



## **Sunday 7 March 2021**

- All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included at the end rather than in situ because many following the service will be in isolation and unable to celebrate the sacrament.
- The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.
- To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page, <http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

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Sermon © Pete Haslam and prayers of intercession adapted from [Katherine Smith](#).

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1 All my hope on God is founded**      (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.**

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 Gloria**

The Gloria is usually omitted during Lent.

## **The Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent**

Eternal God,  
give us insight  
to discern your will for us,  
to give up what harms us,  
and to seek the perfection we are promised  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All**    **Amen.**

## 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 20:1-20*

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 the 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 Create in me a clean heart O Lord** ([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

After Jesus performed His first miracle at the wedding in Cana, He travelled with His disciples and family to Capernaum, located about 15 miles away. After a few days there, Jesus went south to Jerusalem for the Passover, another 80 miles away.

In today's Gospel passage, John writes that we will see a side of Jesus that we usually don't see. We often think of the meek and lowly Jesus and rarely think of the Jesus who was consumed with passion over the desecration of the Name of His Heavenly Father.

Passover was the most important of the three great religious feasts. By the time of Christ, it had become a major spring festival. To prepare for Passover, they would repair the roads for the great influx of people and whitewash the tombs so nobody would accidentally touch them and defile themselves. Homes would be cleaned, cooking utensils washed, and the house was searched to make sure no leaven was found. Those living in Jerusalem were expected to put up guests, so they thoroughly cleaned their houses. People in Jerusalem usually dressed up in their best clothes, as if they were getting ready for a journey.

It was a time when the Jews celebrated their deliverance from bondage in Egypt. Jews from all over would come to the Temple in Jerusalem to present their offerings of a sheep, ox or dove. The animals would be sacrificed in the Temple. The fat would be burned, and the blood would be offered on the altar. The meat would be taken home, and roasted, and eaten by the family. It was at this time that they could pay the temple tax of a silver half-shekel coin. 'Passover' was a special time of worship both in the Temple, and in the family. Families would observe the Passover Meal, which three years later Jesus would eat with His Disciples just before His crucifixion.

Jerusalem was bustling with activity and excitement. Passover was the biggest event of the year. Jesus went into the Temple, and saw merchants selling oxen, sheep and doves. It was inconvenient for many people to bring them with them on their journey to Jerusalem, so they just bought their sacrificial animal in Jerusalem.

Jesus also saw the money changers, whose job it was to exchange the money that the people brought for the special silver half-shekel for the Temple tax. The people couldn't use just any coin for the Temple tax. People came from all over the world, and some of the coins had the impression of heathen gods or Caesar. It was considered blasphemy to offer a coin with the image of a heathen, for the service of God's Temple. The money changers would exchange their coins for the Temple coin. The Temple had therefore become a one-stop shopping centre similar to spindles or the Arndale centre everything in one place.

There were four courts in the Temple: the Court of the Priests, the Court of the Jews, the Court of the Women and the Court of the Gentiles. This last was outside the others. It was the large open area that had been turned into a shopping mall.

So when Jesus comes to the Temple, He saw the booths set up for the merchants and the money-changers. The marketplace had moved into the Temple area, and the Temple of God has been dishonoured. Instead of worship, prayer, and praise, Jesus found a feeding frenzy of corruption and greed.

So what was possibly happening? Annas, the High Priest had sold franchises for the concession stands to the various merchants and money changers. The merchants were charging inflated prices for the oxen, sheep and doves. He was making a killing!

If you brought your own ox, sheep, or dove, the priests would tell them it was unclean, so they had to purchase one of the merchant's 'clean' animals. They would then sell your 'unclean' animal to someone else as a 'clean' animal. The money changers would cheat the people by charging an unfair exchange rate for their foreign coins.

Jesus saw greed, corruption, and wickedness being carried out right there in the Temple of God, in the Court of the Gentiles. This was a place set aside for those who were not born Jewish but had converted to Judaism. And Jesus was appalled.

But Jesus didn't suddenly 'lose it'. He didn't fly off the handle. While He was walking around, observing the chaos, He probably picked up some of the leather cords that were laying around ... used to tie up the animals. While He was walking, He must have been tying them together into a small whip. Jesus was hearing all the commotion ... the arguing over the exchange rate ... the bargaining over the price of the animals ... the anger voices of those who were being cheated. He would be smelling the stench of the livestock market, stepping over the manure, side-stepping the paths of the oxen and sheep. Then Jesus would have watched the greed of the merchants and the cheating, profiteering, circus-like atmosphere.

Jesus got *angry*. This wasn't the way God's house was supposed to be treated.

I sometimes wonder what God thinks of His Church in the 21st Century. Have WE gotten off the path that He wanted us to follow? Are we just going through the motions of worship? Have we lost focus on true worship of our Heavenly Father?

How would we feel if when we came to Church and someone was talking on their mobile phone during the whole service? Or hearing whispering from the pew nearby. Or someone else bringing their lap-top computer and was working away. Jesus saw their attitude and actions and He sees ours. Our attitude toward the house of God reflects our attitude toward God. We need to be undistracted in our worship of God. I realise that there will always be some natural distractions. Most of these can't be helped. Babies will cry, children will wiggle, people might need to use the restrooms, and books will fall to the floor. But we need to be sensitive about being a distraction from the worship of God.

When Jesus cleansed the Temple, He was showing the religious leaders that He was truly the Messiah sent from God. His zeal was eating Him up: He had a *passion* for the things of God. Then the Jewish religious leaders wanted to know: 'Who do you think you are to be doing this?' They understood that Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah when He called the Temple 'My Father's house'. 'It took them 46 years to build the temple ... no way were they going to tear it down. And, even if they did, how could Jesus build it back up in just 3 days? They thought that this was ludicrous. Now Jesus was talking about His body which they would destroy but which God would raise 3 days later. They had desecrated God's Temple And yet God would raise up a new meeting place for worship ... centred on Jesus. With the resurrection of Jesus, God raised up a new Temple in just 3 days.

And nobody got it! Until after the resurrection. 'So, this is what Jesus meant!' It's ironic that the Disciples didn't remember what Jesus said until *after* the resurrection. However, the religious leaders remembered it *before*. Think of Matthew 27:63, 'Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again.'

Jesus wants a clean temple. And He's not just talking about our Church building. Jesus was talking about His 'body: 'You and I, as Christians, are part of the 'body' ... the 'body of Christ'. Romans 12:5 says, 'We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually member's one of another.' Jesus is walking through His 'temple' every day ... looking at the 'body' of believers. What does He see? Does His 'body', His 'temple', need cleansing ... *again*? Is there something in our lives that is defiling God's 'temple'? Is there something that Jesus needs to drive out of our hearts ... something that's standing between us and our worship of holy God? Only we can answer that. And only Jesus can cleanse.

'God doesn't want a dirty douse'. God won't fill a dirty vessel. God won't use a dirty vessel. We can't worship God in a dirty 'temple'.

If we've got dirt that needs to be swept away from our Christian lives then only Jesus can make us clean. I urge all of us at some point this week to pray along with David, in Psalm 51:10, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' Because 'God doesn't want a dirty house'. 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

Holy Father, we pray that you will pour out the living water of your Spirit upon your Church in the world. Give us the humility and courage to seek unity where we are divided. Give us the grace to exclude no-one from fellowship because we disapprove of their way of life or the expression of their faith. Remind us always that it is only through your gracious love that we can find peace with you.

Lord in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

Holy Father we pray that you will pour out the living water of your Spirit upon the nations of the world. Help us to find new non-violent ways of seeking peace and reconciliation. Give grace, wisdom and insight to the powerful that they may surrender some of their power; to the rich that they may surrender some of their wealth; and to those who express hatred and prejudice through violence to learn that there are better ways to be.

Lord in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

Holy Father we pray that you will pour out the living water of your Spirit upon our communities and our families. Help us to allow that living water to flow through us enabling us to reach out to those around us. Help us not to be afraid to show kindness to strangers or to stand alongside those on the edges of our society. Give to us the Spirit that was in Jesus, drawing people to him and uniting them in their common experience of his compassion and love.

Lord in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

Holy Father we pray that you will pour out the living water of your Spirit on all who are in need. We pray for those who face any pain, fear, loneliness, depression or anxiety. Let them find in you refreshment, hope and comfort for their spirit and the peace of mind that comes with the assurance of your presence alongside them.

Lord in your mercy

**All hear our prayer.**

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 Amazing love**

**(please click on this link to hear the hymn)**

**The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below**

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Sermon © Pete Haslam and prayers of intercession adapted from [Katherine Smith](#).

# 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** [10,000 reasons](#)

(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**

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.