

Sunday 5 September 2021

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity



Sermon and prayers of intercession © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

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Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 One faith, one Church, one Lord (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Therefore, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

**Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

Merciful God,
your Son came to save us
and bore our sins on the cross:
may we trust in your mercy
and know your love,
rejoicing in the righteousness
that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of Proverbs

A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
and favor is better than silver or gold.

²The rich and the poor have this in common:

⁸Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity,
and the rod of anger will fail.

⁹Those who are generous are blessed,
for they share their bread with the poor.

²²Do not rob the poor because they are poor,
or crush the afflicted at the gate;

²³for the Lord pleads their cause
and despoils of life those who despoil them. *Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter of St James

My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, 'Have a seat here, please,' while to the one who is poor you say, 'Stand there,' or, 'Sit at my feet,' have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. *James 2:1-10, 14-17*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 A new commandment [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All Glory to you O Lord.

From there [Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food

and throw it to the dogs.’ But she answered him, ‘Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.’ Then he said to her, ‘For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.’ So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, ‘Ephphatha,’ that is, ‘Be opened.’ And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’ *Mark 7:24–37*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

I wonder if you remember where you were when you heard that the twin towers in New York had been attacked and planes had slammed into two skyscrapers which were burning and disintegrating? I wonder if you remember where you were when you heard that President Kennedy had been killed? In such cases, we remember these incidents because they completely changed the world. These events changed the world so radically that *we* were changed and our lives were never the same again.

Well, let’s look at today’s Gospel. I wonder if you remember where you were when you first read this passage and realised it’s a record of another and even greater before-and-after moment.

Let’s be frank: today’s Gospel passage is odd. It begins with Jesus encountering a woman who asks him for a miracle—her daughter is poorly and, we imply, very sick indeed. Jesus refuses her, which seems out of character to say the least. She answers back and he changes his mind. Jesus then heals the girl. We’re seeing Jesus rewrite the rules. Let’s explore that idea.

The woman is described as ‘Syrophenician’ so she is a foreigner, a gentile. A Jewish man was forbidden to even talk to her let alone enter her home, eat with her ... in any way engage with her. That’s why Jesus is apparently rude at the start of the story. He’s telling her to go away, as a Jewish man is instructed to do. It’s only then that the first miracle occurs. And it occurs before the healing.

The word ‘miracle’ means that God has intervened. This first miracle occurs when Jesus changes his mind. At the start of the passage Jesus tells the woman that she comes from a different race from him and therefore he—the Son and Man and Son of God—has no remit to help her. He thinks his mission is to the Jewish people alone. This view is not even scriptural because the prophets labour the point all the way through the Old Testament. Indeed, the first covenant in Scripture (the covenant with Noah) is made between God ‘and *all* peoples.’ God reminds Jesus of this truth and tells him that he must listen to her as his mission is for everyone. God intervened so Jesus could see the richness of his mission to the whole world.

We now look briefly at the background. Why this change now? The passage tells us that Jesus is walking through the region of Tyre. He’s therefore walking on Gentile soil, which is forbidden. He’s doing so, the passage implies, because he’s afraid of being recognised back home. We see Jesus out of his comfort zone. Only then does God intervene: he inspires a woman to accost Jesus. It’s while she’s talking to Jesus that God has a chance to break into his consciousness. That’s how Jesus realises that the view he’s inherited is wrong and therefore sinful.

Today’s passage describes the moment when Jesus the man grows into Jesus the Messiah for all. Beforehand, he is fallible and afterwards, Jesus is more in tune with God. That’s why Jesus changes tack and does what the woman asks of him. He has repented and changed.

The implications are vast. God is telling Jesus that his mission is not to the Jews alone but to everyone: explicitly Jew and gentile, male and female; but also by implication young and old, educated and illiterate, ... , in short, for everyone. The Gospel is for everyone. Heaven is therefore full of people of every colour of skin, from every background, with those who (on earth) spoke every possible language.

Next, we notice how today’s passage occurs immediately after the Pharisees sponsor a debate about what is clean and unclean—we discussed those themes last week. And, straight after today’s passage, Jesus feeds four thousand people (and it’s inconceivable that all of them were Jews). The story is therefore exploring the difference between God’s idea of clean and ours.

In the following weeks we see Jesus walk outside the confines of Palestine once more and is Transfigured: he demonstrates God as his own flesh shines ablaze with spiritual perfection. We see the pattern that he leaves his comfort zone and God speaks to Him.

Today’s passage occurs more or less half-way through Mark’s Gospel. Beforehand, God is thought of as parochial and Jewish; but after these stories God is shown to be for everyone. Today’s Gospel reading is therefore a source of profound

hope and comfort. It says that God doesn't mind if we come from a different group or tribe to Jesus. No background stops us feeling his love. We only need to follow him.

Today's passage also means that, as Jesus' representatives here on earth, we can either follow him or reproduce the same mistake and only engage with people like us. It's suggesting that we may be called to leave our own comfort zones and talk to those we consider to be outsiders. It may be racial difference as symbolised by the colour of a skin or the accent or the language. It may be lifestyle, as implied (in the Letter from St James) by smell—yesterday's food or dirty skin. It may be anything from sexuality, creed, or politics. No: as St Paul says, 'In Christ there is no longer Jew nor Greek, male nor female' and so on. Perhaps we should remember the phrase that began today's service: 'God so loved the world ...' The world! The *whole* world! God loves everyone and He expects us to explore that love by sharing it also sharing with everyone.

To conclude: I wonder if you remember where you were when you heard the outrageous idea that God loves everyone and that God expects us to share His love for us with everyone regardless of anything. Remember that you heard it here first.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

We believe and trust in one God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Loving Lord, Lord of all: we thank you that you came for everyone regardless of gender, age, background, sexuality, income, or creed. Help us to share your message of salvation and love.

Lord of love:

All Hear our Prayer.

We pray for our Churches: help us to make our Churches places of inclusion, togetherness and love. Help us to cleanse our Churches of intolerance and difference. Give us courage to change anything that excludes or scares.

Lord of love:

All Hear our Prayer.

We pray for our nation and the wider world: help us to make our country a better place. We ask you to intervene each time we respond as Jesus did at the start of today's Gospel story. Change us as you changed him. We pray for an end to all forms of nationalism. We pray for the people of Afghanistan.

Lord of love:

All Hear our Prayer.

We pray for ourselves: help us and heal us all prejudice and indifference. We pray for those suffering because of prejudice and indifference. And we pray for those we know who are ill in any way. We ask the Jesus who healed the little girl in today's Gospel story to heal them.

Lord of love:

All Hear our Prayer.

We pray for those who have died and for their families and friends. We remember those whose anniversary of death occurs about now.

Lord of love:

All Hear our Prayer.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.
Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.
Peace from the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver
The peace of the Lord be always with you,
All And also with you.

HYMN 3 I am a new creation (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.
All Amen.

HYMN 4 Only by grace can we enter (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Lord God, the source of truth and love,
keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.