

**Sunday 8 September 2024**

# Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity



**Sermon** © Pete Haslam.

**Liturgy** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Prayers of intercession** © various.

**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 He who would valiant be**

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

## 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 Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity**

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit  
upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:  
grant that your people may be fervent  
in the fellowship of the gospel  
that, always abiding in you,  
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;  
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 Proverbs

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

The rich and the poor have this in common:

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

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

Do not rob the poor because they are poor,  
or crush the afflicted at the gate;  
for 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 favouritism 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 dishonoured 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 fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour 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 I am a new creation**  
**I am a new creation**

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

## 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 do not know for certain who this Syrophenician woman was but, somehow, I picture her as a single parent with a real problem. Her encounter with Jesus is told here by Mark and by Matthew in Chapter fifteen of his Gospel. The fact that the various translations call her 'woman' leads me to believe she may have been a single parent, for the term in the original text could just as easily have been translated 'wife' but, as far as I know, none of the translations ever choose to render it this way. The difference between using wife or woman always depends on the context: perhaps her husband remained at home to watch their little girl while she came to Jesus, but perhaps too she was a widow or a single mother for another reason. At any rate let's admire her faith that brought her to Jesus that day in the region of Tyre. Let's realise that being a disciple of Jesus is a process of 'coming and going;' and, therefore, the message for today is 'Come and Go.' In fact, many of the words in Scripture can be translated by either of these words in English. Forms of the words 'come' and 'go' appear three times in the first part of our Gospel text this morning:

1. Verse 25, 'a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet.'
2. Verse 29, 'And He said to her, 'Because of this answer, go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.'"
3. Verse 30, 'And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having gone.' When we are obedient to Jesus, we can bring our greatest need, hurt, and pain to Him and go in peace. How is this woman an example of that truth for us to follow today?

First of all, like each of us, this woman had a hurt. Her 'little daughter had an unclean spirit,' a demon. She was possessed by a satanic force. Now the signs of demon possession include: abnormal behaviour; speaking in a different voice; sometimes the powers of telepathy and clairvoyance. Oftentimes the possessed person would become violent and out of control. When Jesus, Peter, James, and John came down from the Mount of Transfiguration in Mark, they found a father seeking help for his son who was demon possessed; the desperate father cries out 'whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground, he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and stiffens out. I told your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it.'

Many cultures have looked to epilepsy as demon possession, but the Bible never equates epilepsy with demon possession. Indeed, the young man's symptoms in Mark's Gospel, appear much more violent than epilepsy, an illness whose nature even today is still not fully understood. Suffice it to say, this mother had a real concern for her daughter, and both of them were hurting. This mother had a hurt, but she had also heard about Jesus, the One on Whom Peter invites us all, 'Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Upon having heard of Him, she 'immediately came and fell at His feet.' What does it really mean to hear Jesus? Although we have heard about Him, have we really heard Him? In the Old Testament hearing God meant seeking Him by obedient action. A person who had truly heard God who committed his or her life to Him in total surrender according to Jeremiah 'You will seek Me and find Me when you search for me with all your heart.' To hear God in the Old Testament meant seeking and searching for Him with all one's heart.

In the New Testament hearing Jesus is related to obeying His Word; hearing Jesus means we accept Him for Who He Is, 'the One Who has the words of eternal life and is the Holy One of God' To hear Jesus is to receive His grace and obey His call to repentance. This Mom 'after hearing of Him ... came and fell at His feet.' She came in obedience, without delay; she came 'immediately.' Coming to Jesus is an individual commitment; it is standing out above the crowd, not following the

crowd. In Mark Chapter Five, Jesus asked the crowd who were present when the woman with the issue of blood touched His garment and was healed, 'Who touched me.' Mark tells us she made that individual step of coming to Jesus, she stepped out of the crowd: 'But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell before Him and told Him the whole truth; this is the same step of faith this mother took when she came to Jesus. When we truly hear Jesus, we come to Him with our burden, our hurt, our pain, and our need. This hurting Mother next humbled herself in prayer. First, she fell at His feet. In Scripture to 'fall at the feet of someone' means that you place yourself into that person's care and charge. When she fell at the feet of Jesus, this was a true act of homage and reverence, 'falling at the feet of Jesus' is literally a picture of kneeling in humble prayer. It was a testimony, 'Lord, I'm helpless, but You are all powerful, there is nothing You cannot do. Please help my little girl.' The humility of this mother is also seen in verse 26, 'And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.' 'She besought Him.' To keep asking or beseeching Jesus means to ask Him earnestly; it suggests real fervour and passion in the asking and implies anxiety over the outcome.' This Mother was anxious for her child; Jesus was the One who could relieve her anxiety. Her beseeching spirit at His feet was true humility.

Although almost humiliated, she did not lose her faith. Now on the surface it appears that Jesus prejudice and discriminated against this Gentile woman. At appears He calls her and her daughter 'dogs.' If that isn't an insult and humiliation, what is it? In New Testament times this was the attitude of your average Jew toward the Gentile nations, everyone who was not a Jew.

But the word Jesus uses for dogs is not the degrading one for 'despicable street dogs.' Both Jesus and the woman use the term meaning, 'little dog, puppy,' and it is found only here and in the parallel passage of Matthew, chapter fifteen. This is a term for a beloved family pet. Still these words seem harsh coming from Jesus: 'Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. The key to understanding is sequence. Jesus came to be the Saviour of the World, for whosoever believes; but He offered Himself first to His own nation, the Jews. The Gospel of Jesus went into all the world after Calvary, the Resurrection, and Pentecost: (Acts 1:8) 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.' So, the hurting Mother's faith is never daunted. She replies, 'Yes, Lord, but even the dogs, the family pets, under the table feed on the children's crumbs 'She understands Jesus' plan for spreading the Gospel, 'To the Jew first, and also to the Greek.' Her faith has not wavered; she is still humble; she testifies that even a small crumb from under



the table will be sufficient to meet her daughter's need, and Jesus honours her faith, 'Because of this answer, go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.'

There is nothing left for the mother to do but to heed the commandment of Jesus. On hearing of Jesus, she had come to Him immediately; she continues to obey the Master without question by 'Going back to her home.' Jesus tells her to 'go back home,' and she does just that. From start to finish, she has walked the pathway of obedience, and she receives grace. In verse 29 Jesus assured her, 'The demon has gone out of your daughter,' and verse 30 takes up on that, '... she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left.' Again, the original text does justice to this miracle to a greater extent than does our English translation. The meaning is that 'a process that took place in the past has results that continue in the present.' In other words, the instant that Jesus spoke His words, the child was healed; and her mother found that it was so when she returned home. The healing by Jesus was a lasting healing: the Greek word that Jesus uses in verse 29 for 'go' also affirms the woman's obedience and faith. You notice He commands her to 'go' before He grants her request. The request is granted in His words, '... the demon has gone out of your daughter.' In commanding the woman to 'go' before He granted her request, Jesus was telling the mother that her daughter's cure depended on her trusting His Word. Her trip home was her testimony that she did indeed trust His Word.

So, to conclude, the same holds true for us today. Jesus cares deeply for each one of us. He will not leave us alone to bear our pain, our burden, our sorrow, our hurt. His grace is sufficient to meet every need, but you and I must trust His Word.

I invite every one of us to come to Jesus and to His table today. Bring all our hurt, all our burdens, all our pain. And remember the words of St Peter 'Cast all your anxiety on Him, for He cares for you, and trust in His Word.' Just remember He does care for you, and He will never let you down. 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**

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.

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**

The fruit of the Spirit are love, joy, and peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**All And also with you**

**HYMN 3 I stand in awe of you**

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

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## **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.**

**HYMN 4 I could sing of your love for ever**

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

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**

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy;  
and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall,  
keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful,  
and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation;  
through 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.