

Sunday 3 March 2024

The Third Sunday of Lent



Sermon © The Revd Robin Wilding.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 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 hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns 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 [Christ whose glory fills the sky](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)
[Christ whose glory fills the sky](#) (different version)

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.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion, and 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 Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent

Almighty God,
whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
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.**

Psalm

It is usual practice when reciting the psalms to pause for a few seconds halfway through each verse. The diamond symbol ♦ indicates the location of that pause.

- 1 The heavens are telling the glory of God ♦
and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.
- 2 One day pours out its song to another ♦
and one night unfolds knowledge to another.
- 3 They have neither speech nor language ♦
and their voices are not heard,
- 4 Yet their sound has gone out into all lands ♦
and their words to the ends of the world.
- 5 In them has he set a tabernacle for the sun, ♦
that comes forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber
and rejoices as a champion to run his course.
- 6 It goes forth from the end of the heavens
and runs to the very end again, ♦
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.
- 7 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; ♦
the testimony of the Lord is sure
and gives wisdom to the simple.
- 8 The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart; ♦
the commandment of the Lord is pure
and gives light to the eyes.
- 9 The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever; ♦
the judgements of the Lord are true
and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold,
more than much fine gold, ♦
sweeter also than honey,
dripping from the honeycomb.
- 11 By them also is your servant taught ♦
and in keeping them there is great reward.
- 12 Who can tell how often they offend? ♦
O cleanse me from my secret faults!

- 13 Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins
lest they get dominion over me; ♦
so shall I be undefiled,
and innocent of great offence.
- 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight, ♦
O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. *Psalm 19*

First reading

A reading from the Second Book of Moses called Exodus

Then God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Moses, 'You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die.' Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin.'

Exodus 20:1-17

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

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

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.' Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 All Heaven declares

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

or I lift my eyes to the quiet hills

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All **Glory to you O Lord.**

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone. *John 2:13-25*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

Psalms 19 is wonderful, so let's explore it.

God seen in his creation:

Verses 1-6 are a wonderful extolling of the creative brilliance of our amazing God. His majesty and power and glory seen in splendour. When we see the glory of a sunset, all the multiple shades and colours, the splendour that takes our breath away, or on a clear night see the spread of the Milky Way and wonder at the panorama before us we are seeing but a glimpse of the glory and majesty of the God who made them. God's signature to be seen in every bit of extravagant beauty.

But we can miss his splendour or explain it away. But whenever we think we have tamed creation or understood it we find another layer of wonder and mystery and complexity—note the recent issues in cosmology when the latest telescope

broke cosmology—things that were predicted as obviously what we would see proved to be amazingly and ridiculously wrong!

God's character revealed in the Law:

How else has he revealed himself to man? For our poet the Law is his second great revelation of Himself to us. The Law is pure, righteous, perfect, magnificent, holy and so reveals the character of the one who gives it. It reveals his love for man and desire that we would live right, it shows how we need to be right if we are to approach the great majesty of God safely, but it also shows the absolute nature of that glory—its purity, its sinlessness, all the sharp edges inherent in a pure perfect powerful majestic God.

And indeed, for all his extolling of the majesty and purity of God it is that fret, that worry that our Psalmist finishes with. The implication he struggles with is that he himself fails and falls short despite his wonder and praise of God and his greatness—his own frailty and capacity to mess it up is right there. And that's where he leaves us—hungry and desiring to approach but aware of our mess. Please God may I be acceptable.

God revealed in Jesus:

But from our New Testament perspective we can add hope to this equation. The self-revelation of God does not stop with the revealing of the Law. All this was what was known in the Psalmists time but we have seen more and greater self revelation by God. God speaks again and this time he speaks his very self into the world. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father full of grace and truth. Our Jesus through whom all things were made comes.

And speaking of the Law, challenging the Pharisees Jesus shows how it fails to save but can only reveal our sinfulness in the sight of God—it's not enough to act without lust, we must not think it; it's not enough to act without anger, we must not have it inside because God sees the inside of a man not merely the actions. Ouch. The Law teaches us that we fall short of his glory unsurprisingly since our Psalmist showed us that it reveals the purity of God himself.

How then can we be saved? At the heart of Jesus' purpose in coming is the surrender of himself as a perfect sacrifice. The God who not only speaks of his glory, who not only speaks of his holiness and purity, but also the God who gives himself to the uttermost that he may win us for himself for eternity. How can we respond but by adoring him and giving ourselves to him in love and gratitude.

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

With confidence and trust let us pray to the Father.

For the one holy catholic and apostolic Church ...
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For the mission of the Church,
that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel
to the ends of the earth,
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For those preparing for baptism [and confirmation] ...
and for their teachers and sponsors,
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For peace in the world ...
that a spirit of respect and reconciliation may grow
among nations and peoples,
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer ...
for refugees, prisoners, and all in danger;
that they may be relieved and protected,
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For those whom we have injured or offended,
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For grace to amend our lives and to further the reign of God,
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

In communion with all those who have walked in the way of holiness ...
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

God our Father,
in your love and goodness
you have taught us to come close to you in penitence
with prayer, fasting and generosity;
accept our Lenten discipline,
and when we fall by our weakness,
raise us up by your unfailing mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Jesus is Lord!
Jesus is Lord!

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

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;
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 My Jesus, my saviour

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

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

Merciful Lord,
grant your people grace to withstand the temptations
of the world, the flesh and the devil,
and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God;
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.