

# Sunday Sermon

Revd Canon Charles Jenkin – 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021

*Genesis 9.8-17; Psalm 25.1-9; 1 Peter 3.18-end; Mark 1.9-15*

And so Jesus begins. And the good news begins. Exploring his powerful sense of being called by God, Jesus goes to be baptised by John, and then new thing happens. The Holy Spirit descends on him. The Spirit changes everything and Jesus goes out into the wilderness for a really big think. He returns with massive good news, God is on the move, repent and believe.

The differences between the messages of John the Baptist and Jesus are important and significant. John's message was, "Repent and get ready for God to act." Jesus's message is, "Repent and believe the good news." Like many prophets before him John called people to sort their lives out. However Jesus called people to let the love of God change their lives; to believe in the love of God. And the good news is that a new power is at work in a new way; all you have to do is believe in it. It is the gift and work of God's Holy Spirit, the substance of God's love, poured out for all, which makes the difference.

The call is still to repent, to turn your life around according to God's priorities; that doesn't change. But with Jesus we are called to believe that the Holy Spirit will come and make a real difference. It's not just up to us. We are not alone. We are not just being judged. Repent, and believe this good news. You too can become a child of God like Jesus, eternally confident in the love of God, called, forgiven and inspired, ready to take your part in changing the world in some way for good.

Lent is a time for Christians to begin (again), and believe (anew); to discover again when we take time to look just how close to us is the Kingdom of God; to discover again how close is this new world that is so securely held in God's love, in which we too may dare to learn to love like God does; to discover again how foolish we are when we ignore such divine treasure; and to discover again how good it is to repent and believe that the love of God is on the move.

Perhaps this year, seeing Lent as a time of new beginnings is particularly apt. The world is being shaken by the pandemic. Lots of things will not be the same, even when things get back to some kind of new normal. We are weary of the lockdowns, aghast at the suffering, and apprehensive of the future. But coming out of the lockdowns and meeting this new world, will be a time of God's new beginnings too.

Coming out of the Lockdown is a time for everyone to repent in some way, turn lives around in new ways, and to believe the good news. To believe that God is on the move too, that his Spirit is already making lives new, that God's Spirit can make your life new too, and that each and every one of us can begin again. There may well be some wilderness on the way. But just remember.... when Jesus came back from the wilderness he was full of the Good News. Amen.

CJ. 21.02.21