

## Who is this Jesus?

### Gathering

*Create a space for worship - perhaps with a small table with a bible, cross and candle.*

*This week, it would be appropriate to find a **green cloth** or scarf to signify that we are moving into "ordinary time".*

*Take some deep breaths as you gather your thoughts towards God.*

### Greeting

If I was to ask you to tell me 5 things about the person sitting next to you or in front of you, would you be able to? What you would say? If the person sitting next to you is someone you've known for a long time then it would be easy, the person in front, maybe you're not even sure of their name, that's much harder. If I said, take a few minutes to talk to the person in front it might be easier.

As we come to look at today's readings I want to invite you to come with a question in mind - who is this Jesus we are talking about?



### Light Candle

### Acknowledgement of Country

From the booming spray of the Blowhole to the quiet, sandy paths of Seven Mile Beach,  
From the sun rising over the Island that guards the mouth of the River of Plenty of Fish  
To the sun setting over the harsh outline of Saddleback may Your name be praised Biami. For  
in Your presence the Wadi Wadi people have walked the paths of this country back into the  
mists of time. We acknowledge their care and connection to Country and their Elders, past,  
present and emerging. Give us grace to listen and to learn from them we pray.

### Call To Worship

This morning we're going to think about just who Jesus is, so it seems most appropriate that we begin by saying something about God, words that have echoed through many generations...

Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise Him all creatures here below  
Praise Him above you heavenly hosts  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

### Listening for God's Voice

**Bible Reading**  
**Colossians 1: 15-28**

<sup>15</sup>He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; <sup>16</sup>for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross. <sup>21</sup>And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup>he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him— <sup>23</sup>provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel. <sup>24</sup>I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. <sup>25</sup>I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, <sup>26</sup>the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. <sup>27</sup>To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup>It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup>For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.

**Luke 10: 38-42**

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing, Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

You might like to read this conversation that might have happened between Martha and Mary some years later...

<https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2019/07/16/martha-and-mary-of-bethany-15-years-later-a-dialogue/>

## Reflection

There are a couple of things I'd like to suggest to you this morning as we think about these scripture passages, and particularly as we are going to keep looking more at the Colossians readings over the next few weeks.

**First of all** – our understanding of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and how it all fits together is something that grows over time as we get to know more about God and ourselves.

\*a couple of months ago we brought home 2 kittens, only just old enough to leave their mother, we've been watching as they have grown and begun to explore the world. At first they were too small to jump onto the bed and had to scramble up the blankets - now they clear the kitchen bench in one bound and dart across the garage roof after the turtle doves.

Like the kittens our understanding needs time to develop

The early church was in the same position – who is this Jesus – how can he be fully human and fully divine? If He's human then, as Max Lucado once suggested that means He had pimples as a teenager! If he's fully divine then what happened on the cross when He died? As they struggled with these questions it was easy for different groups to pick up different ideas, as Paul says here, you need to continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, but that requires work and thought, it means staying in relationship with God and learning more.

As we live our life of faith, we find out more of who God is

Just this week we've seen photos from NASA's latest probe - suddenly whatever we thought we knew about the universe has changed. This probe has gone further, and no doubt cost more than ever and now we have a new understanding - perhaps like the hymn writer we too might say 'tis only the splendour of light hideth Thee'.

**The second thing is;** Where we are standing affects what we hear. For most of us today's readings are words we've heard so often that sometimes we don't really hear them at all.

Jesus - son of God, tick, fully divine fully human, tick (whatever that really means anyway) head of the church, tick; firstborn, fullness of God, yes, all that...

Martha, Mary, Lazarus tick, Bethany, tick, Martha ticked off because Mary was being slack, tick... we know all this stuff!

But what if you didn't? What if Caesar was the one you believed in and even if you didn't believe he was god every year you were going to SAY that if you wanted to keep your job, protect your family keep the roof over your head. What if you had just started hearing about this Jesus and every story seemed more outlandish and unbelievable than the last? There from the beginning of Creation?

Holding all things together? But, last week you said he was crucified, how, what?

We sit here and nod, yep, Paul's letter to the church in Colossae - wonder if their building projects had to wait for DA approval? That's what churches do isn't it?

We don't even realise that our thinking has been shaped by the world we live in and the things we have experienced. Much of our world and society have been built on the foundations of Christian faith but for many people today the Christian message is unknown – they have no context, no point of reference to know that our world has been shaped by the faith of generations of Christians before them. How do we help them find out who Jesus is?

**Finally;**

I think the answer is found in OUR attitude. Have WE grasped the passion of Paul's letter? Do we have a grip on who Jesus is, because if we those words we've read today are stirring us to explore more, to deepen our faith, to keep striving to understand more, then that will show in our conversations with others. We will WANT to introduce others to this One who stirs our hearts and directs our days – after all - <sup>15</sup>*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;* <sup>16</sup>*for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him.* <sup>17</sup>*He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* That's certainly someone worth knowing!

<b>Responding</b>
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**Prayer for Others**

Wondrous Creator, you inhabit this world  
not shying from it's suffering and shame  
walking in the gardens and on hard pavement  
you are with us in our fearful and darkest hours.  
We fragile humans pretend not to see the pain  
we run from the uncomfortable situations  
yet you are there in the midst of war and conflict  
you never deny that you love all of your creation.  
Peter was wracked with fear and denied you  
yet your love was bigger than his great failure  
forgiveness and restoration are your gifts to us  
and we all need that in great measure today.  
Help us to walk in the dark and scary places  
give us strength to witness to your abiding love  
make us compassionate and full of faith  
so we might bring your love to a troubled world. Amen.  
(Source: Carol J Gallagher, Facebook post)

**Offering**

You might like to spend a few minutes dedicating your offering to God today, whether that is a financial contribution to the work of the church here and in the world or some action that you feel God is calling you to this week.

<b>Sending</b>
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**Sending and Blessing**

*May good friends accompany us along the way.*

*May you know the presence of God as you journey.*

*May Christ be your companion*

*And may the Spirit lift up your life.*

*And the people said... Amen.*

*(Helen Warmingham)*

Marion Haigh  
17<sup>th</sup> July 2022