

Our Sunday Service Together

October 2021

Trinity 20



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 22.1-15

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me, and are so far from my salvation, from the words of my distress?
O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; and by night also, but I find no rest.
Yet you are the Holy One, enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
Our forebears trusted in you; they trusted, and you delivered them.
They cried out to you and were delivered; they put their trust in you and were not confounded.
But as for me, I am a worm and no man, scorned by all and despised by the people.
All who see me laugh me to scorn; they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,
'He trusted in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him deliver him, if he delights in him.'
But it is you that took me out of the womb and laid me safe upon my mother's breast.
On you was I cast ever since I was born; you are my God even from my mother's womb.
Be not far from me, for trouble is near at hand and there is none to help.
Mighty oxen come around me; fat bulls of Bashan close me in on every side.
They gape upon me with their mouths, as it were a ramping and a roaring lion.
I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint;
my heart has become like wax melting in the depths of my body.
My mouth is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue cleaves to my gums; you have laid me in the dust of death.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall
be: world without end. Amen.

Scripture Reading Hebrews 4.12-16

¹² Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account. ¹⁴ Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

At the end of the reading we say: 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 Mark 10.17-31

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' ¹⁸ Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother."' ²⁰ He said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.' ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' ²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. ²³ Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' ²⁴ And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' ²⁶ They were greatly astounded and said to one another, 'Then who can be saved?' ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'
²⁸ Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' ²⁹ Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.'

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

"The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart", says the writer in Hebrews. And boy do we see it at work with precision in Mark's gospel today; not in a condemnatory judgemental fashion but in love!

It would be good to firstly jump back into the scene to gain some comprehension of what is happening; it is so easy to read the bible through our own age and miss the point! As we do we find this exchange of words is not about being rich – or the dangers of riches. Neither is this about camels and needles – if someone mentions them to use we would think of injections or sewing or knitting needles perhaps. The needle Jesus is talking of everyone would have known about; a very narrow gate into the old town of Jerusalem which, to get through, would require a merchant take everything off their camel.

In setting the scene we also need to know that the man's question is not asking about how to get to heaven when he dies, in some 'vertical' spiritual sense of heaven being 'up there'. His concern is about how he might live his life in the here and now, in a very earthy 'horizontal' manner, in such a way that is honouring to God. As such the talk of 'eternal life' is not about some timeless existence but about having fullness of life with God and neighbour, now. The treasure in heaven Jesus talks of is not something a person goes to heaven to enjoy, any more than money in a bank is to be spent in the bank – that would be more ludicrous than getting a camel through the eye of a needle.

The man has clearly been a good Jew, keeping the laws of Moses – Jesus accepts this. But the Kingdom Jesus is ushering in is, as it were the other side of the 'needle gate'. For the man to enter and live fully in this 'Kingdom come' will mean divesting himself of some things (selling up and giving away the preoccupations of the old way) and investing his life in this Kingdom and its concerns and purposes (following Jesus). Peter joins the conversation here and points out both how he has left all behind to follow and is a bit concerned about the way ahead. 'Fear not', comes Jesus reply for you will find even greater riches come your way as you live in my kingdom's ways.

As with the previous verses in Mark and Jesus' conversations about the regulations Moses gave on marriage and divorce, because of the hardness of peoples' hearts, Jesus is pointing beyond the old Mosaic law to the new age to come, to the Kingdom now close at hand.

To enter that kingdom requires a move away from the old; a selling up, a giving away of old preoccupations and dependencies at the 'needle gate' and a following of Jesus into the new ways of the kingdom, the ways of grace, love, peace, mercy, justice for the earth. There may be grieving at the thought of losing these old familiar ways of living but, as Peter is encouraged to know, entering into the life of the Kingdom now at hand brings with it even greater riches and blessings.

I wonder if we might pray together the words Jesus gave to us, 'Your Kingdom come, and your will be done, here in earth as in heaven'. Amen!

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*

Gracious God, we pray for your church throughout the world, that your way may be known upon earth, and your saving power among all nations. We pray for all church leaders and all those who are seeking new ways to live and tell the story of Jesus in changing times.

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

God of compassion, the Canaanite woman's persistence led to Jesus's blessing. Challenge the boundaries we set to our charity and concern. Grant that we may all rejoice in your love and share it.

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

God of hospitality, you set a place for everyone at your table. Open our hearts to embrace those who are easily excluded and despised. We pray for peace and unity among all people and across nations.

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

God of healing, at your word, the girl was released from her distress. Grant your healing love to all who are weighed down with sickness or anxiety. We pray especially for Paul, Gerald, Linda, Doreen, and Rachel

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

God of hope, you bring life to all who call upon your name. Draw into your family all who have died and be with those who are bereaved....

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

The Collect

All: God our light and our salvation: illuminate our lives, that we may see your goodness in the land of the living, and looking on your beauty may be changed into the likeness of 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