

**Sunday 6 November 2022**

# The Third Sunday before Advent



**Sermon** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

**Liturgy and prayers of intercession** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

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

Prayers of intercession © Inspired by [Jim Cotter's](#) meditation on Psalm 62.

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 Brightest and best**

(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.**

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 Third Sunday before Advent**

Heavenly Father,  
whose blessed Son was revealed  
to destroy the works of the devil  
and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life:  
grant that we, having this hope,  
may purify ourselves even as he is pure;  
that when he shall appear in power and great glory  
we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom;  
where he 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 Job

[Job said], 'O that my words were written down!

O that they were inscribed in a book!

O that with an iron pen and with lead

they were engraved on a rock for ever!

For I know that my Redeemer lives,

and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;

and after my skin has been thus destroyed,

then in my flesh I shall see God,

whom I shall see on my side,

and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *Job 19:23-27a*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**



## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians

As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we beg you, brothers and sisters, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you?

But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. For this purpose he called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word. *2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-end*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 I love you Lord**

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

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; then the second and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died child

less. Finally the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her.'

Jesus said to them, 'Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed, they cannot die any more, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.' *Luke 20:27-38*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

My first thought is always for the poor woman. The parable implies she has no choice but to marry seven times. She is property rather than a person. That's the point: she's virtually an afterthought. Maybe her gravestone will be like those you see in long-forgotten graveyards, which say something like, 'She was a relict of ...'

For many people today, God is also something of an afterthought. They think their principal encounter with God occurs when they die. And, because they're afraid of death, they're also afraid of God. And because they're afraid, they avoid Him. They live life to the full, maybe as a distraction to avoid talking of death. And because the mere concept of death is taboo, and we try not to mention it when mingling with polite society, God also becomes taboo. Today's Gospel speaks into that mindset.

The punchline of Jesus' parable just now occurs when Jesus says that our God, is God of the living and not of the dead. Yes, we *will* encounter Him after death, but we dictate the nature of that encounter now, in this life. He is the God of the living.

In today's Gospel passage, Jesus was debating with the Sadducees. They were a Jewish religious group at that time who taught there was no resurrection after death; or, at the least, that any resurrection that did occur should not be thought of as occurring in bodily, physical form. They were not necessarily saying there was no *life* after death.

If God is the God of the living and not of the dead, our task must necessarily shift from preparing for death to finding Him in this life, because an encounter after death is too late. It's like reaching the finishing line after the umpire with his watch has gone home. We need to find God now.

This conclusion changes the whole nature of some forms of Christianity. Human life is not walking the path of spirituality to its end whether brutal or loving, and finding God waiting at its end. True, genuine Christianity is not theology. It's not preparing for death, when our soul separates from its material flesh. It's not behaviour, with endless rules. It's a way of communicating with God that works: our task as disciples is to find God and walk the path with Him.

Here are two extreme ways of thinking about God: first, there is the transcendent. It thinks of God as remote, distant, unreachable, untouchable. He is high above the earth, so glorious and so holy that he would be polluted should we ever touch Him. Alternatively, there is the imminent God who is here with us. He is incarnate, living in and with us—wholly authentic, tangible. Our task on earth is to move from a knowledge of God who is entirely transcendent to acquire knowledge of a God who is also imminent. And I don't mean just head-knowledge. That simply will not do. It's not knowing *about* God but actually knowing Him.

It's now that we can usefully look at today's parable from Luke's Gospel. The central conceit on which Jesus constructs the parable is marriage. Marriage is built on love. And that love is never merely an emotion. As I say in a wedding service, a good marriage is not about 'give and take' but 'give and give' with a bit of 'give more and give even more' thrown in. It's customised goodness. Love is treating a partner as we need them to treat us. And, as scripture insists, *God is love*, so every encounter with God is an encounter with love, and so every encounter with love is an encounter with God. That's why the marriage metaphor is such a potent clue.

The Christian who wants to meet with God must completely rewire their entire spirituality into a spirituality of love. That love is never theoretical but is actual, physical, emotional, engrossing, overwhelming, sacrificial, and therefore outward looking, and so on. And to make sure it doesn't lapse into sentiment or spending money, emotional doormat or sugar daddy, that love needed to be guided. We need God Himself to direct our love. In effect, we reconfigure our prayer life, moving from 'bless mummy', 'heal auntie' into something more like, 'fill me with your love, Lord, and *be* my love when I struggle or feel like I simply cannot love any more.'

If we learn to love this way, using the love of God as the fuel and substance of that love, if we learn to draw inspiration to love from God Himself, if we speak to God about love and ask Him to speak to us about love, if we ask God to show us whom to love and when/where/what to show that love with, then, little by little, we are learning who God is. Our encounters with God will change. We will transition from knowing *about* God to truly, genuinely knowing Him.

And that's why God gives us this human life. As we love this way, incidentally building the Kingdom of Heaven as we go along, we are living His life in us. That's

why Jesus insists that we must love the Lord our God—not because he somehow needs our love but because that way we focus on the source of our love and look through the lens of love when we look at Him, with the result that His love rubs off.

When we live this way, when we do finally die, there occurs an almost seamless transition from life in the flesh to life in God. To paraphrase Jesus, He is the God of the living before we die.

## 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, we are gathered today to worship you, to sing our praise and tell out our love. But you remind us that this is only part of our relationship: we also need to wait on you alone, in our stillness. And then you in your turn will speak to us. Help us to fulfil our calling, both as part of the Body of Christ as a whole, rejoicing in moving together as one to serve you, and also as individual atoms of that Body.

Lord, in you alone is our hope.

**All In your mercy, hear our prayer.**



**Creation, human society and those in authority** Lord, we ask you to inspire the powerful to acknowledge, even if only to you, their own failings and fears, and recognise their need for forgiveness, so that they may empower the oppressed, temper the law with mercy and work for the common good, mindful always that with great power over the lives of others comes great responsibility.

Lord, in you alone is our hope.

**All In your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**The local community** Lord, inspire us every day with your love so that it may overflow into love for those we live amongst. Teach us to share in each other's joys and bear one another's burdens, for your sake. And together may we build something of use, foundations for the next generation to inherit and build on in their turn. Lord, in you alone is our hope.

**All In your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**Those who suffer** Lord, show your mercy to those who feel themselves unwanted and unloved, who can see no place for themselves in our common life together. Turn and soften those whose hearts are hardened against their neighbours. May they all be comforted by the reality of your presence, and know the blessing of your grace.

Lord, in you alone is our hope.

**All In your mercy, hear our prayer.**

**The communion of saints** Lord, we pray for those whom we have loved here on earth and who have now entered into rest. May they know peace, and may they rise in glory to be with you and all your saints.

Lord, in you alone is our hope.

**All 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**

To crown all things there must be love, to bind all together and complete the whole. Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 For the beauty of the earth** (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

May Christ our exalted King pour upon you his abundant gifts,  
and bring you to reign with him in glory  
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 Come and see the King of Love** (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**

God of peace,  
whose Son Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom  
and restored the broken to wholeness of life:  
look with compassion on the anguish of the world,  
and by your healing power  
make whole both people and nations;  
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

**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.