

Sunday 11 June 2023

St Barnabas the Apostle



Sermon © Lucie Reilly.

Prayers of intercession © Eric Simmonds CR.

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 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 [Amazing grace](#)

(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 Barnabas the Apostle

Bountiful God, giver of all gifts,
who poured your Spirit upon your servant Barnabas
and gave him grace to encourage others:
help us, by his example,
to be generous in our judgements
and unselfish in our 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 Job

When the ear heard, it commended me, and when the eye saw, it approved;
because I delivered the poor who cried, and the orphan who had no helper. The
blessing of the wretched came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for
joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a tur-
ban. I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I
championed the cause of the stranger. *Job 29:11-16*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from Acts of the Apostles

Those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen
travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no

one except Jews. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians'.

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.

Acts 11:19-30

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 [Amazing love](#)

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.'

John 15:12-17

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Who do you think is the most prominent figure in the Book of Acts, after Paul and Peter? Not John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who wrote a Gospel and many letters. He barely even appears in Acts. Not James, brother of Jesus who became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. Neither is it Stephen, the first martyr nor Philip the evangelist, although both come across as real people acting in real ways.

No: there is one individual who is named twenty-four times in the Acts: a Levite from Cyprus called Joseph. But we know him better by the name the Early Church gave him. He is Barnabas or, rather, 'Barnabas' is his nickname (Acts 4:36). Let me explain.

'Barnabas' is Joseph's Hebrew nickname, and it literally means 'son of encouragement'. It would have sounded something like 'bar na-*baahs*'. If we look at the Greek wording in which the Acts has come down to us today, we'll find the word *parakleseos* which is sometimes translated as 'son of consolation'. It's closely related to the word *parakletos*, which is a term used of the Holy Spirit and which means a conceptual mix of 'consoler', 'advocate', 'councillor', and 'helper'. And this verbal similarity helps explain why the work of the apostle Barnabas is generally linked to the work of the Holy Spirit. For example, we're told in Acts that he was 'full of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 11:24). Again, he was set apart with St Paul, 'by a revelation of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 13:2); and that 'setting apart' was done in order to preach the Gospel and do the work to which the Spirit dictated.

When Barnabas went to Antioch, we're told that he 'saw the grace of God' (Acts 11:23). In normal grammar, grace is more of a verb than a noun, for example, a dancer looks graceful. But in the Bible 'grace' is a concrete noun, and can usefully be understood using its initials, as 'God's riches at Christ's expense'. So what Barnabas is seeing are indeed the riches of God at Christ's expense, and those riches played out in real human lives and in one of the world's first Christian communities. Specifically, what Barnabas sees is the faith of the church in Antioch and that faith played out by the disciples as love for one another. It was so powerful and so unmistakable that we're told that it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians' (Acts 11:26).

And it can be the same for us. Our love for one another can be used to encourage the church through our unity in faith and through lives transformed by this grace. In fact, as Christians we can similarly encourage by proclaiming that God is present among us, and that He has freed us from our sinful human condition. To use the

words of Matthew's Gospel, we encourage such that 'the preaching of the Gospel brings healing and new life' (Matthew 4:23). Stated otherwise, we can actually counter evil.

As we've seen, the example and teaching of St Barnabas can enable the church to bring consolation and encouragement to real people in the real world. But it can do so only when all of us play our part—only if we do the work that the Holy Spirit has set us apart to do at our baptism.

But what is this 'work'? And what are the lessons and teachings from St Barnabas? There are a great many of them, which interlink to produce a tapestry image of encouragement and generous love. They are:

1. The Importance of encouragement: St Barnabas was known for his encouragement and support, particularly of St Paul, for example when other disciples were sceptical of Paul's conversion. This lesson shows us the importance of being a source of encouragement to others, and of helping others to believe in themselves and in the truth of those who live the Gospel.
2. Faithfulness and loyalty: St Barnabas remained loyal and faithful to his mission, even when it was clearly very difficult. This lesson reminds us of the importance of staying true to our Christian beliefs, even when it is hard. Like Barnabas, we must be steadfast in our faith.
3. The Power of forgiveness: St Barnabas was instrumental in bringing St Paul into the fold of the Church, after he had been a persecutor of the church. This is an additional lesson and highlights the power of forgiveness and demonstrates that even the worst of sinners can be redeemed.
4. The Importance of unity: St Barnabas was known for his role in promoting unity among the early Christian communities and for his efforts to bridge the gap between different groups. His encouragement was channelled and its huge cost was expended for a godly purpose. This lesson teaches us the importance of unity, and of working together towards a common goal.
5. The power of love: St Barnabas was a disciple of love because God is love (1 John 4:16) so all true discipleship involves love, so it's natural for Barnabas' actions to show his love for God and for others. This lesson teaches us the spiritual power of grace-filled love and shows us how love can change the world.

These five works interlink to paint a picture of encouragement painted in love: they demonstrate the grace that speaks of God's riches and comes across as encouragement. They clearly describe St Barnabas in particular, but they also describe any disciple whose faith is sincere and is willing to use everything to hand to build up and give courage, to demonstrate God's riches at Christ's expense. In short, they describe a person daring to be as like Jesus as he can.

Today, as we celebrate the feast day of St Barnabas, Scripture invites us to remember the many lessons that St Barnabas' story teaches us. In response, then, let us strive to be like St Barnabas and live our lives in a way that is pleasing to God and that brings us closer to Him.

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

Father of all,
from whom every family on earth is named,
we thank you for the apostolic labours of women and men
of every age, and especially for the life and witness of Barnabas.
We pray for the church in Cyprus
and that you will bless all parishes and institutions
dedicated in honour of St Barnabas.

Lord hear us:

All Lord graciously hear us.

Father of all, we pray for this nation,
and we thank you for the freedom and benefits of democracy
that we enjoy.
Take from us the narrowness of self-interest,
and grant to us leaders of vision, moral courage and integrity.
And grant to all nations the blessings of peace,
justice and freedom.

Lord hear us:

All Lord graciously hear us.

Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
be with the sick, support the elderly and the infirm;
may the evening of their life be calm and filled with light. Surround with your
compassion all who are in distress and all who mourn.

Lord hear us:

All Lord graciously hear us.

Father, give your blessing to all
who seek to bring healing, compassion
and encouragement into the lives of their fellow human beings,
all those who work in our National Health Service,
all counsellors and social workers.
Prosper their ministries, that there may be wise-hearted love in the relief of all
human affliction.

Lord hear us:

All Lord graciously hear us.

Loving Father,
remember in your kingdom all who have died,
all who have died in great fear, bitterness and loneliness:

fulfil now in them your promise to wipe away all tears from every eye.

Lord hear us:

All Lord graciously hear us.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

We are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, through Christ our Lord, who came and preached peace to those who were far off and those who were near.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 O happy day

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

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

**HYMN 4 For all the saints
For all the saints**

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

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.

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 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

Almighty God,
who on the day of Pentecost
sent your Holy Spirit to the apostles
with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame,
filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel:
by the power of the same Spirit
strengthen us to witness to your truth
and to draw everyone to the fire of your love;
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.