had suffered for a long time. He could not do a day's work with only one good hand – for two reasons – he was hampered with only one useful hand, secondly healing was seen as working, something not done on the Sabbath. The really observant of you will have spotted my connection to this story besides being hampered physically. Yes, my operation was on a Sunday, our Sabbath! This was so that having this operation could be fitted in a lot quicker and therefore, my being relieved of the pain in my shoulder. We do not know if he was really willing to accept this healing right then, but surely he must have been a very happy man indeed once the healing took place.

Do we sometimes see things like Naaman did? Are we likely to just accept this or perhaps put up a barrier? Only you can answer this for yourself, but for me there was no doubt about what I would do, accept the operation whenever it was planned!

Hymn StF 650 H&P 390 Heal us, Immanuel! Hear our prayer

Prayers of Intercession:

Let us pray for the Church of God throughout the world.

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for those who have power and influence and for all who govern the nations,

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for the powerless, for all victims of famine and war, and for all who strive for justice and peace,

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us pray for the afflicted and sorrowful and for all who need our prayers,

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us remember before God those who have passed from this life in faith and obedience,

Lord, hear us. Lord, graciously hear us.

Eternal God, through the self-offering of your Son you have filled our lives with your presence.

Help us in our sufferings and trials and strengthen us in our weakness;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn: StF 652 Lord, we come to ask your healing

Closing blessing –

The God of all grace who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, make us perfect, confirming and strengthening us; and to him be the power for ever and ever.

Amen.