

## **Sermon for Sunday 21 June 2026 (Morning Worship and Baptism)**

**Revd Canon Simon Pitcher, Rector**

### ***Mark 1.9-11***

So today is Father's Day, isn't it? And I was sent a little present by my daughter which I thought I would share with you, which describes itself as great fun for all Christians. Okay, so this celebrates itself as 'Grow Jesus', and it says Jesus can grow up to 600%.

On the front it says, Jesus is always there for you. Jesus's love is unending. Jesus will never judge you but always love you. He is a forgiver. Find faith in the Lord and then you will find faith in yourself. So that all sounds rather fantastic, doesn't it? And it says, watch Jesus grow. So it says, put Jesus in water and see what happens. So I need a willing volunteer. Who'd like to come and volunteer?

We'll see what happens. So would you come and help me? Come, Rosie. Yeah. So there's Jesus. All right, okay, okay. And another volunteer, would you like to come help me? Either of you, both of you can come. So would someone like to pour some water into the bowl for me? Who'd like to do that? Do you want to do that? OK, right, that's it. No, I think fill it all up.

Are you excited about this? I am. Thank you. I don't know, we'll see. Pop Jesus in then and we'll see what happens. Well done. Right. Nothing instantly is happening. We might have to wait a little while. Let's see what it says on the packet. It says, 'Jesus will be fully raised after 3 days.' There you go. Thank you very much. Yeah, we better leave that and we'll see what happens.

So anyway, I thought that was rather fun and I thought I'd share it with you. And it also kind of made me think about what we're doing today really, because, what does it include? What ingredients did we have there? What did we need first of all? We needed some water, didn't we? Yes, we needed some water. Would anyone like to tell me what you think water is? Why do we use water in baptism? Any ideas?

Sorry, what did somebody say? For purity. Thank you, Charles. Any other thoughts? Sorry? To being cleansed, yeah, being washed, yes, and refreshed too, I think, on a hot day like today. So we had in our Bible reading that Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan and he was washed, and he was washed so that all others who are washed too are washed into the family of Jesus. And washing is a symbol of washing off all the things that we have done wrong and making a new start. So that's important in baptism.

But we might say, well, Finlay's only small, what has he ever done wrong? And of course the answer is, well, not much. So there's also washing in the promise that is on here: Jesus is always there for you, his love is unending. So the water is a symbol of washing off, but also a symbol of always being able to wash off and leave behind whatever the future might hold. So whenever we turn back to Jesus. He's always there for us, he always loves us, he always forgives us. So the water is a symbol of washing, washing off anything that we might think might separate us from the love of God or the love of each other. And water is also about making a new start, so we begin to live when we come out of the water as members of the family of Jesus.

So it says on here, he's a forgiver. He's always there for you. His love is unending. He will never judge you but always love you. I think all those things are true. And parents and godparents, how is Finlay going to know those things for himself? He's only going to know those things for himself if you tell him. And part of the role of the promises that we make together in this service is that parents, godparents, and the church, we will all tell him that Jesus is there for him, that he loves him, that he will always forgive him and never not be there for him. So we're all promising that together.

And it says on here that Jesus will grow 600% his real size. Well, maybe what we're really saying today is that Jesus is going to grow not just 600%, but beyond imagining when we tell Finlay together about the love of Jesus for him, so that Jesus can grow in him as he grows older. And that's what we're doing together today.

So if you want to see how big Jesus grows in the water, you'll have to come back on Wednesday morning when we have our midweek service, and we'll see what's happened. Good. So we'll leave that there for now.