

**Sermon**

**Saint Peter's**

**Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2023**

**Hosea 6.1a,2b, Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 78, Phil 2**

**The Reconciliation of the World to God in Christ**



Come, let us return to the Lord, that we may live before him.

Last week I told you the story of how people travel from all over the world to Jimbarin Beach in Bali. That it is like a natural theatre that faces west. Sloping down to the water it is made, it seems, for the sunset. For the sun to die in a blaze of glory. Bringing peace to every human heart.

As the Son of God died in a blaze of glory.

To bring peace to every human heart.

Brighton Beach is a bit like that, don't you think. People travel from all over the world to visit. It is like a natural theatre, facing west, and the land slopes down to the water. It, too, is made seemingly for the sunset. For the sun to die in a blaze of glory. To bring peace to every human heart.

In the Old Testament, Moses struck the rock, and water came out of it, so that the people could drink.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ, in his crucifixion, is the struck rock. So that the people can drink.

Each day, Brighton Beach is ablaze with the glory of the Son of God.

Each day, we are called to be ablaze in our hearts with the glory of the Son of God, in God the Spirit.

At his triumphal entry to Jerusalem, the disciples shouted out, with a loud voice, praising God joyfully, and saying, 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!' But the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.' Jesus answered them, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.' As he came near and saw the city, Jesus wept over it, saying, 'If you had only recognised on this day the things that make for peace!'

As should be abundantly clear to all who live in contemporary, modern, western, purely secular society:

All people have fallen short of the glory of God.

All who are reconciled to God in Christ are called by God to the Christian ministry of reconciliation.

‘All this is from God’, according to the apostolic testimony, ‘who has reconciled the world to himself in Christ, and has called us to the ministry of reconciliation.

That is, God was in Christ reconciling the whole world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the ministry of reconciliation to us.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat all people on behalf of Christ, ‘be reconciled to God’.

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!’

We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry.’

In the words of the Psalmist this morning:

Give heed to my teaching, O my people:  
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.  
For I will open my mouth in a parable:  
And expound the mysteries of former times.  
What we have heard and known:  
What our forebears have told us.  
We will not hide from our children  
But declare to a generation yet to come:  
The praiseworthy acts of the Lord

His mighty and wonderful works’.

His mighty and wonderful acts in history, in the creation of the world, and in the reconciliation of the world to himself by the death of Christ, the eternal Son of God, once, for all people, in every time and place.

In the words of the Apostle Paul this morning,

‘If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, make my joy complete:

be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God

as something to be grasped,

but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,

assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,

he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—

even death on a cross.

Therefore God exalted him even more highly

and gave him the name

that is above every other name,

so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Come, let us return to the Lord, that we may live before him.