

Lent Reflections on the Stained-Glass Windows



**South Aisle (near to the Chapel)
Thursday in the Fifth Week of Lent**



Designed and erected by William Aikman probably about 1937. It is in memory of Harry Osborne Ince and his wife Annie.

Reading: Matthew 18:1- 7, 10; 19:13-15

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

‘If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of stumbling-blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling-block comes!...

‘Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven....

Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.’ And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

Commentary

What did Jesus look like?

Everyone probably has their own mental picture. Besides the blond haired, blue-eyed looking Jesus that was once a popular image, there would also be an African or Chinese or Indian looking Jesus depending on one's cultural background. However, we do not have a physical description of Jesus from the New Testament or early Christian literature: The writers are more concerned to tell us about His character.

One of the strongest portraits of Jesus in the Gospel is that of a teacher, of a Rabbi. The majority of times that Jesus is addressed directly in the Gospels He is called 'Teacher.' In fact, it is what He calls Himself: 'You call me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am' (John 13:13). He taught in synagogues, in houses, from a boat, on the hillside, at a well, at table, on the road and by the shore. Jesus teaches people where He is and wherever they are. He taught through parables and stories, through instructions and sermons, and of course by example. Not everything He taught or did was clear to the disciples who were often confused or baffled by His sayings and actions.

Several of His teachings involved children, who were regarded as insignificant in society at the time, without power or status. Our window depicts our reading today, 'an enacted parable,' where Jesus literally places a child in the middle of the disciples as an example of humility and lack of concern for worldly status. He treats the children with gentleness and mercy and blesses them.

We see in the window a bearded Jesus wearing a long, white robe, a shawl over his head, sandals on his feet and a tasselled belt. Is this how Jesus would have looked?

We know from the Gospels (Mark 6:56) that He wore a large shawl ('himation' in Greek) which had tassels, described as 'edges,' which, worn like a wrap, would hang down below the knees. He would have walked in sandals and most probably have worn a basic tunic (chiton), which for men usually finished slightly below the knees (not at the ankles). Only rich men wore long tunics because they didn't have to work.

He probably would not have worn white, but his clothes would have been undyed, unbleached wool. His hair most likely would have been kept short and he may have had a beard. Writing in the mid 2nd century AD, a scholar named Celsus, who tried to research from people who had seen Him, just what Jesus looked like, suggested He looked scruffy.



Joan Taylor, professor of Christian Origins and Second Temple Judaism at King's College, London, draws our attention to a 3rd century depiction of Moses as how a Jewish sage was imagined in the Graeco-Roman world. He has undyed clothing, a prayer shawl and short tunic with short hair and a slight beard. She thinks this is the closest correspondence to what Jesus really liked like.



Meditation and Prayer by Ashely Blackburn

Look upon the Holy Face of Jesu

O how he loves you

How he has been waiting for you

He sees you

He sees your loved ones, those you are most worried about,

those you lift up in prayer to him

He sees your station in life

He sees your situation, all you have been through,

and all you are going through right now

He sees you in your entirety

He sees all that you are, all that you've done,

and all that he hopes for you to do

His eyes are the eyes of gentleness,

of kindness,

of forgiveness,

of perfect charity

Behind his gaze is Our Heavenly Father who is all powerful,

all knowing and all loving

Coming from his Most Holy Face is the Holy Breath of Christ

The same breath that he shared with you upon your creation

The same breath he shared with you at your Baptism

The same breath he strengthened you with at your Confirmation

This Holy Breath of Christ is what sustains you now and always

Allow him to breathe upon you now

Close your eyes and breathe in the Holy Breath of Christ

Invite the Holy Spirit in

This Spirit that lives and moves between you and Jesus

Take a deep breath in

Allow it to completely fill your lungs

And then imagine the breath of Christ flowing throughout your entire

body

healing your wounds

restoring your hope

Now talk to Jesus from this place

He already knows your heart's deepest longings, for he placed those

longings into your heart

Speak to him as your best friend

Be honest with him in this moment

Then reverence the silence as you wait for his response

=== Silence ===

Your faith is a gift from God

In exchange for trust in him, He gives you the gift of faith

Trust even in the darkness

Even in the uncertainties

Even in the pain

Speak these words now: "Jesus I trust in you"