

## **Sunday 14 September – Holy Cross Day**

### **Sermon by Rev'd Darren McIndoe, Area Dean of Harlow**

As it is café church at St. Luke's there is no sermon from there this week, but the sermon from Chelmsford cathedral can be viewed at [Weekly Sermons from the Diocese of Chelmsford](#) and a transcript of it is reproduced below.

#### **Look to the cross**

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have Eternal life.

These are words that are very familiar to us. But this morning, I want to put them in the broader context of the rest of the reading, to help us to understand what Jesus was saying as he spoke these words.

They are words of universal love. They speak of the all-encompassing nature Of God's love. His desire that the whole of creation should be reflecting his light, and His love.

And yet, the story before where Jesus echoes the narrative of a time in the book of Numbers, (our Old Testament reading) where the people of Israel have just been rescued from Egypt. They've escaped into the desert, and they're on their way to the Promised Land. And yet, despite being in this wonderful place, this place of God's presence and His glory, where the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire is going before them. Despite this intimacy where God is with His people, still they choose to live in a way that reflects their own values, rather than allowing God to shape them.

And the consequence is that they fall ill. And in the midst of that illness, Moses is told to lift a brass serpent on a rod. And it is as the people look from themselves to that serpent, that they receive the healing that is available to them.

Curious story, but one that speaks of the universal love of God, he had no desire to see the Israelite people suffering in the wilderness. But their choices and their decisions led to them having a life that was less than God's ideal for them. And it was only when they acknowledged their rebellion, and turned to receive God's salvation that they were able to be transformed.

Now, when we look at, the New Testament reading - a reading from the book of Philippians. We hear another passage that I've heard many, many times in my Christian life, and I must confess, I find it really challenging.

Paul says, our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who chose in humility. to live in such a way that humanity was restored to God.

The purpose of our life is to, first of all acknowledge our need for that saving love. God so loved the world that He sent His only Son that whoever believes would not perish, but have eternal life.

First, we need to understand our need to be changed. And then having believed, and having received, and having been put on that journey when we are being transformed.

The rest of our life is intended to reflect that which we have received. "Let your attitude be the same as that of Christ Jesus."

So the challenge of our readings this morning.

It's, first of all, to have the humility to accept that God's way of life and God's plans are the best for us, and not just for us, but for the whole world.

And once we have allowed ourselves to be shaped by His grace and His love, then we're responsible for sharing that with others.

For allowing them to see. And then, in turn to be transformed by the love that God offers.

So this morning, let's look up... Let's see the cross. Let's allow ourselves to be changed by His love. And let's reflect that love to a world that desperately needs it.

Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.