

Sunday 13 February 2022

The Third Sunday before Lent



Sermon © Lucie Reilly.

Prayers of intercession © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

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 [When I survey the wondrous cross](#) (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 Third Sunday before Lent

Almighty God,
who alone can bring order
to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity:
give your people grace
so to love what you command
and to desire what you promise,
that, among the many changes of this world,
our hearts may surely there be fixed
where true joys are to be found;
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

Thus says the Lord:

Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals
and make mere flesh their strength,
whose hearts turn away from the Lord.

They shall be like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see when relief comes.

They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.

They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

The heart is devious above all else;
it is perverse—
who can understand it?

I the Lord test the mind
and search the heart,
to give to all according to their ways,
according to the fruit of their doings. *Jeremiah 17:5–10*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. *1 Corinthians 15:12–20*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Wait for the Lord

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

‘Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

‘Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.

‘Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

‘Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

‘But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.

Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.

Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.

‘Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets. *Luke 6:17-26*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

The Beatitudes are among the most popular and best remembered sections of the New Testament. Many Christians memorise them, and they pop up frequently in the liturgy.

But what is a Beatitude? The word itself suggests a blessing: a beatitude is a situation or circumstance that facilitates and sponsors the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit.

When we say 'Beatitudes,' we instinctively think of the nine from St Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit ...' The four Beatitudes and four woes in today Gospel from St. Luke's Sermon on the Plain are rarely considered.

However, if Luke's Gospel was written later and in response to Matthew's account—and a great many people think the passage is indeed later—then we must ask, why did Luke wreck one of Jesus' most beautiful set of teachings? Why would he take something so inspirational and make it so pedestrian? Or was he going back to the original, a tradition that had been overwritten and spiritualised for some reason by Matthew. What's going on?

My response would be that Luke did not wreck them at all. First, his intentions were far different than those of Matthew. Second, Luke's different intentions might well have been closer to those of Jesus than were those of Matthew.

Luke's Beatitudes begin, 'Blessed are you who are poor ... , Blessed are you who are hungry now ... , Blessed are you who weep now ... , Blessed are you when people hate you ...'

His woes are exact reversals of the Beatitudes: 'Woe to you who are rich, ... , Woe to you who are full now ... , Woe to you who are laughing now ... , Woe to you when all speak well of you ...'

One thing to notice is that Luke writes in the second person - Jesus' sermon is directed to 'you'—while Matthew's Beatitudes are in the third person—they describe Christian virtues.

Luke presents Jesus as talking to the community as it is, today, in front of us now, and not as it ideally should be. Jesus, on the plain, speaks face-to-face to the people, not while sitting on top of a mountain. Despite the 'woes,' there is a lack of judgment in Luke's account; Jesus is making a promise to the community, and he accepts people as they are.

It is worth noting that while Jesus here pronounces woes upon the rich, later in Luke's Gospel he does bring salvation to some who are wealthy—think of Levi and Zacchaeus, for starters.

One recent commentator suggests: 'The Gospel means joy to some and misery to others. The good news is for the poor ... not just because they are poor, but because their poverty cries out for something to fill it. The bad news is for the rich,

not just because they are rich, but because their lives are satisfactory, and they do not want anything else.'

The different sets of Beatitudes need to be interpreted considering the different emphases of the Gospels: for example, Matthew emphasises moral perfection and judgment while Luke puts the priority on mercy. They also choose to speak into the needs and concerns of different racial constituencies.

But both Gospels, for example, describe Jesus' call to love your enemies. For Matthew, this is an ethical norm, one which could easily be followed in an insincere and patronising manner. For Luke, 'loving one's enemies' springs not from obeying an ethical norm but out of gratitude for God's mercy to me, a sinner.

In Matthew's account of the sermon, Jesus says, 'Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it'.

Luke tones down that passage and places it in a different context: 'Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able'.

Context is indeed important. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount runs to 111 verses; Luke's Sermon on the Plain is a mere 29. Luke does use some material like Matthew's sermon elsewhere in his Gospel, while omitting much, but he intersperses it amidst accounts of Jesus' healings and exorcisms.

If Matthew gives the impression that Jesus issues many instructions however, Luke portrays Jesus as merging preaching, prayer, and healing.

The temptation is to think that the beatitudes are rules or conditions for being blessed or receiving our heavenly reward. They are not that at all. They are not about building up, accomplishing, or acquiring. They are about letting go, surrendering, living with a vulnerable and open heart. That does not mean we run away, back down, or isolate ourselves from the realities of our life and world. It means we engage them in a different way, Jesus' way.

The beatitudes teach us to trust God more than the external circumstances of our lives. They invite dependence on God rather than self-reliance.

In today's world that sounds a lot like weakness and foolishness. But to those who are being saved it is the power of God. The beatitudes are nothing less than the way of the cross. The fullest expression of a 'beatitudinal life' is seen in Jesus' crucifixion. If we live the beatitudes, they will take us to the cross.

In the trauma and setbacks of life we discover that we cannot do life by ourselves. As we admit our need for God, we find purity of heart. The arrogance of self-sufficiency gives way to meekness. We realise that all that we are and have, is from

God and we begin to know ourselves as poor in spirit. Our own misfortunes awaken and connect us to the pain of the world for which we cannot help but mourn. We think less about ourselves and become merciful to others. We have nowhere else to go and so we turn our gaze back to God. The longer we gaze at God the more we hunger and thirst for righteousness, for God's life, and we become peacemakers reconciling ourselves and our neighbours to God. This is the life for which Christ's disciples are willing to be persecuted, a life of righteousness, the life for which Christ died and rose again.

The beatitudes are not so much about what we do, but how we do. They are less about actions and more about relationships. To live the beatitudes is to live a life of reckless, exuberant, self-abandonment to God and our neighbour. That's love. The only reason we can do that is because we know and trust ourselves to have already been blessed by God. We live the beatitudes as a response to God blessing us. That is the way of Christ. That is not only the way forward through this life, but also the way to life. If we are to follow Christ it must become our way.

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

These prayers are inspired by the Crucifixion and Resurrection.

The Scriptures tell us that God wants us to give him our lives to him in order for him to live in us. We pray to the God who brought Jesus back from death to life. Let us pray.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus, though crucified, is raised from the dead. We ask you to help us crucify our own sinful natures, putting to death everything in us that is not Christlike. Enable our resurrection from the death of sin to newness of resurrection life. Today we pray for ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

The risen Lord Jesus forgave Peter three times and restored him to a place in the community of faith. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Shape us to become living stones in your Church, that it can give you honour and glory. Today we pray for ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

The risen Lord Jesus walked beside his disciples on the road to Emmaus. He taught them, gave them words of comfort, and made himself known in the breaking of bread. Give us your comfort and help us recognize you. Today we pray for ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

The risen Lord Jesus prayed peace on his disciples as they cowered in a locked room and forgave those who refused to believe. Give us your peace, calm our fear, and forgive our lack of belief. Help us to turn from fear to peace and doubt to belief. Today we pray for ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for all those who are experiencing their own pain of crucifixion; those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; and those whose earthly lives are coming to an end. We ask the hands of Jesus which bear the marks of his pain to restore and bring resurrection. We pray for those who cannot be here today through illness. Today we pray for ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus died and rose to resurrection life. We pray for those who have died today; those who've died alone; and those whose years mind occur at this time. We ask you to welcome them as they pass from this life to the next. Today we pray for ...
Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We offer these prayers at the foot of the cross, trusting in your promise to hear and answer our prayers in the same power that raised the Lord Jesus from the dead.

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 Walk in the light

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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 of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Jesus Christ is risen today!

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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

Merciful Father,
who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life,
that those who come to him should never hunger:
draw us to the Lord in faith and love,
that we may eat and drink with him
at his table in the kingdom,
where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

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.