

## 28th February 2021 2nd Sunday of Lent

During Lent 2021, Bishop Emma is leading us in an introduction to the refreshed 'God for All' vision for the diocese.

This week: Jesus Foretells his Death and Resurrection: *Follow Daily*.

### Opening

Abraham believed in the God who brings the dead back to life  
and who creates new things out of nothing.

Even when there was no reason for hope,  
Abraham kept hoping (Romans 4.17-18 NLT)

### *Be Thou My Guardian and My Guide*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQeIGbKqiw8>

### *Let Your Living Water Flow*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzxWhUv8dyg>



## Lenten Confession

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit,  
returned from the Jordan  
and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,  
where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.  
Let us confess our sins  
remembering before God  
the times when we have fallen  
from temptation into sin.

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love:  
**fill us with your Spirit.**

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:  
**fill us with your Spirit.**

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:  
**fill us with your Spirit.**

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May Almighty God, who sent his Son into the world to  
save sinners, bring *us* his pardon and peace, now and for  
ever. Amen.



Romans 4.13-end (NLT)

*(If you read nothing else this Lent, read this!)*

13 Clearly, God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was based not on his obedience to God's law, but on a right relationship with God that comes by faith. 14 If God's promise is only for those who obey the law, then faith is not necessary and the promise is pointless. 15 For the law always brings punishment on those who try to obey it. (The only way to avoid breaking the law is to have no law to break!)

16 So the promise is received by faith.

**It is given as a free gift.**

And we are all certain to receive it, whether or not we live according to the law of Moses, *if* we have faith like Abraham's.

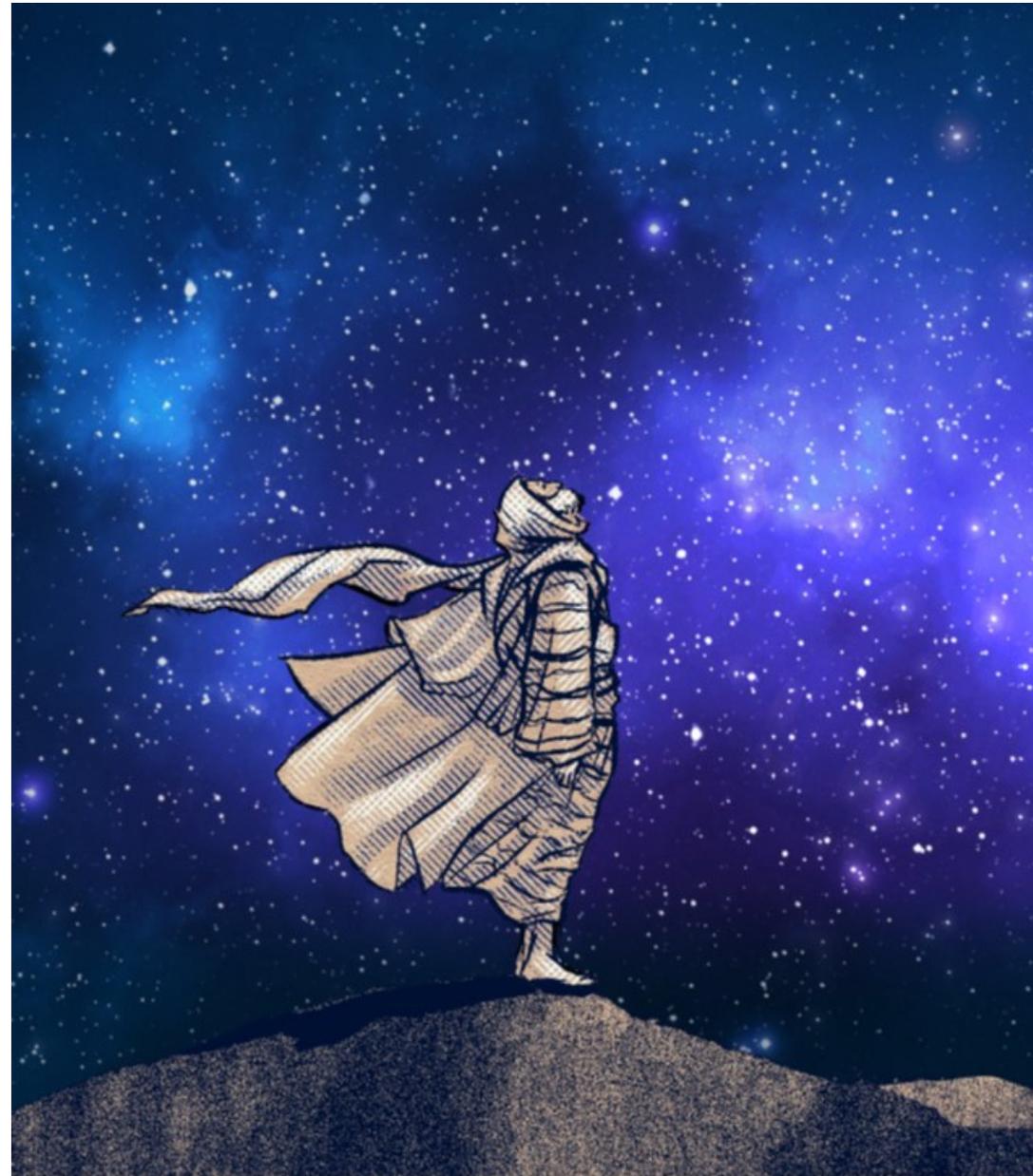
For Abraham is the father of all who believe.

17 That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." [Gen 17.5] This happened because

**Abraham believed in the God**

**who brings the dead back to life and**

**who creates new things out of nothing.**



18 **Even when there was no reason for hope, Abraham kept hoping**—believing that he would become the father of many nations. For God had said to him, “That’s how many descendants you will have!” 19 And Abraham’s faith did not weaken, even though, at about 100 years of age, he figured his body was as good as dead—and so was Sarah’s womb.

20 Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. 21 He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises.

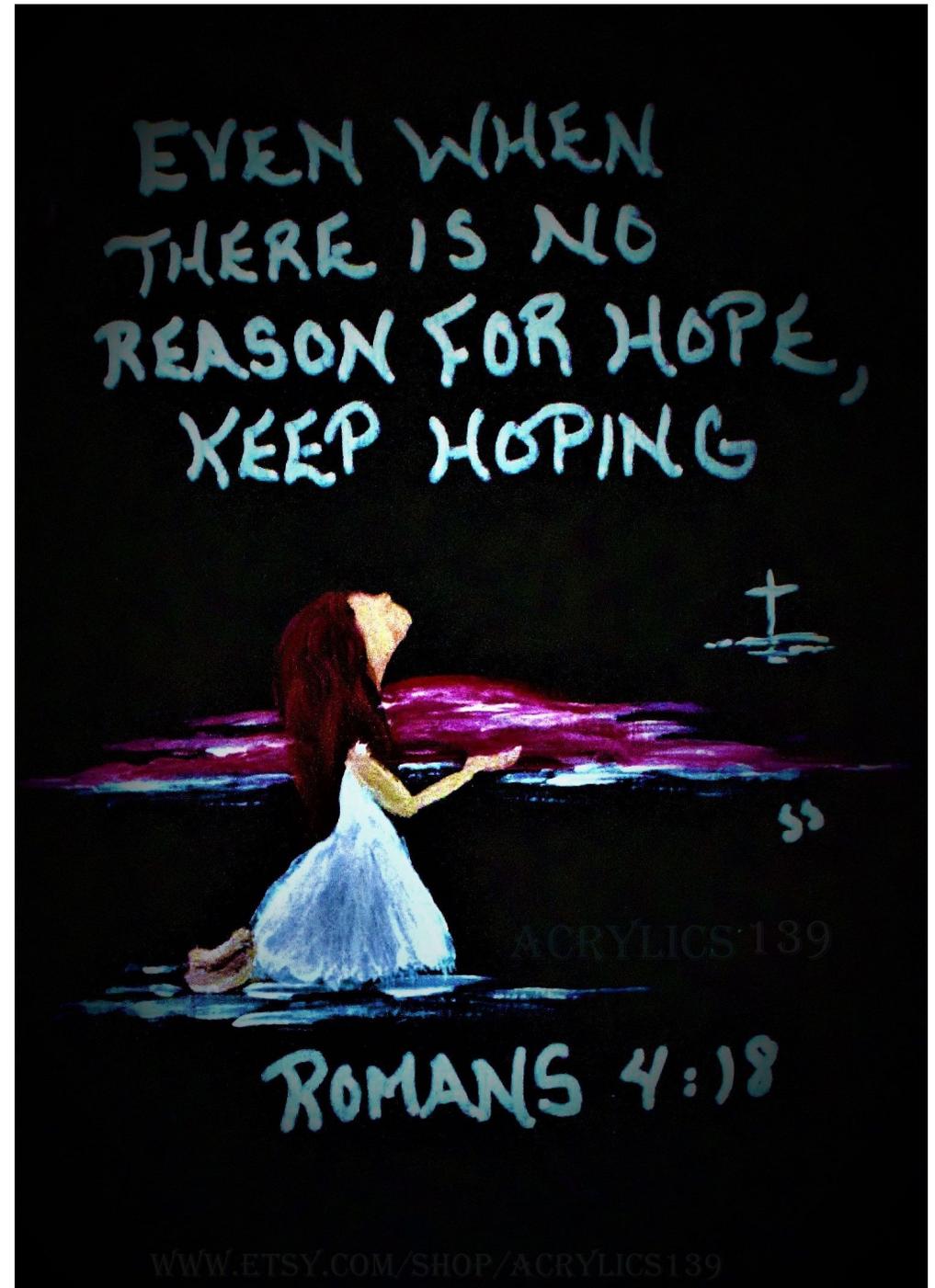
22 **And because of Abraham’s faith, God counted him as righteous.**

23 And when God counted him as righteous, it wasn’t just for Abraham’s benefit. It was recorded 24 for our benefit, too, assuring us that **God will also count us as righteous if we believe in him, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.**

25 He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

### *God Forgave My Sin*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QI3eklr3fc0>





James Tissot, *Recommandation aux Apôtres*, Brooklyn Museum

### Mark 8.31-38 Jesus Speaks about His Suffering and Death

31 Then Jesus began to teach his disciples: “The Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. He will be put to death, but three days later he will rise to life.” 32 He made this very clear to them. So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But Jesus turned around, looked at his disciples, and rebuked Peter. “Get away from me, Satan,” he said. “Your thoughts don't come from God but from human nature!”

34 Then Jesus called the crowd and his disciples to him. “If any of you want to come with me,” he told them, “you

must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me. 35 For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for me and for the gospel, you will save it.

“36 Do you gain anything if you win the whole world but lose your life? Of course not! 37 There is nothing you can give to regain your life.

“38 If you are ashamed of me and of my teaching in this godless and wicked day, then the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

*Show Me the Way of the Cross - Matt Redman* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGGeeDPJFnc>

Sermon from Bishop Emma (or click here:) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fE5vID\\_F5yI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fE5vID_F5yI)

These days, (when permitted by the Covid restrictions of course), if you go to a coffee shop and simply ask for 'a coffee', apparently that's not good enough. You then get bombarded by a whole range of follow-up questions: What kind of coffee? An Espresso? Cappuccino? Macchiato? A pour over? Single origin? Blend? Small, medium or large? With milk or without? Hot milk or cold milk? I'd like a coffee please!

I sometimes wonder if our approach to Jesus is a bit like our approach to buying coffee. What kind of 'Jesus' would I like today?

If I'm honest I would possibly like Jesus to be a bit more like my idea of what Jesus should be - the kind of Jesus who will be at my beck and call to make my life a little bit better, a bit easier. I'd quite like my Jesus to be some kind of superhero, who swoops down to help me out when I'm in a fix - like when I can't find a parking space, for example. I think I'd like a kindly Messiah, who understands me, but also one who can sort out all the world's problems in one go - without getting in the way of anyone's free will, of course. I'd like a Jesus that doesn't offend anyone too much and doesn't make me look too crazy, or ask me to do too many embarrassing things.

Jesus's disciples probably wouldn't have chosen the kind of Messiah Jesus described himself as, in today's reading:

"Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and

be killed, and after three days rise again"

This Sunday, the second in Lent, we continue our series of sermons based on the refreshed vision we have agreed together as an ecumenical county

"to release the whole people of God for the whole mission of God for the transformation of Cumbria in Jesus's name".

Last week we had an introduction to the four themes of that refreshed vision - to "**follow daily, speak boldly, care deeply, tread gently**" - with a reading about Jesus and his temptation in the wilderness. Today we focus in on the first of the themes - follow daily - with a reflection on Jesus foretelling his death and resurrection.

So what does this glimpse into the life of Jesus from Mark 8 show us about our theme to '**follow daily**'?

Up to this point, and just before we pick up our reading for today, Jesus has been trying to get through to his disciples the not terribly welcome news that, far from being the Messiah they would probably choose - the one who would storm the gates of Jerusalem with some (hitherto unknown) army to overthrow the Roman occupation, if not quite a superhero, then close, Jesus was in fact a Messiah who was to suffer and die.



**Follow Daily** **Care Deeply**  
**Speak Boldly** **Tread Gently**

Let's think how all this must have sounded to Peter. It would be a bit like a politician who suddenly burst on the scene today and announced that he was standing in the next General Election. It doesn't matter really which party. This person announces such sensible

policies, such solutions to the world's problems, talking such wisdom and sound common sense that you believe everything they are saying. This person puts forward workable solutions to the debt crisis, to the pandemic, to low-cost vaccinations for everyone, to trade deals, to the funding gap in the NHS. This new politician has the strength of character and the integrity and honesty to make you want to follow them and vote for them. This amazing new politician is all set to win a landslide victory - and then a few months into his election campaign, they announce - "Oh and by the way I will be dead before the election happens".

How would you feel?

This was not the kind of Messiah the disciples had ordered!

So Peter - (don't we all love Peter - getting it wrong, blurting out inappropriate things, sticking his foot in it?) - has reacted strongly to all this talk by Jesus of death and dying and "took him aside and began to rebuke him". Peter dares to correct Jesus's theology! But Jesus corrects his misunderstanding, and then helps his disciples to face the reality:

*"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."*

I guess we sometimes fall into the same trap as Peter. We would like our Messiah to be strong, invincible, able to sort out all our problems with one sweep of his mighty hand.

We will help each other to follow Jesus more closely, seeking to grow as his disciples in all aspects of life, both corporately and as individuals.

The trouble is, when we ask for a strong and powerful God like that, we see strength in the same way as Peter did - from a human perspective, rather than a divine one. We see strength as the ability to carry out one's own will through

power, and force. In the eyes of God strength looks very different. For God, strength is measured in vulnerability, in sacrifice. Ultimately, evil won't be overcome by military or political might, but through the self-giving sacrifice of a humble saviour. Jesus came to give himself away. That's the kind of Messiah he is.

And he calls his disciples to do the same as he does:

*"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*

This is what it means to 'follow daily.' It's hard work, but it's worth it.

The Christian writer, Tom Wright says,

*"Following Jesus is not an invitation to accompany him on a pleasant afternoon hike, but to go on a walk of danger and risk. ... Or did we suppose that the kingdom of God would mean merely a few minor adjustments on the way?"*

I wonder what you have given up for Lent? Alcohol?

Chocolate? Cake? I spoke to someone the other day who has given up alcohol, tea, coffee, chocolate and cake. That's a bit extreme!

A few years ago Pope Francis encouraged Christians to give up indifference for Lent. He said:

*"Indifference to our neighbour and to God represents a real temptation for us Christians".*

Our reading today challenges us with something similar - with giving up something costly for Lent - and that something is living our lives exactly the way we would choose, and instead taking up the costly call to follow Jesus daily, rather than our own desires, preferences and securities.

Jesus challenged Peter to consider whether he really wanted the Messiah, or whether he wanted his own idea of the Messiah. We too are called to the same kind of reflection. Do

we want to follow the Jesus superhero we would quite like, or are we willing to follow the real Jesus? This Messiah may not be the kind of Jesus we would have asked for by choice, a suffering one, with holes in his hands and feet, but this is the only kind of Jesus who can save us.

We have made the phrase 'carry your cross' into an everyday truism, shorthand for any kind of suffering that comes our way. But remember that when Jesus said it, it didn't yet have that slightly noble overtone. Jesus himself hadn't yet carried his own physical cross at this point. The cross was a source of shame and derision, used to torture and kill any who dared to challenge and stand up to the power of Roman rule. And so the call to take up the cross is the call to join a revolutionary movement.

*Are we up for that?*

Jesus's words remind us that to follow daily means taking up the cross, the symbol at the heart of the Christian faith - dying and resurrection, death and life, reality and hope.

This is a great time of opportunity - people need now more than ever to hear Jesus's gospel message of hope out of death, comfort in pain, healing, blessing. As we go into this next week let's go with ringing in our ears the daily call of Christ to costly discipleship, to take up the cross, and follow him.

And the good news - the very, very good news - is that when we give up our own lives to follow the real Jesus - the suffering Jesus - then our lives are actually saved. If we commit to costly discipleship, to following him daily, to carrying his cross, not in our own strength but in his, then we will find that we have all we need. If we respond to Jesus's call to follow him, we can be very sure of one thing - that he doesn't say, 'There's your cross - pick it up and off you trot'. He walks with us every step of the way.

*'I am with you always', he said, 'to the very end of the age'.*

We consider and weigh the cost that is rightly ours to bear - the call to '**follow daily**' - and then we trust God to provide all the rest.

As St Paul says,

"I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Christ, and him crucified."

As we commit again this Lent to follow Jesus daily, we know that in ourselves we have nothing - and yet in Him, we have everything.

### The Vision Refresh prayer

Living Lord,

as we offer to you our common life,

refresh our vision

that we may know your will

and seek to follow in all your ways.

May we:

**follow daily** as your disciples,

**care deeply** for one another in community,

**speak boldly** your gospel words of love, and

**tread gently** as faithful stewards of your goodness.

We ask this in the power of your holy name,

as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of our lives,

today and for ever.

Amen.

## *Take Up Thy Cross, the Saviour Said*

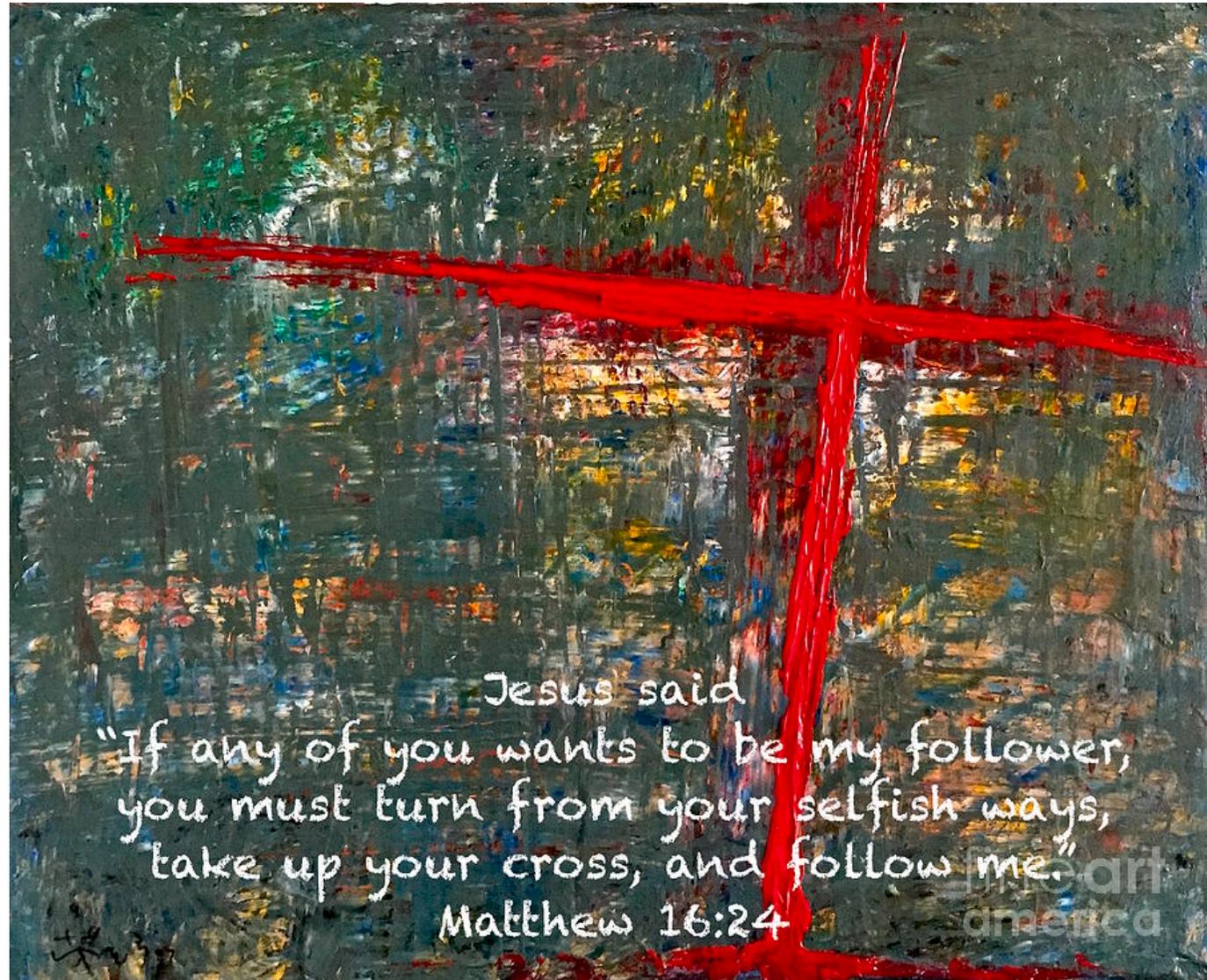
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OS3q4uTEAik>

## *Take Up Your Cross - Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0m606j7qWA>

### Collect

Almighty God,  
you show to those who are in error  
the light of your truth,  
that they may return to the way of  
righteousness:  
grant to all those who are admitted  
into the fellowship of Christ's body,  
that they may reject those things  
that are contrary to their profession,  
and follow all such things as are  
agreeable to the same;  
through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen



[Click here to view the recorded intercessory prayers](#)

## Intercessions

We pray to You Lord for courage to give up other things and to give ourselves to You this Lent.

Give Your Church the courage to give up her preoccupation with herself and to give more time to Your mission in the world.

*[We pray for ...]*

May the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus

bring forgiveness to Your people and help us to face the cost of proclaiming Your salvation.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give Your world the courage to give up war, bitterness and hatred, and to seek peace.

*[We pray for ...]*

May the shoulders of the risen Jesus, once scourged by soldiers, bear the burden of political and military conflict in our world.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up quarrels, strife and jealousy

in our families, neighbourhoods and communities.

*[We pray for ...]*

May the presence of the risen Jesus,

his body once broken and now made whole, bring peace and direction as we live with one another.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage

to give up our selfishness as we live for others,

and to give time, care and comfort to the sick.

*[We pray for ...]*

May Your wounded hands Lord Jesus bring Your healing touch,

and the light of Your presence fill their rooms.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up our fear of death

and to rejoice with those who have died in faith.

*[Especially we hold ... in our prayers.]*

May Your feet, risen Lord Jesus, once nailed to the cross,

walk alongside the dying and bereaved in their agony, and walk with us and all your Church through death to the gate of glory.

Lord, meet us in the silence,

**give us strength and hear our prayer, here and in eternity. Amen.**



## Blessing

May God the Father,  
who does not despise the broken spirit,  
give to you a contrite heart.

**Amen.**

May Christ,  
who bore our sins in his body on the tree,  
heal you by his wounds.

**Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit,  
who leads us into all truth,  
speak to you words of pardon and peace.

**Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty:  
Father, Son and Spirit  
Be with us all  
Today and always, Amen.

### ***The God of Abraham Praise***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pKAIWQpbSH8>

### ***Follow Me - Kelly Willard***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdesAwnlqWw>

Closing worship:





## **Extrabits**

*Follow Me - Casting Crowns*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LraPDltKlvI>

*Show me the way by Becks*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxImHDsDOPs>

*Let Your Living Water Flow over my Soul*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzxWhUv8dyg>