

Sunday 16 June 2024

The Third 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 are included at the end.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

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

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 All I once held dear

(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.

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

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 Collect for the Third Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God,
you have broken the tyranny of sin
and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts
whereby we call you Father:
give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,
that we and all creation may be brought
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;
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 Ezekiel

Thus says the Lord God: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind. All the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the Lord have spoken; I will accomplish it.

Ezekiel 17:22-24

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

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

We know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! *2 Corinthians 5:1-10, 14-17*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Wine of the Kingdom [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus] said, 'The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come.'

He also said, 'With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.'

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples. *Mark 4:26-34*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Sometimes I worry. Every day of my life I pray the Lord's Prayer with its central request 'your Kingdom come' yet the world never seems to get better: the Kingdom never seems to come on earth as it is in Heaven. I used to get quite down until I realised what the Lord's Prayer was saying, and what it is not saying.

The Lord's Prayer is not a magic incantation or command, 'Change the World!' because its chief focus is *us*: it's you and it's me. In effect, we are praying, 'Please change me, whatever it costs' and it then suggests a few of those costs.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we pray to a God who is in Heaven and is holy beyond conception. His very essence is holy to the point where his very name sums him up: 'Our Father in heaven, *Holy is your name.*' As one of the liturgies at Holy Communion reiterates, 'he is Holy indeed, the source of all holiness.' That holiness is the correct lens through which we see God because, as the Letter to the Hebrews reminds us, 'without holiness no-one can see the Lord' (Hebrews 12:14).

In fact, only when we have recognised how our God is a spiritual being of immense holiness can we look at ourselves. It's a relational thing. After all, as it says again and again and again in the Old Testament, 'be holy as I am holy says the Lord'.

That's why holiness lies at the very heart of the Lord's Prayer, but it does so in code: *we pray for the Kingdom to come on earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Straightaway we discern a simple problem: the word 'kingdom' implies a king but for many of today that language is not at all useful. Sadly we're stuck with it, but the idea itself is simple: our Father in Heaven is a being of infinite power and therefore requires our complete submission. But unlike a first-century king like, say, Herod, our God is a being of holiness and love and mercy and compassion and gentleness and patience and is altogether utterly desirable. True servants will do

anything for *this* King. We're praying to Him and asking for the world to reflect Him. 'Your Kingdom come', then, means we are asking God to enable us to work toward the necessary transformation of ourselves so we can help change the world. The prayer 'Your Kingdom come' is actually the prayer 'Lord of holiness, change me so I can make my bit of the world so much better that people can see You in it'. That's what asking God to bring heaven down to earth is about. It's like a spiritual transplant.

Having prayed for the Kingdom to come, the Lord's Prayer then teaches us the cost, identifying ways in which we can and must change. Firstly, it asks us to admit that we must become less greedy. Environmentalists and ecologists have always known this truth, but Jesus got there first. God is a Spirit so He wants to shift our attention away from a material way of living toward a spiritual way. That's why Jesus teaches us to pray for our *daily* bread—he is consciously alluding to the chosen people living on God's provision as they trek across the wilderness: 'daily bread' here means 'manna in the desert'.

Secondly, we must pray for the ability to forgive. At this stage in the prayer, we are already seeking holiness of life which means striving to grow toward a simple loving trust in God's provision. We now turn toward life lived more fully in God's way. And, again, Jesus phrases his trademark prayer using something like spiritual shorthand: while he asks for the ability to forgive, he's actually asking to get rid of the pride and self-sufficiency that ruins relationships. That means living without sin because living together in harmonious community requires nothing less. Incidentally, he reminds us that as we learn the ability to forgive so we are forgiven by God—as it says in the Sermon on the Mount, 'measure for measure' because sin and forgiveness are forever intertwined.

And thirdly, we pray to be tempted less because temptation is the tangible interface between God's way and the realms of darkness. As God progressively takes over, so these powers lose their ability to influence us, and we become God's through and through. We can tell God is taking over because we see temptation for what it is and take averting action, for example asking him for help.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we do not pray for the world to change; we pray for something more immediate and thrilling. *We pray that we might change.* We pray that we might be enabled to see Him as He is: pure, high and lifted up, and Holy. We pray that we might be enabled to change such that we accommodate his holiness into our lives: that's why we pray this shorthand of 'the Kingdom'. That means asking for God's Holy Spirit to come into our lives and turn us around. The sin of pride goes as we forgive and enable people to become our friends. And the sins of temptation lose all their power. In this way, The Kingdom comes because

the King can take His place, enthroned in our lives.

We recently started the long church season of Trinity which the Church generally uses as a time for teaching. During Trinity, the church offers a syllabus of Christianity as an opportunity to rehearse what we believe and why.

The Trinity season starts, of course, with God and takes its name from God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Next, we looked at Jesus and the way he interprets the commandments such that they lead to 'life in its fullness' (cf. John 10:10). And last week we looked at sin and the idea that the powers of darkness oppose God and also want us to oppose God.

In essence, the idea of the Kingdom contains all these themes but it enhances them, placing them centre stage. Just as the Trinity tells us there is a sense of love and community at the heart of God, so Jesus wants love and community at the heart of our society. So we must learn to live in holiness, learning a spirituality of forgiveness and without sin, and altogether in total trust in God and His provision: that is why we pray, 'Our Father in Heaven: holy is your name. Your Kingdom com, on earth as it is in heaven.'

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 version of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew's Gospel.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. We ask you to give us the courage to forgive others; the grace to forgive ourselves; and the strength to heal the effects of our past actions.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Leader Lord, hear us, **or** Lord, in your mercy

All **Lord, graciously hear us. Hear our prayer.**

Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven. We ask you to inspire us to make the world a better place. We ask for strength, wisdom and determination.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Leader Lord, hear us, **or** Lord, in your mercy

All **Lord, graciously hear us. Hear our prayer.**

Give us today our daily bread. We ask you to deal with our greed or apathy or laziness. We ask you to heal those of our attitudes that harm us. We pray for the environment and those of our habits which damage it.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Leader Lord, hear us, **or** Lord, in your mercy

All **Lord, graciously hear us. Hear our prayer.**

Do not bring us to the time of trial but rescue us from the evil one. We ask you to help us grow in the paths of discipleship, particularly those aspects we find difficult.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Leader Lord, hear us, **or** Lord, in your mercy

All **Lord, graciously hear us. Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who yearn for the Kingdom to come but continue to suffer because it has not. Help those who suffer in any way, those we know about, care about and worry about and those who cannot worship with us today for reasons beyond their control. In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Leader Lord, hear us, **or** Lord, in your mercy

All **Lord, graciously hear us. Hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,

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

The Peace

The peace to this house from God our heavenly Father.
The peace to this house from his Son who is our peace.
The peace to this house from the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All **And also with you**

HYMN 3 **Seek ye first the Kingdom of God** ([click here link to hear the hymn](#))

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

HYMN 4 **Kingdom of God song** ([click here link to hear the hymn](#))

Kingdom of God (Taize) ([please click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The Dismissal

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you
 and give you his peace;
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

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

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

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.