

Our Sunday Service Together

June 19th 2022

Trinity 2



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 22.19-28

Be not far from me, O Lord; you are my strength; hasten to help me.

Deliver my soul from the sword, my poor life from the power of the dog.

Save me from the lion's mouth, from the horns of wild oxen.

You have answered me!

I will tell of your name to my people; in the midst of the congregation will I praise you.

Praise the Lord, you that fear him; O seed of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, O seed of Israel.

For he has not despised nor abhorred the suffering of the poor;

neither has he hidden his face from them; but when they cried to him he heard them.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;

I will

perform my vows in the presence of those that fear you.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord shall praise him; their hearts shall live for ever.

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,

and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.

For the kingdom is the Lord's and he rules over the nations.

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 Galatians 3.23-29

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

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 Luke 8.26-39

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷ As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me'— ²⁹ for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰ Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him. ³¹ They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³² Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³ Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵ Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷ Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

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

Fear abounds in our reading from Luke today! The Geresenes are fearful of a man's mental health, and have him locked away outside the community. The man himself is filled with fear and torment as he encounters Jesus; or better, that which possesses him is terrified of the power inhabiting the Son 'of the Most High God'.

As Jesus ministers healing to the man and as peace enters his life, possibly for the first time in many, many years, we find a new fear now grips the townsfolk; a fear of God! A violent 'madman' the town could deal with and keep chained up and suppressed – most of the time, but someone wielding such power in the spiritual realms is truly terrifying. In Jesus they see a man who is really unmanageable; and they are right, for no man can direct and manage the will and actions of God!

The 'fear of God' we are told is the beginning of wisdom, but what do we mean by the term 'fear of God'?

I will be honest, I have struggled for years at funerals using the words “As a father is tender towards his children, so is the Lord tender to those that fear him”. The sense that tenderness can exist within a world defined by fear doesn't fit my concept of being a parent, and is certainly not part of any world where the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is a concern.

But not for a moment do I think of God as fluffy and cuddly, a smiling old grandad with Werther's original toffees to hand, a deity who lets all things happen without consequences, or simply a mystical concept – God is God, and the ways and means of God are to be respected and approached with care. Here is the heart of matter revealed to us in Jesus Christ; we are to approach God. We can approach God because of Christ, and we approach without fear, because of Christ.

Jesus' most used phrase, throughout the gospels, is 'do not be afraid'. Clearly there was the chance of fear but instead he bade people come, approach in peace! It is these constant words of Jesus, and his call to actions in peace, that gives rise to my struggle with the words from the funeral liturgy. If Jesus repeatedly says 'do not be afraid' then we should not be, why, because fear stops the possibility of relationship with God.

As Jesus heals 'Legion' fear is replaced in his life by faith, and he now sits with Jesus, in peace and with the possibility of a life lived within that peace rather than fear. However, the people now gripped by fear are shut to any possible approach to, or relationship with Jesus; the door is closed and he must leave the area.

Paul has come to see that the Law, rather than make the relationship promised to Abraham a possibility has, through fear of failure to keep the law, of ever making the grade, of a Father's wrath at failure, become a barrier. But now, through Christ the barrier is gone and all can come 'in faith' to God, everyone, whether Greek or Jew, slave or free. Faith in Christ replaces fear as the basis for relationship between humanity and God.

Knowing we are not God, that God alone is God, having a right sense of our place and God's possibilities, is the beginning of wisdom. This possibility, this relationship offered is nothing to be afraid of, rather it is something to be embraced, welcomed, entered into. Christ bids all come and approach, without fear, to sit with him, follow him, know him and be known by him. The Geresenes could not do so, the question comes to us, 'will we'?

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

God of light and power, we rejoice in your light, we live in your power, we look for your glory.

Open our eyes to perceive your presence, that we may give ourselves to you...

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

We give thanks for the light that is revealed to us in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, enlighten your church where vision is dim and the light of the gospel nearly gone out.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

We pray for spiritual renewal, for an increase in vision and hope. We remember all who are prophets and visionaries today. *Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.*

Lord, direct all who are seeking to improve the world. We pray for peace-makers, for relief agencies, for all involved in scientific research, for all who hunger for righteousness and justice.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

We give thanks for all who have led us to you, all who shared insight and knowledge, all who kept the lamp of faith burning. *Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.*

We pray for all who have entered into weakness, into sadness or into trouble this week, all who have been injured in accidents, the afflicted and perplexed, the persecuted and the forsaken.

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.

We rejoice that the afflicted will know affection, the perplexed will know purpose, the persecuted will come to your peace, the forsaken will be enfolded in love, in the fullness of your kingdom. We pray for our loved ones departed. *Lord, in your mercy hear our prayers.*

May the joy of your presence, visions of your glory and the hope of your kingdom close at hand, strengthen us and give us your peace.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Collect

All: God of truth, help us to keep your law of love and to walk in ways of wisdom, that we may find true life in 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