

Our Sunday Service Together

August 20th 2023

11th 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 67

God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us,
That your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

O let the nations rejoice and be glad, for you will judge the peoples righteously and govern the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, and God, our own God, will bless us.

God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

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 11.-2a and 29-32

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

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 15.21-28

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.'

Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

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

Is this Jesus movement an anti-Jewish and Gentile religion? This is the question Paul wrestles with in the mid-point of his letter to the Romans. Certainly, his calling has been to the Gentiles and he has seen much evidence of God at work in the lives of the unclean, of those the 'chosen people' of Israel would consider beyond the love of God.

In Matthew's gospel today we find Jesus exercising ministry beyond the bounds of Israel, for the first, but not the last time. You might suspect that the disciples had been able to receive the rebuff of the religious elite when they accused their master of eating with Tax Collectors and sinners – after all they were Israelites, just wayward and in need of redemption. But now, now Jesus has crossed the border, both geographically, ethnically and in faith matters. Tyre and Sidon are as much outside of Israel, and consequently beyond any sense of God's love and grace, as they would be seen today by good Israelites.

What is Jesus doing, for heaven's sake? A Canaanite woman comes and asks for mercy. The disciples do as any good Jew would and suggest she is shunned. Jesus, some commentators suggest, toys with the women in his conversation. However, that would seem both out of character for him and unfair for all involved in having revelation about God's heart for His creation. His question to the women enables clarification of her quest and reveals that, whilst God has chosen a people as his blessed ones, God has love for all of humanity.

Jesus' talks of dogs in the way that the Jew would think of a Canaanite; of any gentile. However, the women responds by talking of the young puppies welcomed under a table at the feast. Your faith is great, says Jesus; might this be because she sees that God welcomes all who would come just as all would welcome a puppy? The healing comes instantly!

God is not done with His chosen children, with Israel. Christianity is not a separate faith, but a new shoot grafted into the vine. At the moment, Paul declares, it seems God's blessing on all of this new growth is directed to the gentiles. But the vine remains, it is the source of life for the new branches! We are Judeo-Christians with a heritage seen back to the covenant of God in Abraham.

It is very easy for established faith to become self-obsessed and believing that those within are the only ones righteous in God's sight. It is easy to think that only those 'within the fold' could be blessed by God. It is easy to think them and us, they could not possibly be the folks God would love, God would have mercy on – they are the 'dogs'. But we have been shown again and again through history that God's love in Christ welcomes all who come, seeks out all that the 'righteous' would consider beyond reach.

It is good to reflect every so often who we think of as sinners and Tax Collectors, those we would consider outside the bounds of God's love in Christ, those society and polite religion would think of as 'dogs'. It is to these that Jesus welcomes – can 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*

We Pray for our Government and for the leaders of nations. May serve in humility for the common good, seek peace, have mercy and administer justice. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for the victims of war, injustice, prejudice and abuse that they may find peace and reconciliation. May we never forget that all people are loved and valued by God regardless of differences. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for our use of the gifts of God entrusted to us, that we may use them responsibly for the good of all. Especially we pray for those soon returning to school and college. We hold the staff team at Ilchester Primary in prayer as term begins with 4 new teachers and interim Head Teachers whilst the task of finding a new permanent Head Teacher is undertaken by the Governing body. *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 and dying and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill to 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. Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

The Collect

All: O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, 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