

Wednesday 30 August 2022

John Bunyan



John Bunyan was born in the village of Elstow, near Bedford and baptised 30 November 1628.

He joined the Parliamentary Army during the first stage of the Great English Civil War. He became interested in religion after marrying. He first attended the parish church but soon joined a non-conformist group in Bedford and became a preacher. He is best remembered as the author of the Christian allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which also became an influential literary model. In addition to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Bunyan wrote nearly sixty books, many of them expanded sermons.

He died on this day 1688.

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Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

Prayers © John Bunyan (excerpted from his *I Will Pray With The Spirit*).

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 **He who would valiant be**
He who would valiant be

(folk version)
(traditional 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.**

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 John Bunyan

God of peace,
You called John Bunyan to be valiant for truth:
Grant that, as strangers and pilgrims
we may at last rejoice
with all Christian people in your heavenly city;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour,
who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns,
one God, for ever and ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the book of Psalms

- ¹⁰ All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, ♦
and all your faithful shall bless you.
- ¹¹ They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, ♦
and tell of your power,
- ¹² to make known to all people your mighty deeds, ♦
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.
- ¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, ♦
and your dominion endures throughout all generations.
- The Lord is faithful in all his words, ♦
and gracious in all his deeds.
- ¹⁴ The Lord upholds all who are falling, ♦
and raises up all who are bowed down.
- ¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you, ♦
and you give them their food in due season.
- ¹⁶ You open your hand, ♦
satisfying the desire of every living thing.

¹⁷The LORD is just in all his ways, ♦
and kind in all his doings. *Psalm 146:10–17*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the First Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

The Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

For who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?'

But we have the mind of Christ. *1 Corinthians 2:10b–end*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 I could sing of your love forever

[\(please clicker here\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the sabbath. They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority. In the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 'Let us alone! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' When the demon had thrown him down before them, he came out of him without having done him any harm. They were all amazed and kept saying to one another, 'What kind of utterance is this? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!' And a report about him began to reach every place in the region. *Luke 4:31–37*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

When Jesus teaches in today's Gospel, we hear that the people 'were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority'.

The dictionary defines authority as, firstly, 'the power to give orders or make decisions: the power or right to direct or control someone or something', and secondly 'the confident quality of someone who knows a lot about something or who is respected or obeyed by other people'.

The Gospel refers to Jesus as 'speaking with authority' in the second sense. He had very little power in the first sense. As an itinerant preacher from a small northern town, the son of a carpenter, he had no power to give people orders, to make laws or to enforce his will on anyone. If he had wanted to be the warrior Messiah many people hoped he would be, to lead a rebellion against the Roman occupation of Israel, he would have failed, because his followers had no resources and no military training.

But he had enormous spiritual authority. Evil spirits certainly recognised it: he is shown giving them orders and casting them out throughout the Gospel and they always recognise him and fear him accordingly. And people flocked to hear him teach and to receive his touch because they sensed that he knew what he was talking about and that he had great healing power.

Part of Jesus' 'authority' came from his obvious personal integrity: he did not just 'talk the talk' but 'walked the walk'. Even when he was on trial at the end of his earthly life, his accusers couldn't find any dirt to dig up on him. He preached love and goodness and the saving power of God and he lived his life fully in accordance with those teachings.

Anyone can have power. If you follow politics, you'll be aware of the shenanigans that go on as people struggle for dominance, make rules that they themselves don't follow and try to bring each other down. It's nothing new. Read about politics in any period of human history and you'll find the same thing.

Power can be seized by force and enforced by brute strength. People obey because they are afraid of the consequences if they don't. Authority of the kind Jesus had can only be earned. People obey because they sense the love and care behind it and they want a world where such authorities rule.

The rule of Jesus' type of authority is the Kingdom of God on earth and as Christians, it's our job to seek it and promote it wherever we can. We know it when

we see it and we feel its absence keenly. We recognise it in the lives of those who follow Jesus closely and we seek it in our own lives.

If we want to, we can invite the Holy Spirit into our hearts and ourselves become channels of that gracious and loving authority. We often sing this adaptation of the 'Prayer of St Francis' in church. Let's make it our prayer today:

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is hatred let me bring your love
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord
And where there is doubt true faith in You

Make me a channel of your peace
Where there is despair in life let me bring hope
Where there is darkness only light
And where there's sadness ever joy.

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

Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit, for such things as God hath promised, or according to the Word, for the good of the church, with submission, in faith, to the will of God.

I will pray with the Spirit. Now to pray with the Spirit—for that is the praying man, and none else, so as to be accepted of God—it is for a man, as aforesaid, sincerely and sensibly, with affection, to come to God through Christ, &c.; which sincere, sensible, and affectionate coming must be by the working of God's Spirit.

It is not the mouth that is the main thing to be looked at in prayer, but whether the heart is so full of affection and earnestness in prayer with God, that it is impossible to express their sense and desire; for then a man desires indeed, when his desires are so strong, many, and mighty, that all the words, tears, and groans that can come from the heart, cannot utter them. *John Bunyan*

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 I heard the voice of Jesus say [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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 I will sing the wondrous story [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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 John Bunyan 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

God of ** 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.