

Our Sunday Service Together

Sunday November 19th 2023



An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia! To you we come, Father of lights, with angels and saints, where heaven and earth unite. May Jesus meet us in the breaking of the bread. 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

God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

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 90.1-8 and 12 *We say the psalm aloud*

Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another.

Before the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the world were formed, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turn us back to dust and say: 'Turn back, O children of earth.'

For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday, which passes like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away like a dream; they fade away suddenly like the grass.

In the morning it is green and flourishes; in the evening it is dried up and withered.

For we consume away in your displeasure; we are afraid at your wrathful indignation.

You have set our misdeeds before you and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

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 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. ² For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! ⁴ But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; ⁵ for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; ⁷ for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹ For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

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.

¹⁴ 'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵ to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶ The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷ In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸ But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹ After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." ²¹ His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." ²² And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." ²³ His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." ²⁴ Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." ²⁶ But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹ For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰ As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

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

Many people seem to be talking about 'times and seasons' these days. Whilst there have been times of war, seasons of bad weather, reports of earthquakes and floods, these things never seemed to be happening all at once; like today they seem to be.

How do we respond, what can we do? The folks at Thessalonica seem to have asked this of St Paul. His reply is simple, you know your calling is to live as people of the daylight, and to be faithful to that calling. Do not get caught up in the lifestyle and expectations of a world in darkness, Paul says, for that will lead to disaster. Do not be fooled and get carried away in practices of the night because the dawn will come and catch you unprepared.

Jesus' parable has the same emphasis on faithfulness and being prepared through it!

A 'Talent' to Jesus' hearers was a sum of money, and in the story the master's servants had been set a task to use a sum given them and make something of it. The master would return, possibly unexpectedly, and ask them to give account. All but one are faithful in their charge and, to their best ability, increased the value of their talent. But one, through fear hid the talent and nothing became of it.

Jesus' is talking of Israel and the great gift they had been given as the people of God, but have failed to make anything of it for their master's glory. In some ways Jesus is passing judgement, if not on the nation then certainly on the leaders, the priests and the Pharisees. The master is before them and finds them wasteful and wanting. They will be cast aside.

But, this is also very much a call to enter into the grace of God he offers – it actually is not too late. Judgement is come but has still to happen, there is a time between in which they can get back to faithful living, in which they can turn to be the people of daylight once more.

Over the years, more so in recent times, the 'talent' of the parable has become associated in Christian thought with gifting and ability, especially spiritual gifts, rather than a sum of money. This has led some folks have in a race to acquire as many 'gifts of the spirit' as possible. Others have found themselves caught up in an elitist attitude claiming they have more and are of greater worth than others. This is not how things sit in the parable Jesus tells; it is not the nature of the talent that matters, but how it is faithfully applied to the Glory of the master, to the glory of God.

All four of the 'slaves' are given a talent to make good with. All, bar the one makes something of things in the way they can, and each is celebrated. So too, each person is gifted in some fashion or other. Each gift is of equal value in God's sight, none is greater than the other. Sometimes gifts change as life brings its changes to us all. However, the calling of each and all remains the same through every phase and change in life, to make something of the 'talent' have, of who they are, in the way possible for us - to live faithfully in the light rather than wastefully in the darkness.

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*

Mindful of God's kingdom, set in process through the cross of Christ and yet to be fulfilled, we commend ourselves to God and pray for the needs of the world in the words: 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done'.

We pray for our Church throughout the world and across all denominations. Pour out your Spirit of truth on all ordained and lay leaders and grant them wisdom and courage to proclaim your kingdom to the margins of society.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

We pray for our world. Guide and direct all world leaders and those in positions of authority with responsibility for decision making. Grant them great wisdom, deep commitment and right judgment. We pray especially for the people of America that divisions may be healed and unity restored in the aftermath of their elections.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

We pray for all God's people. Grant us the grace to put aside all differences of culture, race, gender or ability, to recognise that we are all created in your image. Guide all those involved in serving children and young people in education that they may see the gifts in everyone. We pray for all doctors, nurses and carers. Grant them strength, encouragement and the resources for all lives to flourish without exclusion. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*

We hold before God the elderly, the vulnerable and those who are most at risk from coronavirus. We pray for the sick, those experiencing sorrow and those who are isolated. In the silence of our hearts we make our own intentions...

We pray for ourselves, for one another and for those whose needs are known only to you. Grant us the grace to listen to your voice and the courage to follow it wherever it may lead us.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Amen

The Collect

All: Heavenly Lord, you long for the world's salvation: stir us from apathy, restrain us from excess and revive in us new hope that all creation will one day be healed 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.