

Sunday 18 July 2021

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity



Sermon © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Prayers of intercession © Lay Anglicana.

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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 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>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 All creatures of our God and King ([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

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 the Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Generous God,
you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard seed,
make it grow to your glory
and the flourishing of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord. Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord. The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.' *Jeremiah 23:1-6*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called 'the uncircumcision' by those who are called 'the circumcision'—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. *Ephesians 2:11-22*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 The Lord's my shepherd

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All Glory to you O Lord.

³⁰⁻³⁴ The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognised them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁴⁷⁻⁵² When evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. When he saw that they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind, he came towards them early in the morning, walking on the sea. He intended to pass them by. But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out; for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.' Then he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly astounded, for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

⁵³⁻⁵⁶ When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed. *Mark 6:30-34, 47-56*

The lectionary omits verses 47-52. These verses have been included here because the passage is not wholly comprehensible without them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

St Mark is such a very clever writer but it's possible to misunderstand his message if we don't know his style.

In today's Gospel reading, we encounter a stylistic technique we sometimes call a 'sandwich.' The main story acts as the two slices of bread while a second but related story acts as the filling between them. The filler helps bring out the flavour and thereby gives greater depth and meaning to the main story.

In today's Gospel reading, the bookends of the story—the bread—introduces the idea of Jesus as a shepherd. In the first portion Jesus is described as a shepherd. In the second he has now succeeded because he's brought the disciples home. The middle portion is a miracle that occurs *en route* when Jesus calms a storm.

The Jews had a thing about the sea. They feared it and hated it. The Bible, and the Old Testament in particular, show us how they demonstrated that fear repeatedly. At the beginning, at the start of creation, God 'separated the waters': he places waters above (from which come our rain) and waters beneath, which we call the sea. The region of order between these two has no water, so he has made it safe. That's why the ancient Jews retold the story of Noah and the deluge: for a period, these two waters came together again and reintroduced chaos to the place of order. But God made it safe again; in that story, the place of safety is dry land.

We see this same fear in the New Testament: in one of the best-known parts of the Book of Revelation: at the extreme end of the Bible, St John the Divine describes the New Jerusalem. And central to its attraction, at least to the Jews, was the line 'And the sea shall be no more.' It's in Revelation 21.

The Jews of Jesus' day not only conceived the sea as chaos, but also saw it as evil. It was the place where ghosts lived. That's why the man infected with unclean spirits (the story of the Gadarene swine a few weeks ago) could only be reached by crossing water. It was a mixing of like with like—quarantine. For this reason, a fisherman—someone who lived *on* the sea—could not enter a synagogue because he might infect other believers. He was not allowed to read a lesson in the synagogue in case he mis-spoke. He could not be an elder.

The reason why I've dwelt at such length on the Jews and their image of the sea is that (without it) we do not realise quite how remarkable is the miracle in the Gospel this morning, and what it *actually* means.

Jesus is walking on the water; that's surely remarkable enough. *That's* why the disciples think he's a ghost. It's a natural assumption: the sea is where ghosts live so it can only be a ghost when they see what looks like a man on the surface of the water. We then realise what Jesus is doing and saying. The disciples in the boat are experiencing the evil and chaotic nature of the sea *and Jesus has tamed it*.

With Jesus on the water, the sea is now safer than the boat. When Jesus is there, what was dangerous (in particular was spiritually dangerous) has become safe. We have a complete inversion. Jesus makes everything safe—including the spiritual realm. That's the second part of the introduction.

We can now look at the main part of the story. In both the Old Testament reading, and in the Gospel, we see an image of shepherds. Jeremiah says the nation's leaders are like bad shepherds. They do not lead properly. If only there was a good shepherd to follow. And in the New Testament, St Mark describes the people as 'being without a shepherd.' Again, if only they had someone they could follow safely.

It's now we see why St Mark places the story of Jesus walking on the water here. What Mark is doing is this: he first sets up a quandary: 'if only the people had someone they could follow safely' and then tells them that following Jesus is the ultimate in safety. In effect he's saying, if Jesus can even make the waters safe then surely anywhere is safe with this saviour—*only if we follow him!* He's saying that we have a shepherd worth following. Later in the Bible, St John makes the point more clearly when Jesus says that he's the Good Shepherd.

These, then, are the perfect series of readings with which we look toward to a very uncertain future—together, as Christians and as a nation. From tomorrow the country is unlocking yet Covid cases are rising again at a frightening rate. We need

someone safe to follow. There is much evil afoot—look at the trolling of the footballer Marcus Rashford last weekend; look at the rise of nationalism here and abroad; look at the rise of far-right politics. We need a shepherd to follow. And look at the way all our Churches are struggling so much we need a safe guide, a good shepherd. This is a mix of chaos and real-time wickedness. What do we do? Where do we go? Whom do we follow? If only we had a really good shepherd.

To summarise, the Jews feared and loathed the sea. It was the place of chaos, and the place of spirits. By walking on the water, Jesus showed that chaos and anything in the spiritual realm can have no power over him. Quite the reverse: he has power over them. And he makes them safe.

We see how St Mark is telling us to keep as close to Jesus as we can. Jesus the shepherd ensures his disciples can get safely from A to B. It's not just a matter of following in a physical sense but also a spiritual sense. It therefore means knowing him and obeying him. It means seeking him in order to find him in order to follow him. It suggests we're only really safe when we stay close to him. The message of today's Gospel is simply this: follow Jesus and stay close. It's the safe place to be.

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

The Church of Christ

Lord God, we thank you for your work in the Church, where your followers attempt to be members one of another in the body of your son. We thank you for those times when you are able to work through us, and for the privilege such responsibility affords. And we thank you that, when needed, you work around and in spite of our efforts, for you know our frailties. Guide us, O Lord, as we seek to serve you. To the greater glory of you in all that we do

All Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority

Lord, whose beauty is beyond our imagining, and whose power we cannot comprehend: show us your glory so far as we can grasp it, while shielding us from more knowledge than we can bear until we may look upon you without fear. Your Spirit is around us in the air we breathe; your glory touches us in the light that we see, the fruitfulness of the earth, and the joy of its creatures. You have written for us your revelation, as you have granted us your daily bread: teach us how to use it. To the greater glory of you in all that we do

All Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

The local community

Lord, help us to know and love the people whom you have planted as our fellow labourers in the vineyard. May we be fresh air and nourishment to each other, through your grace. And if we become bruised, and find it hard grow together, you have promised to break down the divisions between us. Where fields are overgrown with thorns, you will disperse every trace of bitterness and replant. And in you shall we find our peace.

To the greater glory of you in all that we do

All Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Those who suffer

Lord, you have compassion on your people in all their needs, and have promised your steadfast love if we do but build on you as our cornerstone. You look into our hearts and see a beauty worth the battle: you watch over our growth and find a purpose worth the pain. The past bears your footprints; the future holds your hope; but, above all, be the presence in our present, O Lord, our comforter.

To the greater glory of you in all that we do

All Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

The communion of saints

Lord, we lay before you all those who have died. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. As you make us a dwelling place for you in the here and now, so may we come to dwell with you forever.

To the greater glory of you in all that we do

All Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.

Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.

Peace from the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Follow him, follow him (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

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

and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always.

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 Will you come and follow me (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

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life,
ever giving himself that the world may live:
may we so receive within ourselves
the power of his death and passion
that, in his saving cup,
we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

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.