

Today's text has the title is "Even Our Weakness is Anointed" Blessed.

We shall make references to (**Psalm 69:13–28, Acts 1:1–22, 2 Samuel 3:22–5:5**)

The introductory question is "Do you ever feel too weak or inadequate to be useful to God?"

A teenager from Cumbria in Northern England felt God calling him. Patrick was poorly educated, ineloquent and faced significant opposition throughout his ministry from those who felt that he wasn't up to the task. Even as an old man he still admitted, 'Today I still blush and fear more than anything to have my lack of learning brought out into the open.' Yet despite all his disadvantages Patrick remained convinced that God had called and anointed him as an evangelist. He wrote, 'We are a letter of Christ for salvation even to the back of beyond – and what does it matter if it is not a learned letter? For it is still to be found valid and plain for all to read, written in your very hearts, not in ink but by the Spirit of the living God!' Today his more eloquent contemporaries have long been forgotten, but the impact of St Patrick's ministry and mission to Ireland 1500 years ago is still recognised around the world. Even his weakness was anointed.

As David takes up the throne of Israel he says, '... though I am the anointed king, I am weak' (2 Samuel 3:39). The moment we put our faith in Jesus, God anoints us with the Holy Spirit. However weak and inadequate we may feel, God can use us, like David, in extraordinary ways. "Even our weakness is anointed".

Let us Pray "Father in Heaven as we study your word this morning we remember St Patrick's ministry as a perfect example of a powerful transformation of a personal weakness into a strength. Teach us to to recognise our weaknesses and offer them for correction in your service.

Lord hear us. Lord Graciously hear us

In Psalm 69: David says

13 But I pray to you, LORD, in the time of your favour;  
in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.  
16 Answer me, LORD, out of the goodness of your love; in your great mercy turn to me.  
17 Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble.  
18 Come near and rescue me; deliver me because of my foes.

Commentary - Anointed in times of trouble

Are we going through a time of trouble? David was in a time of deep trouble in his life. He felt like he was in a 'swamp', a 'Black Hole', a 'deathtrap'. He says, 'I'm... flat on my face, reduced to a nothing' (vv.15–20, MSG). David, the anointed leader of Israel (2 Samuel 5:3), was a person of prayer. Many of the psalms are attributed to him. In this psalm we see an example of his honest, raw and intimate prayers.

So when you are in trouble or in a position of great weakness: Let us remember two things.

1. Know God's great love for us

David prays, 'In your great love, O God, answer me' (Psalm 69:13). 'Answer me, O LORD, out of the goodness of your love; in your great mercy turn to me' (v.16).

2. Cry out to God in our heart

Be honest with God. Tell him what you are really feeling: 'Rescue me from the mire, do not let me sink' (v.14). 'Do not hide your face from your servant; answer me quickly, for I am in trouble' (v.17).

## Prayer

Lord, thank you that we can pray to you in times of trouble. Lord, today we cry to you for help.

Lord Hear us. Lord Graciously Hear us

## Acts 1:1–22

3 After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Commentary - Anointed by the Holy Spirit - The same power that raised Jesus from the dead now lives in us. Of the four Gospel writers, Luke is the only one who continues to tell the story of the next generation. The story of Jesus continued in 'the believers' (v.15) and now it continues in us.

The book of Acts is the History of the Church Volume I. History matters to Luke. He uses such words as 'eyewitnesses', 'carefully investigated', 'an orderly account' (Luke 1:2–3) and here he talks about 'many convincing proofs' (Acts 1:3). He stresses that Jesus did not just appear as a fleeting impression like a ghost: 'After his death, he presented himself alive to them in many different settings over a period of forty days... as they met and ate meals together' (vv.2–4, MSG).

This is the second volume in Luke's life of Jesus. He refers to his earlier Gospel as being about 'all that Jesus began to do and to teach' (v.1). Now he tells the story of what Jesus continued to do through the Holy Spirit. Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as the gift promised by the Father (v.4). Now he promises that in a few days the disciples will be baptised with the Holy Spirit and receive power to be his witnesses to the city ('Jerusalem'), the nation ('all Judea and Samaria') and the world ('to the ends of the earth') (v.8).

Through the rest of the passage we see a series of examples of people who have been filled by the Holy Spirit and been his messengers across the world. The wonderful news is that we are included in the list!

### 1. David

The Holy Spirit speaks through people, including David (v.16). Peter gives examples of how the Holy Spirit spoke through David in the psalms – even predicting the replacement of Judas the betrayer (vv.15–20).

### 2. Jesus

Supremely, the Holy Spirit anointed Jesus. Luke tells us that Jesus gave 'instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen' (v.2).

In particular, 'On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this

command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit" (vv.4-5).

### 3. Apostles

Though in many ways they were weak, the apostles would be anointed by the Holy Spirit for the task that lay ahead. The word 'apostle' is used in several different ways in the New Testament. In the wider sense of a person who is sent by God, it clearly applies to many people in the past and also today (1 Corinthians 12:28-29). In a narrower sense, there are people who have what might be described as an 'apostolic' leadership gift (Mark 3:14). However, here it is used in the narrowest sense of the word. They were a special group of people who were uniquely qualified by Jesus. The Holy Spirit spoke through them in a unique way. These were the apostles whom Jesus had chosen and to whom he gave special instructions through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2).

Judas had originally been part of this group. Now they were looking for a replacement. Peter lays down the qualifications. They had to have been with Jesus throughout his ministry, witnessed his resurrection and to have received the necessary training (v.2122).

### 4. Us

Jesus said, 'In a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (vv.5,8). On the day of Pentecost this was fulfilled and the apostle Peter made it clear that the promise was for 'all whom the Lord our God will call' (2:39). This includes us! The Holy Spirit comes to anoint and empower us – to help and guide us in every aspect of our life – not just the 'spiritual' parts. Everything we have belongs to God and he wants to be involved in all of our life. Through the Holy Spirit living within us God wants us to become like Jesus in all our thoughts, attitudes, words and actions. We are "Jesus" to the world.

### **Prayer**

Lord, thank you that your Holy Spirit now lives in us. Thank you that, though we are weak, we are anointed to be your witness. Help us to be the mouthpiece of your Holy Spirit.

Lord Hear Us. Lord Graciously Hear us

### **Leadership** - David Becomes King Over Israel

5 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. 2 In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'

3 When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

Commentary - Anointed for leadership

In order to be leaders, we do not need to be perfect. David said, '... though I am the anointed king, I am weak' (3:39). The history of David's life in the Bible is a great testimony to both the anointing and weakness of David. He knew that he was far from perfect, and yet he also knew that God could still use him. He doesn't dwell on his weakness, but rather turns the situation over to God (v.39). In spite of his weaknesses, God used him in extraordinary ways.

This passage also reminds us that God used David throughout his life. We have already seen many examples of how God had used David as a leader for many years before he became king. Yet when he became king, David was still relatively young. Thereafter he continued to be used by God throughout a long and (mostly) successful reign: 'David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned for forty years' (5:4). The Lord said about David, 'You shall shepherd my people Israel, and you shall become their ruler' (v.2). Then, 'all the elders... anointed David king over Israel' (v.3). David became a leader full of integrity. He 'shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skilful hands he led them' (Psalm 78:72). David was the type of leader we desperately need today, in the church and in society – men and women of character and capabilities; integrity of heart and skilful hands.

### **Prayer**

Thank you, Lord, that the same Holy Spirit who lived in David, Jesus and in the apostles, now anoints and lives in us. Thank you that even our weakness is anointed and thank you for helping us overcome the fear of leadership.

Lord Hear us Lord Graciously Hear us.

Verse of the Day Acts 1:8 You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.

We take a moment to bring to mind all those mentioned in our newsheet and others dear to us.

**Merciful Father** Accept these prayers for the sake of Your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ