

Sunday 23 October 2022

# Bible Sunday



shall be blessed as you are in your offspring." "None that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place – and I did not know it!" And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Bethel; but the name of the city was Luz at the first. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one-tenth to you."

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Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field and three flocks of sheep lying there beside it; for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well. Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran." He said to them, "Do you know Laban son of Nahor?" They said, "We do." He said to them, "Is it well with him?" "Yes," they replied; "and here is his daughter Rachel, coming with the sheep." He said, "Look, it is still broad daylight; it is not time for the animals to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them." But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; thus we water the sheep." While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep; for she kept them. Now when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his mother's brother Laban, and the sheep of his mother's brother Laban, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of his mother's brother.

## A modern Bible illumination

Donald Jackson in collaboration with Chris Tomlin.  
*Jacob's Ladder*  
(Genesis 28:10–17)

**Sermon** © Rosie Kingham.

**Liturgy** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

**Prayers of intercession** © Jen Ryder.

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 One Church, one faith, one Lord** ([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 word of God is living and active.

It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

All is open and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we give account.

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.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness  
draw us to himself,  
and cleanse us from all our sins  
that we may behold the glory of his Son,  
the Word made flesh,  
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 Bible Sunday**

Blessèd Lord,  
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:  
help us so to hear them,  
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them  
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,  
we may embrace and for ever hold fast  
the hope of everlasting life,  
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
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

Turn to me and be saved,  
all the ends of the earth!  
For I am God, and there is no other.  
By myself I have sworn,  
from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness  
a word that shall not return:  
'To me every knee shall bow,  
every tongue shall swear.'

Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me,  
are righteousness and strength;  
all who were incensed against him  
shall come to him and be ashamed.

In the Lord all the offspring of Israel  
shall triumph and glory. *Isaiah 45:22-end*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.  
*Romans 5:1-6*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Your word is a lamp unto my feet** ([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.**

When Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' He said to them, 'Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Doctor, cure yourself!" And you will say, "Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum".' And he said, 'Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's home town. *Luke 4:16-24*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Today is known as Bible Sunday, Now, you might say 'surely every Sunday is Bible Sunday?'. This is a fair point, because we do read from the Bible every week and we do try, in some small way, to reflect on what the Bible is saying to us week by week and to weave it into our lives and worship.

But the idea of Bible Sunday is to take a small step back from the weekly readings and to seek to look at the Bible as a whole. To think about and reflect on the importance and meaning of what we call 'the Bible'.

I am not going to embark on a theological history of the Bible (phew!), though some history will creep in. It is still the world's best-selling and most-translated book, even though it probably isn't read, at least in this country, nearly as much as it was a hundred years ago, or five hundred years ago when ordinary people first got their hands on the scriptures in English. And that's a story in itself—Google [John Wycliffe](#) to find out about how the Bible was translated into English. It was a real religious revolution, and it changed countless lives, and the Church itself.

The Bible is not just one book, but a whole a library of books, written by many different human authors over a thousand or so years, in Hebrew and in Greek, and at different times. The early Church in the fourth century collected these books, from scrolls and oral traditions, and decided on the contents (called the 'canon'). It took quite a bit of time to decide which books to consider as Holy Scripture and which books to leave out of the Bible. Even today we cannot agree completely. You'll find that particular books (the 'Apocrypha', for example) are included in the Bible of some traditions that are left out of those of other Christian traditions.

And in our society, we can see a variety of approaches to the Bible. One is that it is a load of outdated, dangerous nonsense that we should leave in the past. That

it's not relevant to the present, so why should people bother with it, except to see it as a source of art and literature.

Another way that it is misused is for someone to treat the Bible as simply a list of ethical rules. They then take that list of ethical rules and apply them, usually not to themselves, but to those around them, often in a condemnatory fashion. Sadly, some Christians and some churches seem to build their whole lives and ministry believing themselves to be superior to others because they believe and follow the rules whereas others do not, rather like the Pharisees. That does not mean that *'anything goes'*, which it might if someone sees the Bible as an irrelevance, but it does mean that if we use the Bible to point the finger at other people we shall find the same judgement given to us. This can be very destructive and it can be seen in some cases as a justification for racism, sexism and homophobia.

Then it is possible to take every word as the literal, unchanging truth and treat the Bible as a sort of textbook of science and history. It takes quite a bit of mental gymnastics to hold this kind of view, because you've got to get your head round fossils and Ice Ages, but it is certainly a view held by some. I know a very devout person who told me that fossils were put there by God as a red herring, like the tree in the garden of Eden, to let us exercise our free will to believe the literal, seven-day story of the creation of the world or not. Which I find very sad, because this person can't see the whole creation of God in all its glorious complexity.

So, if the Bible is not to be relegated, used to judge or slavishly adhered to, what should we do? The important thing to remember is that the Bible is not just a series of disconnected stories but that it is a grand, sweeping story of God's relationship with his people. It is for us, his people, to explore that big story so that the small stories make sense and, more importantly, so that we can grow in our faith and advance along our journey. The Bible shows us how God revealed Himself in the world, and the source of our knowledge of Jesus Christ, who is the true Word of God. It points to him, not to itself.

And we shouldn't be afraid to think when we read the Bible. One very important tradition of the Church is to read the Bible together, as a community, as well as individually for study. This means we can explore its possible meanings and learn from one another.

We need to think how we will engage with the Bible—maybe make a New Church Year resolution for Advent to read and meditate on the set readings for the day? Find and follow a course of directed readings? Whatever we do, we need to enjoy it, debate about it, meditate with it, let it get under our skin. It is a unique gift that has lasted for millennia and will endure for many more. We need to be so familiar with His word that that the ears of our hearts can hear the unfamiliar and

the unexpected so we may be ready for the unexpected possibilities the God of Life and Love offers to us all.

On this Bible Sunday let us give thanks for God's word living and breathing through us, and remember that we may be the only Bible some person ever reads. 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

God of the silence, God in the stillness and the calm,  
who met Elijah not in the rushing wind but in quietness,  
who brought peace to a group of fishermen in a raging storm:  
be with us, here, and now.

Help us to leave behind the busyness of our lives, and listen for your word.

God of relationships, God of compassion and love,  
who gave Ruth to Naomi when she had no family,  
who gave Abraham and Sarah a baby when they had given up hope,  
who brought together the disciples and other followers of Jesus:  
we think of our relationships,  
our families, our friends and colleagues and our Church family,



we lift them to you now,  
we bring our thanks, our concerns, our need for forgiveness.  
Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our prayer.**

God of wisdom, God of the proverbs and the 10 commandments,  
who inspired your prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah, to speak your words:  
we bring before you our country and its political leaders, we pray for wisdom  
and justice.

and we think of situations, people, places around the world that need change.  
Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our prayer.**

God of creativity, God of beauty and delight,  
who gave David the gift of song-writing, who spoke to Joseph in vivid dreams,  
who inspired the Songs of Solomon:  
open our eyes to see you all around us.

help us to find you in nature, in poetry, in song, in conversation, in touch.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our prayer.**

God of surprises, God of hopes and plans,  
who called Samuel in the night,  
who met Paul in blinding light,  
Help us to hear your call for our lives, however big or small,  
open our eyes to your promptings and guidance, so that we can see the people,  
places, opportunities that you want us to.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our prayer.**

God of revelation, who came to us as one of us.

You call us to be the light of the world,

to love our enemies, and treat our neighbours as we would be treated,

who urges us not to worry, who encouraged us to seek and we will find,

who told us that we are so loved that if we were one of hundred sheep he would  
leave the other ninety-nine to look for us if we were lost:

help us to take your Gospel words seriously,

let them shape our lives and give us courage to take new paths and explore new  
patterns. Help us to hear their call afresh and let them release us from old

routines to try new steps and dance with you in abandoned joy through all our days.

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**

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** [Jesus loves me, this I know](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)  
or [Veni Creator Spiritus](#) (Gregorian chant)

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** [We have a Gospel to proclaim](#) (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**

God of all grace,  
your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry  
with the bread of his life  
and the word of his kingdom:  
renew your people with your heavenly grace,  
and in all our weakness  
sustain us by your true and living bread;  
who 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.**