

Sunday 2 July 2023

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity



Sermon © Pete Haslam.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

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 A new commandment (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

Click [here](#) for the tune of this version of the Gloria ('Cwm Rhondda').

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 Fourth Sunday after Trinity

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this, heavenly Father,
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
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

Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the Lord. He said, 'Amen! May the Lord do so! May the Lord fulfil the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the Lord's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon.

Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the Lord only if his prediction comes true.'

Jeremiah 28:5-9

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

Do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:12-end

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 He is Lord! He is Lord! (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, 'Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and

whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.’ *Matthew 10:40–42*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

I want to start this morning with three short stories that are linked to the Gospel reading we have just heard.

One day a man was walking along the beach, when he noticed a boy picking up starfish and throwing them into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, ‘Excuse me, but what are you doing?’ The boy replied, ‘Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The sun is rising, and tide is going out. If I don’t throw them back, they’ll die.’ The man laughed to himself and said, ‘But there’s too many starfish on this beach. You can’t possibly make a difference!’ After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the ocean. Then, turning to the man, he said, ‘I made a difference to that one’.

Secondly a story about hugs. The most profound part of their two-hour hugging experiment was when a middle-aged man received a hug and began to cry while one of the women embraced him. She asked him, ‘Sir, can I ask why you are crying?’ Brushing back the tears, he replied, ‘It has just been so long since I was given a hug by anyone. I forgot what it was like.’

Thirdly a Story about listening. Listening to a friend and just did not have anything to say. It didn't seem right to give my opinion just words of comfort. And I admitted that I felt bad that I didn’t have anything concrete in which to solve his relationship problem and he said, ‘you know, of all my friends, you’re the only one who really spent time just to listen. And I think all I needed to know was that someone cared enough to just feel the pain along with me. To me, that is so much more valuable than advice.’

‘I made a difference to that one.’ ‘I forgot what it was like. I needed to know was that someone cared enough to just feel the pain along with me. In each of these stories: we have seemingly minimal acts that had great impact. As we will see, this is the theme within our Gospel text today.

In Jesus’ mission discourse here in Matthew 10, he begins with giving his disciples authority to do the things he was doing. After giving them this authority, he reveals to them the cost. There will be persecution. You will be sheep among wolves. On top of this there will be division of families. Their very own families were likely

to reject them or disown them. The message of the Gospel can be polarizing and divisive for those who reject it. There is sacrifice for those who follow Jesus. We heard about this little last week, how you don't have to lose your life in the very literal sense to lose your life. The disciple's lives would be on the line for sure, but first, life as they knew it would most likely be tested significantly. But in all this Jesus assures his disciples of reward.

And this is where the small things with great impact theme comes in. But more than that, this relates to identity. Jesus says those who receive you receive me. Disciples of Jesus have their identity intertwined with him. They are ambassadors of him. Bringers of Jesus to others. What a responsibility, right?

And Jesus goes on to conclude: 'And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.' So, what does this mean? What is the significance of a cup of cold water and whom are 'these little ones' Jesus is referring to?

Well, we heard weeks ago when Jesus had compassion on the crowd because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Well friends, it's those people, those folks, people like you and me. These folks are 'these little ones.' It's certainly no coincidence that Jesus gives his disciples authority to do the same things he's doing—heal the sick, drive out unclean spirits—because there are so many who are like sheep without a shepherd. And the Good Shepherd is here to lay down his life for his sheep. To be that sacrificial lamb. To be the Lord that dies and rises again to gather all sheep under his care.

A cup of cold water may seem like a small thing. In fact, it is. This may be precisely the point. Even the smallest, seemingly insignificant act of love or mercy could have a lasting impact upon someone else. Whether it be satisfying the thirst of one of these little ones, extending hugs to unsuspecting strangers, or lending a listening ear to a neighbour in need. Sometimes we make being a disciple of Jesus too difficult. Too grand a standpoint. We imagine conversions and mission crusades. Converting great multitudes at a time, but discipleship can include much smaller displays of Jesus' love.

Yes, Jesus sends his disciples to heal the sick and to drive out demons here in Matthew 10. But he also tells them to give a cup of cold water to a neighbour who needs it. Yes, the power of Christ goes with us, but do we need to drive out the demons or heal the sick in order to follow Jesus?

On second thought, what if in extending the simple gesture of a hug, the demons of insecurity and loneliness were driven out? What if there was deep emotional healing that took place within the heart of the man who had not been given such

affection in some time? What if, in listening to that neighbour instead of giving cliché advice, accept that it was the Holy Spirit at work through us extending love and grace in their time of pressing need? Perhaps Jesus does give us the power to do these very things, but because we may not see a physical manifestation of healing or whatever, we discount it as nothing? But it is something. Jesus says so. And he sends us out saying, yeah you may experience some difficulty with others in following me, but there will be reward. You will see hearts moved. You will see the Holy Spirit do his thing. You will see people changed because of small acts of mercy.

A little bit of grace goes along way. Especially when this grace doesn't belong to us. It's a gift of God.

The beautiful thing is, we don't have to save the world. That is Jesus' work, not ours. He is restoring and renewing and reclaiming all things to himself. We don't have to do that. We are just sent out to share a slice of what His love looks like to others. Whether it be a glass of water or a hug, this is all God's work. Let's have our eyes and ears open to those whom God puts in our paths.

A cup of cold water in whatever form this might take in our neighbourhood can make a huge difference, because it is action. So many ill-fated words have grazed the ears of people in our communities. Our neighbours need the love of Christ. Not another Christian telling them what to do. They need a follower of Jesus to share life, speak life, and extend grace—being 'little Christs.' I think that we sometimes see our community like the beach full of starfish. There are so many people with pressing needs. Or even, so many people who reject Jesus—they are all lost causes.

But perhaps when we see a beach full of starfish. Instead of discounting the work of having mercy on the ones we can, we throw them into the ocean one by one. Knowing that it made a difference to that one. Knowing that even a glimpse of the love of Christ can transform lives. Even a cup of water extended in mercy can let someone know they are loved. Even a hug outside of a market can bring the ripeness of resurrection where the decay of death once reigned. Even a listening ear and a closed mouth can bring abundant life into places where anxiety & fear has taken hold.

This is the power of God working in and through us to others. This is the power of the Good Shepherd laying his life down for his sheep so that those who follow false shepherds may make their way into the arms of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and extends the cup of cold water of his kingdom, or abundant life to all. 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

In the power of the spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Lord our God we pray for your blessing upon your church gathered throughout the world, upon all Bishops, priests and deacons and all faithful lay people. We commend to your mercy and protection all our brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those who risk persecution for their faith.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Lord we pray for your blessing upon all Christian charities and all Christian missionaries. We ask you to guide and inspire all those who labour to build up your Kingdom in this world. Give us the courage to join in with this great work.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

We pray in thanksgiving for the beauty of the creation and we repent of our failures to take care of it. Bring healing to the natural world we pray and teach us Lord to be better stewards of all that you have made.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

We pray for the nations of the world, for justice and liberty within them and for peace between them. We pray for an end to all forms of armed conflict and for help for those who suffer as a result of war.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

We pray for all the sick whatever their illnesses or injuries may be, naming especially *N ...* We ask Lord that you send comfort, peace and healing on them and their loved ones. We pray for our NHS and healthcare workers around the world. Give them courage and fortitude at this time. We pray so that men and women will continue to be graced with the gifts to serve others in the medical profession.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

We remember before God all those known to us who have died and in particular we name *N ...* Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord and let light perpetual shine upon them. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

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

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 [Jesus, name above all names](#) (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 Lord, for the years

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

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

Eternal God,
comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken,
you have fed us at the table of life and hope:
teach us the ways of gentleness and peace,
that all the world may acknowledge
the kingdom of your Son 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.