

Sunday 30 July 2023

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity



Sermon © the Revd Robin Wilding.

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Prayers of intercession © Vanderbilt Library (adapted).

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 Beauty for brokenness

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

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

Click [here](#) for the tune of this version of the Gloria ('Cwm Rhondda').

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 Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty Lord and everlasting God,
we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern
both our hearts and bodies
in the ways of your laws
and the works of your commandments;
that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,
we may be preserved in body and soul;
through our Lord and 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 First Book of Kings

At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, 'Ask what I should give you.' And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have

not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. *1 Kings 3:5-12*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.' No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:26-39

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

**HYMN 2 And can it be
And can it be
And can it be**

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All **Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus put before them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’ He told them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

‘Have you understood all this?’ They answered, ‘Yes.’ And he said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.’

Matthew 13:31–33, 44–52

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

Paul makes some big claims here. What he is recognising is that as Christians we are moving against the whole tide of the world system we live in, that what is ranged against us to put us off, to get us to give up, to make us ineffective, to lead us to feel failures, can seem overwhelming, cosmic in scale, and beyond us. To focus on the struggle can be to lose the fight. When playing chess beginners often count the pieces, but miss the truth of the position—checkmate wins.

At the end of this rich chapter, Paul pulls together all that he has been saying since the start of Romans chapter 4. That God has acted on our behalf to give us new life by his Spirit, and that living by that new life leads to transformation from within. That new Holy Spirit life changes our status, we are children of God. But we

are living in the mean time—what we now experience is good but nothing to compare with the wonders to come, we have become part of the answer for the cosmos rather than part of the problem. God is working in us creatively for good not ill, and whatever may be thrown at us his mercy, grace and love remain constant.

Nothing, no thing, absolutely nothing can separate us from his love:

Not death nor life. One of the characteristics of Christians historically has been holding life lightly. When we are told that unless we deny Christ we will be killed that seems a terrible threat in the world's eyes—but hope based on God's promises means to the Christian it is unpleasant but not powerful. But there's something more here—much of our world is obsessed with escaping from reality, avoiding reality—to those who grasp the wonder of God's love and his life within can hold the world lightly. The tragedy of Faustus—giving everything to gain the world but in the end realising exactly what he had surrendered.

Neither angels nor demons. The New Testament world was one of great attention to spiritual forces—recognising their power and so seeking to placate them. Angel worship as well as idol worship took place. Next to the power of the love of God shown us in Christ Jesus NO spiritual power can stand. We can be tempted to attribute great influence to demons and the devil—he has power as we let him but God wins always, hands down.

Not the present nor the future. The world we live in can be a difficult place – and the media is often playing games with our emotions, scaremongering that can lead to awful consequences. And what we go through can sometimes break us. But what we can find in Christ is that God's love reaches us now and we can trust him without fear for the future – he will be with us.

And no powers. This is often interpreted to mean spiritual forces, but I would suggest that it is better read as the secular governments and rulers that can make life desperate for Christians. That spiritual/secular division is a modern invention so there is still the element of the government and what is behind its rule. Right now rules and the way those rules are used mean Christians can be placed under great restriction and denied the opportunity to worship freely. This is what the Roman church experienced to the extreme in their situation. Paul emphasises the perspective—whatever they may do *to* us they cannot separate us *from* the love of God.

Neither height nor depth. Astrology was popular in Paul's day, more seriously than it is in ours. Underlying it is a fatalism—around me are all sorts of forces that influence my life and I am helpless before them, they control what happens to me for good (the star is high in my sign so positive) or depths (the star has fallen out of my sign, so hard times). NOTHING that happens can take us out of this extraordinary place in God—it is He that commands our destiny, not the stars.

Finally, nothing else in all creation—and just in case he hasn't thought of everything Paul throws in a catch all. And anything else I haven't thought of!

So we are more than conquerors! But there is something to note as we finish. To be more than conquerors requires that we are conquered first! Conquered by his great love. Conquered by the victory of the cross and resurrection. Conquered by the experience of grace and mercy and the very presence of God. Today let us surrender anew to the greatness of our God and the astonishing love he has shown us.

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

Hear our prayers
that we may love you with our whole being
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbours.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Seed-planting, fish-netting, bread-baking, pearl-hunting God,
you shape us into living parables.

Pray with your Spirit in us
so that we may understand our experiences
as healing metaphors,
and become creative and abundant stewards
of the environment you entrusted to our love.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Loving God,
open our ears to hear your word
and draw us closer to you,
that the whole world may be one with you
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Hear our prayers, God of power,
and through the ministry of your Son
free us from the grip of the tomb,
that we may desire you as the fullness of life
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world..

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Move us to praise your gracious will,
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 By faith

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

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and
be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you
and give you his peace;

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 Christ triumphant, ever reigning [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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

Strengthen for service, Lord,
the hands that have taken holy things;
may the ears which have heard your word
be deaf to clamour and dispute;
may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit;
may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love
shine with the light of hope;
and may the bodies which have been fed with your body
be refreshed with the fullness of your life;
glory to you 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.