

Sunday 20 August 2023

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity



Sermon © Sarah Wilding.

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Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

Prayers of intercession © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

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 [What a friend we have in Jesus](#) (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 Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

O God, you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace,
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;
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 First book of Moses called Genesis

Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, 'Send everyone away from me.' So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' And they came closer. He said, 'I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be

neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.' And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.' Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, 'Joseph's brothers have come,' Pharaoh and his servants were pleased. Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your animals and go back to the land of Canaan. Take your father and your households and come to me, so that I may give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you may enjoy the fat of the land.' You are further charged to say, "Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Give no thought to your possessions, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours".' The sons of Israel did so. Joseph gave them wagons according to the instruction of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. To each one of them he gave a set of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five sets of garments. To his father he sent the following: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey. Then he sent his brothers on their way, and as they were leaving he said to them, 'Do not quarrel along the way.'

So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. And they told him, 'Joseph is still alive! He is even ruler over all the land of Egypt.' He was stunned; he could not believe them. But when they told him all the words of Joseph that he had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. Israel said, 'Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I must go and see him before I die.' *Genesis 45:1-15*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. And the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 [Peace to you](#)

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus left and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.'

And her daughter was healed instantly.

Matthew 15:21-28

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

In the passage from Genesis, we see Joseph forgiving his brothers for what they did to him, which had caused him so much suffering. And he forgives them fully, weeping because he is so glad to be reconnected to his family. So what is forgiveness? The root idea in the New Testament is that of cancelling a debt. The Greek word also means to leave, in the sense of leaving something behind. So we leave the debt on the table and walk away from it. Forgiveness is a very important part of Jesus' teaching, so much so that we are told to include it in our everyday prayers as part of the Lord's prayer (Luke 11:4 and Matthew 6:12). There are also warnings regarding not passing on the forgiveness we've received (Matthew 18:21–35).

The trouble with this and other things we're supposed to do and be as Christians is that they can become like heavy bags that we carry around with us, and we become weighed down by our inability to be what we should be. Jesus died to free us from guilt, but we can end up burdened by our own conscience and a diffuse sense of condemnation—even a dread of judgement. We forget that Jesus loved us while we were still sinners and he hasn't changed his mind: he still loves us when we sin. If you have a sensitive conscience then ban the words 'ought to' and 'should' from your vocabulary. We're not under law, we're under grace. Ask yourself instead, where does God want me today? What does he want for me? In fact, in forgiveness as in other things we are meant to grow. We don't become Christlike overnight but enter a process where we develop by prayer and relationship with Jesus. In our passage we don't see the process by which Joseph came to the place where he could forgive, we just see the end point.

I've mentioned briefly what forgiveness is, but now let's look at one thing that forgiveness isn't. When someone knocks into you by accident, for example, it's common to say, 'That's OK,' or, 'It doesn't matter.' Which is fine at that level, but we think that's forgiving, and then when something worse happens we also feel we should be able to say again, 'That's OK,' or, 'It doesn't matter.' And we try very hard to not mind that we've been hurt. That's not forgiveness, that's minimising, and the knock-on effect is that we try to grin and bear it and bury our 'bad' feelings, put them in a box inside us and try not to feel that way. And then we feel guilty and it all builds stress and tension. The trouble is those feelings leak, like a rusty chemical waste canister that lets out poison into the groundwater, and we find our relationships are affected anyway.

No. If someone has hurt you it does matter and it is important. Let out those feelings but, as the scripture says, 'In your anger do not sin' (Ephesians 4:26). Don't take it out on those around you: as the youth evangelist Eric Delve said, 'Swear at

God, be nice to your Mum. God can take it, your Mum can't.' (Substitute 'husband', 'wife', 'boss' or whoever for 'Mum'.) And don't incubate your anger and brood on it, like a mother hen turning her eggs to keep them warm. Then it will hatch into resentment and grow into bitterness. The idea here is to bring these feelings to God *and allow them to pass through* so that they can be released. We're not in this alone but working with God, who knows what He might say to you as you bring your feelings to Him? I'm talking about anger here; the pain of grief is another matter entirely. Joseph is clearly overwhelmed by emotion when he reveals himself to his brothers after carrying his grief for such a long time.

How do we go forward in this process of growth? Start where you are now: be honest with God, not trying to be what you should be. Maybe you're right at the beginning and you can't or won't forgive; you need to ask yourself, 'Who do I want to be? *Whose* do I want to be?' Do you want to be a person of love or a person of hate? Do you want to follow Jesus or the world? Perhaps you're in the middle somewhere, trying hard but it's a struggle. Maybe you need to think about what forgiveness is and what it isn't and learn how important you are to the Lord. We see from the story of Joseph what the end benefit is of having forgiven: he is not only able to forgive but even to help his brothers with their guilt. He says, 'You meant it for evil but God meant it for good.' He doesn't minimise what they've done but has found God at work in it. What astonishing grace! And how like the Lord he continued to serve, even in the darkest places.

Isn't that where we want to get to? I hope so.

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

These prayers are inspired by the story of Joseph, above.

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob—our God. Help us to remember that you are God of us all.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Joseph's father Jacob had favourites and rationed his love. Help us to love all, love our neighbours as we love ourselves; help us to love God with everything.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Joseph was treated sold into slavery by his family but later forgave them. Free us when we are enslaved by hurts too difficult to forgive.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Joseph provoked his brothers with his arrogance and self-centredness. Help us to centring ourselves on You with humility.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Joseph's brothers sold their brother because they hated him. Help us when we hate and cannot love.

Lord in your mercy

All hear our prayer

Joseph was given a coat of many colours. Clothe us with Christ.

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 [There is a hope](#)

(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 [Do not be afraid \(for I have redeemed you\)](#)

(click 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

Lord of all mercy,
we your faithful people have celebrated that one true sacrifice
which takes away our sins and brings pardon and peace:
by our communion
keep us firm on the foundation of the gospel
and preserve us from all sin;
through 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.