

Our Sunday Service Together

26th October 2025

20th Sunday after Trinity



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 Psalm Psalm 84.1-7

How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
My soul has a desire and longing to enter the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
The sparrow has found her a house
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young:
at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
Blessed are they who dwell in your house:
they will always be praising you.
Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion,
Who going through the barren valley find there a spring,
and the early rains will clothe it with blessing.
They will go from strength to strength and appear before God in Zion.
O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer; listen, O God of Jacob.
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 2 Timothy 4.6-8 and 16-18

6 As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

16 At my first defence no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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 18.9-14

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 10 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income." 13 But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" 14 I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.'

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

In today's reading from Luke's gospel Jesus continues to use parables to teach on prayer, and especially the attitude that enables prayer. His hearers are 'some' people who "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt". Jesus uses the parable to help them reflect on their out-look and lifestyle.

Our society values the self-assured, the self-made, the independent and we make icons of many folks with these attributes and look to teach our children to aspire to be like them. But is being declared righteous a bad trait?

For Luke it is often a trait worth emulating, and he gives us examples of righteous people. Elizabeth and Zechariah, John the Baptist's parents, are righteous. So also Simeon and the council member Joseph, who provides a tomb for the crucified Jesus. Jesus himself is called righteous by the centurion. Moreover, Jesus promises blessing when we feed those who "cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous". Yet there is some contrast too, the righteous Jesus says need no repentance, that is for sinners – and for heaven to rejoice over.

The Pharisee in Jesus' parable names a number of 'righteous', characteristics a disciple of Christ should value: He prays. He does not steal or cause unrest or commit adultery or become a cog in imperial rule (unlike the tax collector). He fasts. He tithes. But something seems to be amiss in his attitude.

The Pharisee, standing alone by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector." There are many times when we pray on our own. But there is something much more here than a man standing on his own, with no friends or family about him to pray; after all we all pray on our own. The sense here is that he has set himself apart from the people of God, and forgotten that no one in faith is independent, we are interdependent, we are family and as such always to pray - 'our father', not mine or yours, but 'our father'. And it follows that in setting himself apart from the people of God he actually sets himself apart from the presence of God, who is 'with us'.

The Pharisee sets himself apart from the wider people of God and goes astray: "God, I thank you that I am not like other people ... even like this tax collector" betrays that this imagined Pharisee's righteousness rests on trust in himself rather than interdependence with others. His righteousness is a possession, solely to be clasped.

The contrast with the tax collector is a sharp one indeed. Whilst the tax collector, like the Pharisee, may stand on his own, his prayer acknowledges the reality that all have sinned and fallen short of the corporate calling of humanity to be the glory of God in the world. His head is bowed. He looks for mercy rather than trading in contempt. Jesus, whom Paul in his letter to Timothy calls 'the righteous Lord' declares this man went home 'justified' or 'righteous'.

One apocryphal story goes that a preacher once stood up after our passage from Luke was read and asked,

'which of you thought during your hearing of the word, thank God I am not like that Pharisee'.

Alas, we are all, at times like the Pharisee, resting on our own sense of self-appraisal and self-justification, and in that moment we have contempt for those we think of as other to us, and forget we are all alike and in need of God's grace in Christ.

In the end, the parable probably imagines that we would all be better off in a world where more of us prayed, fasted and tithed, not with an attitude of contempt, resentment, or our self-judgment of what it is to be righteous before God. This would be to misunderstand the shape of salvation, and maybe even hold contempt for God. For the reality is, 'there but for the grace of God we all go', alone!

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

Lord of Lords, King of Kings, so move the hearts and minds of the leaders of nations that we would see mercy, grace, provision for all in need and peace. We pray for your peace in Ukraine, Syria, Sudan, in Gaza, Lebanon and Israel. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.*

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. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.*

God of compassion, challenge the boundaries we set to our charity and concern. Grant that we may all rejoice in your love and share it.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

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.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

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....

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

The Collect

All: God, the giver of life, whose Holy Spirit wells up within your Church:
by the Spirit's gifts equip us to live the gospel of Christ and make us eager to do your will, that we may share with the whole creation the joys of eternal life; 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.

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