

Sunday 13 October 2024

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity



Sermon © Sarah Wilding.

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

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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 O Jesus I have promised

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

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 Twentieth Sunday after Trinity

God, the giver of life,
whose Holy Spirit wells up within your Church:
by the Spirit's gifts equip us to live the gospel of Christ
and make us eager to do your will,
that we may share with the whole creation
the joys of eternal life;
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 Job

Job said:

'Today also my complaint is bitter;
his hand is heavy despite my groaning.
O that I knew where I might find him,
that I might come even to his dwelling!
I would lay my case before him,
and fill my mouth with arguments.
I would learn what he would answer me,

and understand what he would say to me.
Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?

No; but he would give heed to me.
There an upright person could reason with him,
and I should be acquitted for ever by my judge.

'If I go forward, he is not there;
or backward, I cannot perceive him;
on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him;
I turn to the right, but I cannot see him.

God has made my heart faint;
the Almighty has terrified me;
If only I could vanish in darkness,
and thick darkness would cover my face!

Job 23:1-9, 16, 17

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:12-end

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All **Glory to you O Lord.**

As [Jesus] was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother.'" He said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.' Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' They were greatly astounded and said to one another, 'Then who can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'

Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.'

Mark 10:17-31

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

All of our passages are about standing before God in some sense. Job wants to stand before God to call him to account for all the troubles he is experiencing. God is not keeping the rules: Job has been good and compassionate so he should be being blessed. I expect we've all felt like this at some point, that it shouldn't be like this. The passage from Hebrews tells us, however, that the boot is on the other foot.

In fact we are the ones who will be called upon to stand before God and give an account. The rich young ruler wants to know how he can stand before God and obtain eternal life. Even before the question is asked Jesus interrupts his flow with the apparent throwaway line: 'Why do you call me good, only God is good.' In fact, Jesus is laying the foundation for the way that he will answer the young man's question.

Who do you think of as good? When I was a child we would call people in TV programmes and films 'Goodies' and 'Baddies'. In the old westerns, who was which was made plain by the goodies wearing white hats and the baddies black ones. Perhaps that was necessary because their behaviour was not so very different. For example, is James Bond good because he lays his life on the line to save the world, or bad because he is promiscuous, violent, and deceitful. In the Bible, King David is described as 'a man after God's own heart', yet he committed both adultery and murder. Was he a goodie or a baddie? Well, both. And that's the point Jesus is making. No-one is (all) good. Except God.

So when we stand before God, how will he judge? Is justice a set of scales, such that as long as the good you do out-weighs the bad, you will be acceptable? Let's consider Jimmy Savile (and we can say what we like about him, because he's conveniently dead and not subject to the law on slander and libel). Savile did terrible things to children; he also raised thousands of pounds for charity, for Stoke Mandeville Hospital in particular, which made a massive difference to people with spinal injuries. How much charity does it take to balance the scales? What is the price for a child's innocence?

We label abusers and such as monsters, or animals. The trouble with that is that it dehumanises people. And if they're not really human, we don't have to love them. It's OK to treat them badly in turn and even to kill them. The really scary thing is not that there are monsters out in the world, but that there are no monsters. We all have a monster inside us. It may not be a monster of depravity, it could be violence, envy and bitterness, arrogance, or greed. But there'll be one in there.

Consider the story of the two wolves: An old Cherokee Indian chief told his grandson, 'Everyone has two wolves inside them. These two wolves are in a constant battle against each other. The dark wolf is evil; he is anger, envy, greed, arrogance, violence, and ego. The light wolf is good; he is joy, peace, love, hope, humility, kindness, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith.'

The boy thought about this and then asked anxiously, 'But Grandfather, *which wolf will win?*'

The old chief smiled and simply said, '*The one you feed.*'

You will know what feeds the goodness inside you and the bad. Do more of the first and less of the second. Sounds simple but, as the apostle Paul says, 'What I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do – this I keep on doing.' (Romans 7: 14-25). As the old man said, it's a battle. And the sinner can turn to good, and the saint can turn to evil. Everyone is human, everyone; God loves the abuser as well as the abused. No-one is beyond God's redemption.

But if no-one except God is good, how can we stand before God? Jesus commended the rich young ruler for his following of the commandments, but it wasn't enough. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go and sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'

This is the great paradox of salvation. Salvation is the free gift of God, dependent on grace; it cannot be earned. But it costs everything. We are bought by the blood of Christ and no longer belong to ourselves. The cost may not be financial. It might be family; the good opinion of society; a particular lifestyle; the right to justice. The point is, what is so important to you that you cannot lay it aside for Jesus? That's where many 'turn away sad'.

Following is not about keeping a set of rules but relating to a person, to responding to the Holy Spirit he puts inside us and walking with him. Then doing good becomes an outworking of his love in us and our gratitude to him, not a trade-in for eternal life. Following a person rather than rules is how David, who sometimes did bad things, could also be a man after God's own heart: he responded to God's active word into his life and turned back to the right path. Yet the young man, who had always done good things, went away. He did not have God's heart.

If it's not amazing enough that we can know the living Creator God, let's remember that what is on offer here is something wonderful. The young man wants to know how to obtain eternal life; that is, to live forever in paradise: where there is no more sickness, no more tears, no more death (Revelation 21:1-7). The Bible is quite cryptic on the details but that's the basics; on top of that we can store up treasure in heaven, whatever that means. Perhaps it's like the difference between having a shepherd's hut by the wall or a big house in the centre: both are good but one is better. Whatever it means, the Lamb and the Almighty are always there so we can be in complete communion with God (Revelation 21:22-23). And it will outlast anything that we've lost, or gained, in this life: 'to infinity and beyond' (Buzz Lightyear).

How will you stand before God? Wanting to judge him for the troubles in your life? That didn't turn out so well for Job when God actually revealed himself. Will you stand secure in your own goodness, ready to give an account? Jesus said only

God is good. Or will you be one who recognises your lack of goodness but has chosen to follow Jesus?

I will leave you with the words of Jim Elliot, whose life was taken by those he was seeking to reach as a missionary in Ecuador: 'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.'

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 God, that you that you love us. Help us to love you. Help us to prepare for eternal life in your loving presence.

Lord for, your Kingdom's sake,

All Hear our prayer

Loving Lord, we pray for your Church. Inspire your Church to seek your kingdom. Show us and equip us as a Church to be an engine of your kingdom.

Lord for, your Kingdom's sake,

All Hear our prayer

Loving redeemer, we pray for the world—especially those parts that seem far from Kingdom-like. We ask you to speak to the hearts of leaders and those with power to use their influence for good.

Lord for, your Kingdom's sake,

All Hear our prayer

Loving Saviour, we pray for the folk we know, asking you to help them at their point of keenest need. In particular we pray for [...].

Lord for, your Kingdom's sake,

All Hear our prayer

Loving King, we pray for those who have died in the faith and those who died with no faith. We ask your mercy on all who have passed from this life to the next.

Lord for, your Kingdom's sake,

All 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 When I survey

(please 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,

be with you now

and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 All I once held dear
All I once held dear

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

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

God our Father,
whose Son, the light unfailing,
has come from heaven to deliver the world
from the darkness of ignorance:
let these holy mysteries open the eyes of our understanding
that we may know the way of life,
and walk in it without stumbling;
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.