

Sunday 25 July 2021

St James the Apostle



St James the Greater as a pilgrim to the shrine at Compostela, by Murillo

James is often called 'the Great.' He was a Galilean fisherman who, with his brother John, was one of the first apostles called by Jesus to follow him.

The two brothers were with Jesus at his Transfiguration and with him again in the garden of Gethsemane. They annoyed the other followers of Jesus by asking to sit one on his left and the other on his right when he came into his glory; they certainly witnessed Jesus' appearances after the resurrection.

James was put to death by the sword on the order of Herod Agrippa, who hoped in vain that, by disposing of the Christian leaders, he could stem the flow of those hearing the good news and becoming followers in the Way. James' martyrdom is believed to have occurred in the year 44.

Sermon © the Revd Jane Hyde.

Liturgy including prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included 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 For all the saints

(please 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.

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, 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 St James

Merciful God,
whose holy apostle Saint James,
leaving his father and all that he had,
was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ
and followed him even to death:
help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world,
to be ready at all times to answer your call without delay;
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.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the book of the Prophet Jeremiah

The word that the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Baruch son of Neriah, when he wrote these words in a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: You said, 'Woe is me! The Lord has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning, and I find no rest.' Thus you shall say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: I am going to break down what I have built, and pluck up what I have planted—that is, the whole land. And you, do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for I am going to bring disaster upon all flesh, says the Lord; but I will give you your life as a prize of war in every place to which you may go.' *Jeremiah 45:1–5*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. *Acts 11:27—12:2*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Now the green blade riseth ([please click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

The mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, 'You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'

When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.' *Matthew 20:20–28*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

James (whom we remember today) was the first of the twelve disciples to be martyred. The Collect summarises his life very succinctly: he left his father, forsook

all he had, was obedient to the call of Jesus and followed him to a martyr's death. That's the story, in a nutshell.

Our Gospel reading this morning mentions none of this, but introduces us to James' mother who is portrayed as ambitious on behalf of her two sons, who are not in the least embarrassed by her asking Jesus that they may have seats of honour in his kingdom; indeed in Mark's Gospel they ask for this privilege themselves. We know that James' mother was faithful to Jesus, being present at the crucifixion and probably at the anointing of Jesus' body, so commitment was a family affair despite her husband's initial loss of part of his labour force.

James was one of the first to be called by Jesus in the episode by the lakeshore in Galilee. Putting the Synoptic Gospel stories together, we learned that James and his (probably younger) brother John were fisherman, working with their father who was well-off enough to employ hired men. They were in partnership with Simon and his brother Andrew and were at home in each other's houses – as was Jesus whom they appear to have known before he called them to follow him. So, when he did call, they dropped everything and went, abandoning their father in the boat.

Jesus nicknamed James and John 'Boanerges' or 'sons of thunder', for reasons perhaps to do with short temperedness. They were not only angry themselves (offering to call down fire upon a Samaritan village which refused to receive Jesus —see Luke 9.54) but the rest of the disciples were angry with them for allowing their mother to plead for special favour for them. It is perhaps remarkable, therefore, that these were two of the three men closest to Jesus during his life, along with Peter who was prone to speak before he thought. Jesus was apparently not worried by heated arguments among his disciples!

James went with Peter and John to the bedside of Jairus' little daughter who had died, a very tender as well as miraculous occasion when Jesus restored her to life in front of their eyes. These three were also his companions of choice on the mountainside at the transfiguration and on his last night in Gethsemane when, in great distress, he had to face up to a horrific death. At times of such intense agony we want people with us whom we can trust not to let us down. Although they fell asleep, these three men at least remained with Jesus until he was arrested. Then in fear, they fled. It was only later that James would be strong enough to face his own death without flinching.

Ironically James was first, but not first as he or his mother had intended. When Herod arrested some unnamed members of the church, James was among them. Herod had him killed with a sword, a relatively merciful death compared to what others would later face. James' zeal had undoubtedly attracted attention from his enemies, but for all his fiery temperament and his ambitious mother, James was

steadfast and did indeed drink the cup of martyrdom that Jesus drank.

Had James learned in the intervening period to be a servant, a slave, among the disciples, as Jesus had taught? Maybe. While many people are ready to step forward to take up more prominent roles in an organisation, including the Church, fewer are prepared to step back and out of the limelight and let other folk (perhaps younger) overtake them—or take on less glamorous, behind-the-scenes-roles Yet that appears to be what James, who once wanted to be the first, achieved. In doing so, he followed Jesus even to death. It is that example the courageous Collect prays we will be ready to follow. Amen.

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

Encouraged by our fellowship with all the saints,
let us make our prayers to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Father your Son called men and women to leave the past behind
them and to follow him as his disciples in the way of the cross.

Look with mercy upon those whom he calls today, marks with the cross
and makes his disciples within the Church.

Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our Prayer.

Your Son told his disciples not to be afraid and at Easter breathed on them his gift of peace. Look with mercy upon the world into which he sent them out, and give it that peace for which it longs.

Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our Prayer.

Your Son formed around him a company who were no longer servants but friends, and he called all those who obeyed him his brother and sister and mother.

Look with mercy upon our families and our friends and upon the communities in which we share.

Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our Prayer.

Your Son sent out disciples to preach and heal the sick.

Look with mercy on all those who yearn to hear the good news of salvation, and renew among your people the gift of healing.

Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our Prayer.

Your Son promised to those who followed him that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel and would share the banquet of the kingdom. According to your promise, look with mercy on those who have walked with Christ in this life and now have passed through death.

Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our Prayer.

Almighty God,
grant that your Church
may faithfully hold and make known
the faith that has come to us through the apostles,
that with them and all your saints
we may inherit the glories of eternal life.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 O the bitter shame and sorrow ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

May Christ who makes saints of sinners,
who has transformed those we remember today,
raise and strengthen you that you may transform the world;
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 O the deep, deep love of Jesus ([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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
And now we give thanks, most gracious God,
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
We, your holy Church, acclaim you.
In communion with angels and archangels,
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,
we raise our voice to proclaim your glory,
for ever 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 James and 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.