

Our Sunday Service Together

August 22nd 2021

Trinity 13



An Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty. Alleluia

Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Our Confession

Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. **Amen.**

The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Psalmody Psalm 84

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!

My soul has a desire and longing to enter the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.

The sparrow has found her a house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young: at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

Blessed are they who dwell in your house: they will always be praising you.

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion, who going through the barren valley find there a spring, and the early rains will clothe it with blessing.

They will go from strength to strength and appear before God in Zion.

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; listen, O God of Jacob.

Behold our defender, O God, and look upon the face of your anointed.

For one day in your courts is better than a thousand.

I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

For the Lord God is both sun and shield; he will give grace and glory; no good thing shall the Lord withhold from those who walk with integrity.

O Lord God of hosts, blessed are those who put their trust in you.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

Scripture Reading Ephesians 6.10-20

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. ¹⁵ As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Gospel John 6.56-69

⁵⁶ Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' ⁵⁹ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' ⁶¹ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But among you there are some who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. ⁶⁵ And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.'

⁶⁶ Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

at the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

A Reflection for the day

GK Chesterton wrote of Christianity "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried". Sobering words indeed to reflect on, and to ponder, maybe just what is so difficult sometimes about being a Christian. For many youngsters it is the taunting and name calling. For very many these days it is often a sense of being odd, different from the rest of the world about us, it is difficult!

Jesus' listeners too seem to find themselves in sobering reflection and his words seem difficult indeed for many to take to heart; 'many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him'. What had initially caused them to follow? Was it the words, was it the healings, was it the free bread and fish, or simply getting caught in the latest 'thing'? We have all found ourselves drawn to something new, be it a hobby, a job, a book, a TV show, or even a person; how many of these things have fallen by the way side for us?

Interestingly, even those closest to Jesus found what he was saying difficult and Jesus asks them too if they wished to go home. Jesus calls his disciples to full humanity, to be people of love for God and neighbour, to be those who care for the world with heart, mind, soul and strength. And this stretches us in every way, it makes demands on the way we think, the way we act, the way we feel. It asks of us we welcome others as God does, without prejudice. It asks we turn from hatred, envy, greed, from abusive actions and words to peace and to love. However, whilst it may make demands it offers much more for life.

Peter sees this, he declares there is a way of life in Jesus' words; but not any way of life, Jesus' words are a way of life that is eternal – more than any can imagine. John, of course begins his gospel by declaring Jesus is the eternal word of life come to show, come to tell, come to lead us all in a way of living that is eternally life giving.

John also talks of Jesus with us, in us through his Spirit; he talks of a living, loving relationship to be known and lived. Relationships take work, take time, they take our whole being. Paul alludes to this work, this commitment, to a determination even in his letter to the Ephesians. The Ephesians would have either watched soldiers getting ready or possibly many were ex-soldiers themselves. They knew therefore both the need for the amour and how it took time and care to dress properly. They would have known also of the exercise the soldiers practiced each day to be able to stand firm, to use shield and sword.

Jesus' teaching is difficult, to love, and love and love again takes determination. But we do not do this alone! The Spirit is with us, the well of love is ready to be drawn from if we would remain in relationship with Jesus; if we would remain in him and he in us.

The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Prayers *We make our intercessions*

Lord, as you love us, help us to love one another. Give to your church a burning zeal through your Spirit and keep us ardent in our spirits. *Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

Lord, we pray for peace and unity in your church. Increase our fellowship with one another and our openness to others of your church not yet gathered with us. Give us courage to share your love for this world, to tell of our lives with you that the faintest whiff of faith may be fanned into flame for your glory. *Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

We pray for peace in our hearts, our community, in this nation, and across your world, that as much as it may be possible for us we may live in peace with all people. We pray for peace keeping organisations, for NGOs, for the United Nations. We pray for police and probation services. We give thanks for all who offer and work for peace in this world. *Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

May our homes be places of peace and love. We pray for those caught in domestic violence, homelessness, unemployment and spiralling debt. Be with our local foodbank and increase people's generosity to their work. But as we pray this we ask that the systems of injustice, poor decisions by government and the greed of many would be turned by your love to the ways of your kingdom. *Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

We pray for all not at peace, for broken relationships, the broken hearted and broken in spirit. For those who suffer from a breakdown in wellbeing, for all being affected by hatred or revenge. *Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.*

Lord, when you come in your glory, make us to be one with you and the saints who are now at peace.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ, the prince of peace. Amen.

The Collect

All: Almighty God, you search us and know us; may we rely on you in strength and rest on you in weakness, now and in all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
Christ under me, Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen