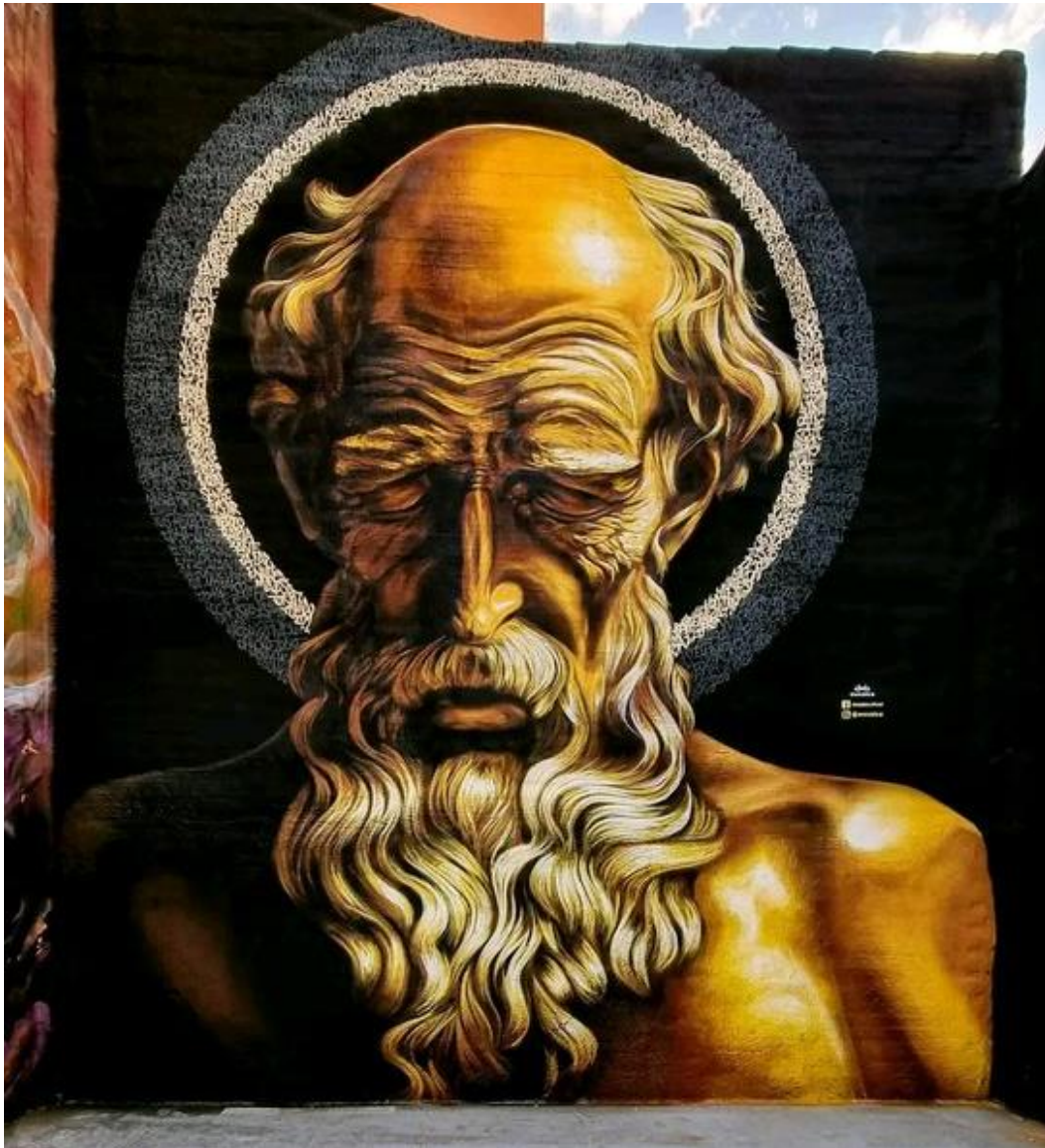


**Tuesday 25 July 2023**

# **St James the Apostle**



James is often called 'the Great.' He was a Galilean fisherman who, with his brother John, was one of the first apostles called by Jesus to follow him. The two brothers were present with Jesus at his Transfiguration and in the garden of Gethsemane, and Jesus also appeared to him after the resurrection.

James was beheaded by Herod Agrippa, who hoped to thwart the spread of Christianity by removing its leaders. His martyrdom possibly occurred on this day in the year 44 AD.

**Sermon** © the Revd Dr Paul Monk.

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

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

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

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,  
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1 For all the saints**

(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 James**

Merciful God,  
whose holy apostle Saint James,  
leaving his father and all that he had,  
was obedient to the calling of your Son Jesus Christ  
and followed him even to death:  
help us, forsaking the false attractions of the world,  
to be ready at all times to answer your call without delay;  
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 Jeremiah

The word that the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Baruch son of Neriah, when he wrote these words in a scroll at the dictation of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: You said, 'Woe is me! The Lord has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning, and I find no rest.' Thus you shall say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: I am going to break down what I have built, and pluck up what I have planted—that is, the whole land. And you, do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for I am going to bring disaster upon all flesh, says the Lord; but I will give you your life as a prize of war in every place to which you may go.'

*Jeremiah 45:1-5*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. *Acts 11:27—12:2*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Now the green blade riseth**

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

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

The mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. And he said to her, 'What do you want?' She said to him, 'Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, 'You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.'

When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

*Matthew 20:20–28*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Today's three readings centre around the concepts of power and its misuse. They follow standard patterns so, in the first, Jeremiah tells his sponsors, 'Do not seek great things for yourself!' and explains the consequences; today's epistle relates the story of King Herod strengthening his own power by executing the rivals he thinks of as a threat; and the Gospel relates how the mother of James and John seeks power for her two sons (although she may have been seeking power for herself, perhaps hoping to wield it through them—we do not know).

Power is defined as, 'The ability or capacity to do something or act in a particular way, the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events.' Power is therefore a way of ensuring that we are in control rather than other people. Stated another way, taking power is the classic way of making ourselves more important than other people.

The problem with seeking power for self is that we must take it from elsewhere, from others. As Christians, we will also be taking that control from God. Rather than taking on power and control, we ought to be giving it to God. As a corrective, then, we should be adopting a process often called *kenosis* from a Greek term meaning 'emptying self'. The classic description of *kenosis* is Philippians 2:6–11.

Jesus says that Christian discipleship starts from this requirement for self-emptying, and often preached on the subject: 'unless a grain of wheat fall to the ground and dies ...; it is as impossible for a rich man to enter heaven as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle ...; take up your cross and follow me ...; and so on.

These examples suggest a decision, a deciding in favour of him and his way of being. For but self-emptying can also be considered as a process or as a journey, and journeys always start from somewhere. The Gospels describe different kinds of self-emptying. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke both start with the birth of Jesus; and the Gospel of John starts with a different description, phrased in terms of 'the Word became flesh'. The first Gospel to be written, that of Mark, starts with John the Baptist in the desert, which was always regarded as a place of radical emptiness, and preaching a message of repentance. The Gospels therefore describe self-emptying that starts with a godly seed growing inside a human body and a radical repentance borne of deliberate decisions for change.

The process of self-emptying is a means to an end. We remove the unhelpful aspects of self in order that we can put God in their place. There's a transference, a swapping, a rubbing off.

The *Mary Rose* was a Tudor warship that sank in the Solent near the Isle of Wight in 1545, and was brought to the surface in 1986. Its wood was preserved remarkably well in the silt on the seabed, but the timbers started to rot as soon as the

carcass of the ship came to the surface. Bacteria in the wood reacted with the air to cause mould. Engineers devised an elegant way to preserve the remains of the ship: they sprayed the wood with a dilute solution of wax having a similar composition to car polish. The wax replaces the water, and mould cannot form in those places in which the wax resides.

The entire process requires constant irrigation and will not be finished until at least the 2050s—a timescale that in fact matches a typical human lifespan. In exactly the same way, we as Christians need to be irrigated by the Spirit of God. The desired effect is to replace self with God in a life-long process of relentless self-emptying. In just the same way as the wax replaces the water deep within the timbers of the *Mary Rose*, so the Holy Spirit replaces self in a human soul.

The wax neither argues nor explains. It simply swaps place with the dirty water: it simply ‘rubs off’. In much the same way, a process of self-emptying just ‘happens’ each time we genuinely come into the presence of God. Our prayer is authentic even if the encounter is short and not tangible, but the result of each meeting with God is that our soul has more of God in it and therefore less of self. John the Baptist would call it an answer to his prayer, ‘He must increase and I must decrease’ (John 3:30–35); and Jesus would call it the blessing of being poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3).

Stated in these ways, the process of discipleship becomes very, very simple. We need to devise a way of encountering God that allows something of Him to ‘rub off’, a transfer of autonomy and power to Him. Indeed, it becomes a Christian duty to encounter God in order for that transference of power from self to Him and the His Spirit to us: our salvation needs that process of spiritual transfer and self-emptying because it underpins the central Christian goal of growing into Christlikeness.

## 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**

Encouraged by our fellowship with all the saints,  
let us make our prayers to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Father your Son called men and women to leave the past behind  
them and to follow him as his disciples in the way of the cross.  
Look with mercy upon those whom he calls today, marks with the cross  
and makes his disciples within the Church.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our Prayer.**

Your Son told his disciples not to be afraid and at Easter breathed on  
them his gift of peace. Look with mercy upon the world into which  
he sent them out, and give it that peace for which it longs.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our Prayer.**

Your Son formed around him a company who were no longer  
servants but friends, and he called all those who obeyed him  
his brother and sister and mother.

Look with mercy upon our families and our friends  
and upon the communities in which we share.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our Prayer.**

Your Son sent out disciples to preach and heal the sick.  
Look with mercy on all those who yearn to hear the good news of salvation,  
and renew among your people the gift of healing.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our Prayer.**



Your Son promised to those who followed him that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel and would share the banquet of the kingdom. According to your promise, look with mercy on those who have walked with Christ in this life and now have passed through death.

Lord in your mercy,

**All Hear our Prayer.**

Almighty God,  
grant that your Church  
may faithfully hold and make known  
the faith that has come to us through the apostles,  
that with them and all your saints  
we may inherit the glories of eternal life.

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 O the bitter shame and sorrow** ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

May Christ who makes saints out of sinners,  
who has transformed those we remember today,  
raise and strengthen you that you may transform the world;  
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**    **O the deep, deep love of Jesus**    [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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 James 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**

Lord God, the source of truth and love,  
keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,  
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,  
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,  
in 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.