

Our Sunday Service Together

July 30th 2023

8th Sunday after Trinity



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 119.129-136

Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore, my soul keeps them.

The opening of your word gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

I open my mouth and draw in my breath, as I long for your commandments.

Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your way with those who love your name.

Order my steps by your word, and let no wickedness have dominion over me.

Redeem me from earthly oppressors so that I may keep your commandments.

Show the light of your countenance upon your servant and teach me your statutes.

My eyes run down with streams of water, because the wicked do not keep your law.

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 Romans 8.26-39

Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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 Matthew 13.31-33 and 44-52

He (*Jesus*) put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.' When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.

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 *Revd John Webb writes*

With the Accession and Coronation of King Charles we have become more aware of monarchy so Jesus' parable about the Kingdom of Heaven is particularly relevant. The Old Testament reading set for to-day is the lovely story of King Solomon having a dream in which God promised to give him anything he asked for. He asked for the gift of wisdom. God's response to this was 'Because you have asked for this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word.' So we now can now speak of 'The Wisdom of Solomon' as the gold standard for monarchy. This was obviously in the minds of those responsible for the Coronation Service. Sadly, Solomon's successors didn't live up to his example and used their power for personal gain at the expense of those they ruled. So this was the background when Jesus spoke, as he often did, of the coming of the Kingdom of God – it is the time when our lives are safe in the hands of a loving God. But as we read our papers or listen to the news it seems obvious that such a situation is a long way off so it is important to learn the lesson of the mustard seed.

To avoid confusion, it is important to note that the mustard seed referred to is not the one we may grow for salad on our windowsills but the rather different one which grows in Palestine which was proverbial for its smallness. Although it is a very small seed it grows into a large bush and the birds do perch in it and eat the seeds. So this parable is about small beginnings and large outcomes. It is also about nature taking its course and being patient – the harvest will come when it is due and no amount of fretting will bring it any earlier. Jesus himself might be seen as that seed. He came in an obscure part of the world, but through a small band of followers his message has spread throughout the world and many thousands of people are now committed to following him and spreading that message. Sometimes his little band of followers must have despaired. How could they change anything. Yet with Jesus an invincible force entered the world. H.G.Wells wrote of Jesus 'His is easily the dominant figure in history..... a historian without any theological bias whatever should find that he simply cannot portray the history of humanity honestly without giving a foremost place to a penniless preacher from Nazareth.'

We are reminded in this parable that God, like nature, cannot be hurried. The seed will come to maturity in its own time. Meanwhile we are called upon to be faithful as we pray 'Thy kingdom come; thy will be done'.

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*

O God of peace, who has taught us that in quietness and confidence shall be our strength; help us, as we come into your presence, to be still and know that you are God.

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

We pray for Bishops Michael and Ruth and all those who seek to serve you in this diocese. May they be filled with the Spirit and speak with authority. May they have confident optimism as they preach the love of God. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for world leaders as they seek justice and peace for all people. Especially we pray for the leaders of Ukraine and Russia that a just solution may be found for their dispute, and for the peoples of Ukraine and Russia that they may become good neighbours to each other. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our King, Prime Minister, members of parliament and local councillors that they may have the Wisdom of Solomon. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for powerful business executives that they may seek the truth and resist the temptation to misuse that power. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the sick, suffering, dying and those who mourn and we give thanks and pray for those who care for them. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

The Collect

All: Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for 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