

Wednesday 24 August 2022

St Bartholomew



It has long been assumed that Bartholomew is the same as Nathanael though it is not certain. The gospels speak of Philip bringing Nathanael to Jesus and calling him an Israelite worthy of the name. He is also present beside the Sea of Galilee at the resurrection. Although he seems initially a somewhat cynical man, he recognises Jesus for who he is and proclaims him as Son of God and King of Israel.

Sermon © Revd Denise Owen.

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Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

Prayers of intercession © Paul Monk.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

All the hymns are hosted on YouTube. Please click on the links to hear them.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [We walk by faith](#)

(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 Bartholomew

Almighty and everlasting God,
who gave to your apostle Bartholomew grace
truly to believe and to preach your word:
grant that your Church
may love that word which he believed
and may faithfully preach and receive the same;
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 the Prophet Isaiah

Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! Let all the nations gather together, and let the peoples assemble. Who among them declared this, and foretold to us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to justify them, and let them hear and say, 'It is true.' You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no saviour. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses, says the Lord. I am God, and also henceforth I am He; there is no one who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it? *Isaiah 43:8-13*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured. *Acts 5:12-16*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 [May your Kingdom come](#)
[Your Kingdom come](#)

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

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

A dispute arose among the disciples as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But Jesus said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

'You are those who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'

Luke 22:24-30

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

One of the places I most enjoy visiting is Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. It's home to the Dukes of Devonshire, and an impressive collection of art works old

and new. The Devonshire family are patrons of the arts and continue to buy and acquire works of all kinds from contemporary artists. One of the most startling of these is a statue of St Bartholomew depicting the mode of his martyrdom. Traditionally, St Bartholomew is understood to have been flayed alive, in other words, his skin was peeled from his body piece by piece until he died. In the statue at Chatsworth the saint is seen holding a pair of scissors in one hand, with his skin hanging from his arm. This is made more shocking because the statue is more than life size, and is displayed in the centre of the sanctuary in the chapel. It is by the artist Damien Hirst, and its title is 'Exquisite Pain'. It may be a myth that Bartholomew was executed in the way described above, but his death would no doubt have been painful and untimely.

One more detail that's worth mentioning is that the Bartholomew of the statue holds the scissors high in the air in a gesture, which appears to me, to be a gesture of triumph and victory. Perhaps, the artist is depicting that moment when Bartholomew stands before the face of God and gives an account of his life, knowing that he has 'run the race' faithfully to the very end, and has endured the 'exquisite' pain of martyrdom in the cause of the Truth. I don't know what was in Hirst's mind when he created this work, but as a Christian onlooker this interpretation makes sense to me!

It inevitably gives me pause whenever I see this statue, as I wonder what will I say to God when I'm judged at the end of time? Will I be able to stand so boldly before the throne of God, knowing I had done what I was asked, with the same commitment and fearlessness? Sadly, I doubt that very much. I also hope I won't be faced with the possibility of martyrdom, although many Christians are martyred on a daily basis across the world. What will I hold up high to God, as the saint holds those scissors, as a symbol of my life?

We are not all called to the drama of a life like Bartholomew's or Nathanael as he may also be known. He knew the Lord. He was one of the first Apostles. He witnessed the resurrection. He was part of that outpouring of the Holy Spirit that emboldened and empowered the disciples at Pentecost. He most probably went on missionary journeys, although in reality we know little of his life, and paradoxically for me this is where I find saints like Bartholomew very inspiring. Despite, what I've just said, Bartholomew/Nathanael is fairly anonymous, and in the history of the Church almost all of our sister and brother Christians have been anonymous. Hardly any of us will become known as heroes of the faith. Most Christians will lead and have led lives of quiet and loving faithfulness. I don't think this in anyway contradicts what I've said about the statue and the scissors and the skin and the fact that we will all one day stand before God, because the judgement of God is the same for the

saints of the Church as it is for us saints of the everyday and undramatic life of faith.

This is another chance to pause and to reflect on my earlier comment. What will I offer to God when I stand before God face-to-face? Will I be able to offer those daily disciplines of the faith that are fundamental to a flourishing spiritual life? Prayer, scripture reading, worshipping with others, acts of loving service, consideration of how I use my financial resources, among others? Or am I already preparing my defence? Or excuses for neglecting these things? Are there other things we can offer to God knowing they are and will be an acceptable sacrifice? The life of a Christian is a life of occasional but regular self-examination. Am I using the gifts I've been given? Am I living my Christian vocation as fully as I could? What is my place in God's Kingdom?

We seem to have come a long way from that statue in the chapel at Chatsworth, but have we really? Isn't the need to give an account of our lives in all of our futures? It just so happens that St Bartholomew was able to offer his martyrdom as a symbol of his faith ... I wonder what mine will be? 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

These prayers are inspired by today's Gospel passage.

Jesus' disciples disputed which of them was the greatest. Prompt us to explore our vocation of equality and discipleship. In particular, we pray ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

The Lord Jesus stands among us 'as one who serves.' Inspire your Church to recognise Jesus and adopt his ministry of radical service. In particular, we pray ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus said, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them.' Inspire everyone with power to use it with wisdom and compassion. In particular, we pray ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus said, 'I confer a kingdom on those who stand by me in my trials.' We ask your blessing on those who are suffering trials of any kind. In particular, we pray ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for those who've passed from this world to the next and now 'eat and drink at your table in the kingdom'. In particular, we pray ...

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

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Wine of the Kingdom

(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 of God the Almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Walk in the light

(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.

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 Bartholomew and 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.