**Morning Praise @ Home 25th June 2023**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** 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. **Amen**

### Bible Reading Romans 12:1 – 2

**Reflection from John**

*Following Jesus Today – Romans 12:1-2*

**J B Philips 12 1-2**With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.

**THE MESSAGE 12 1-2**So here’s what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.

Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to

your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed

from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture

around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops

well-formed maturity in you.

**Verse 1 of today’s reading is our text for the year and I promised at New Year that I would preach on this**

**scripture three times during this year. It captures for us the challenges and pressures which must be**

**faced by those who follow Jesus in the 21st Century.**

Nicky Gumbel (founder of the Alpha Course) related how a young police officer was taking his final exam at

Hendon Police College in north London. Here is one of the questions:

‘You are on a patrol in outer London when an explosion occurs in a gas main in a nearby street. On

investigation you find that a large hole has been blown in the footpath and there is an overturned van lying

nearby. Inside the van there is a strong smell of alcohol. Both occupants – a man and a woman – are

injured. You recognise the woman as the wife of your Divisional Inspector, who is at present away in the

USA. A passing motorist stops to offer you assistance and you realise that he is a man who is wanted for

armed robbery. Suddenly a man runs out of a nearby house, shouting that his wife is expecting a baby and

that the shock of the explosion has made the birth imminent. Another man is crying for help, having been

blown into an adjacent canal by the explosion, and he cannot swim. – Bearing in mind the provisions of the

Mental Health Act, describe in a few words what actions you would take. The officer thought for a

moment, picked up his pen, and wrote: ‘I would take off my uniform and mingle with the crowd!’

We can sympathise with his answer, can’t we? As a Christian, it is often easier to take off our *Christian*

*uniform* and mingle with the crowd. But we are called to be and remain distinctive, to retain our Christian

identity, wherever we are and whatever the circumstances.

The story is the exact opposite to what is commended in our short Bible reading.

The Anglican Evangelist David Watson once said:

***Christians have largely neglected what it means to be a disciple or apprentice to Christ. We are Church***

***members, pew fillers, hymn-singers, sermon-tasters but have still to discover that to be a follower of Jesus is a transforming way of life.***

To come to know Jesus is a life changing decision whether we come to it slowly or dramatically – all those

who first followed Jesus are meant to have a fundamental shift on their lives, priorities, relationships and

attitude to money and possessions.

**Our challenge is that we actually find ourselves living in a world which is set to lead us further and further away from God. Some live in a world very obviously full of violence and greed, others tread a more civilised path. We get by - we get by without God making a big impression on the way we live**.

Instead Jesus comes to Burton to offer us a different way of living – a journey - a process in which our entire lives are rewritten by an encounter with the Living Lord Jesus and my simple message today is that to be a follower of Jesus today must involve a more radical and life transforming way of life in which all that we do in every area of life is being shaped by Jesus taking first priority over and above all the many other priorities which shape us individually and as a Church community.

I end with another story about a young army officer called Nick Carr – he was from the Carr’s Biscuits family.

Nick was about to command his first parade as a recently commissioned Officer. He brought his troops to

attention and issued the order ‘Attention! By the left quick march’. All went well until the troops got

towards the far side of the parade square. Nick forgot what he should have said next and his company

stumbled at the edge of the Parade Square.

He should have said ‘Company halt! About turn. Quick march’.

Being a follower of Jesus involves a clear change of direction in life. Life is and should be turned upside

down as we discover all that following Jesus means………….or have you forgotten……

Company halt! In the name of Jesus Christ. About turn. Quick march!

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession**

We pray for the leaders of the nations, that you will guide them in the ways of freedom, justice and truth.

We pray for those who bear arms, that they may have discipline and discernment, courage and compassion.

We pray for our enemies, and those who wish us harm, that you will turn the hearts of all to kindness and friendship.

We pray especially for the situations in Ukraine and Sudan: for the wounded and the captive, the grieving and the homeless, that in all their trials they may know your love and support.

We ask for your blessing on all clergy in the Diocese of Chester. We ask you to strengthen and guide them as they lead their congregations.

We pray for the Deanery of Wirral South and especially the Parishes of Willaston and Neston as they look to welcome a new vicar.  
We pray for our Parishes of St Nicholas and St. Michael as they learn about what it is to be a healthy Church.

We ask for your blessing on our PCCs. We pray that you will show each one of them what role you want them to play in serving our church family and the local community. Be with them as they go away to think and pray about what God is saying to us.

We pray especially this week for our young people, in particular for the children and young people living in both of our parishes and the increasing numbers of young families living in Burton.

We pray for the governing body of Bishop Wilson School and Christ Church, Ellesmere Port, meeting this week.

We pray for Open the Book and the team who will be at St Winefride’s School tomorrow.

We pray for all who are facing difficult times ahead, all who are struggling to survive with the rising cost of living, all who are fearful and anxious. We pray that the government would find ways to help them. We thank you for all those who work in, and donate to food banks.

We pray for all who are unwell, those in hospital and in nursing homes and for those that we name quietly in our hearts. May they know your presence in their daily lives and remember that you are our hope and that all our strength comes only from you.

We remember the slenderness of the thread which separates life from death, and the suddenness with which it can be broken. Help us to remember that whatever occurs in life we are surrounded by your love.  Help those bereaved by the loss of a loved one to find in your love peace and reassurance.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**