

Sunday 28 July 2024

Ninth Sunday after Trinity



Sermon © Lucie Reilly.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Prayers of intercession © Free from free for (adapted).

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 All creations worships you

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

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

All Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

The Collect for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
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 the Prophet Samuel

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him; they ravaged the Ammonites, and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. It happened, late one afternoon, when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, "This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite." So David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself after her period.) Then she returned to her house. The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, 'I am pregnant.'

So David sent word to Joab, 'Send me Uriah the Hittite.' And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the people fared, and

how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, 'Go down to your house, and wash your feet.' Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. But Uriah slept at the entrance of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. When they told David, 'Uriah did not go down to his house,' David said to Uriah, 'You have just come from a journey. Why did you not go down to your house?' Uriah said to David, 'The ark and Israel and Judah remain in booths; and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field; shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do such a thing.' Then David said to Uriah, 'Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back.' So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. On the next day, David invited him to eat and drink in his presence and made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but [Uriah] did not go down to his house.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, 'Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, so that he may be struck down and die.' *2 Samuel 11:1-15*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 **Beautiful, isn't he?**
By faith

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

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All **Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.'" One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.'" Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'

When Jesus realised that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself. When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

John 6:1-21

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

Today's readings are about scarcity and abundance. What does it mean to have enough?

When all four Gospel-writers include a story about feeding five thousand people with a handful of loaves and fishes, it's possible they wanted to make the point that Jesus is not limited by the rules and regulations in this world or, indeed, by what we regard as 'the laws of nature'. Jesus made the world, the world didn't make Him, He's in charge. In feeding the crowd, we are being taught that God can provide, and God does provide.

That could be it, that's all there is to say, God can provide, and God does provide. That's great, if you say it really quickly and don't think too hard about it. However, it was a bold lesson to teach to people living in ancient, agricultural economies, where the fear of starvation was never entirely absent. The people of the time knew what hunger was like. The same could be said about the massive number of people in our own community and throughout the country today who suffer from hunger. Churches and charities up and down the country are running foodbanks which people rely on. Millions of children begin the school day hungry, millions of adults miss meals because of poverty. When talking about this situation, a statement that 'God provides' is perhaps a little insensitive to say the least. It could even be seen as complacent. Wouldn't it just be easy for God to rain down on us all the wealth and goods that we need in life, so we never had to lift a finger?

But God's concern is for our spiritual need and our spiritual hunger. God's great project is not solely focused on us being well-nourished during the years of our mortal life, but that we should use our lives to grow spiritually so that we become fit for God's eternal friendship. And so, in the context of human life, God set us up to help us to develop patience and courage, compassion for others' needs and generosity. There are ways I think that this can work out in practice, and which I believe we need to bear in mind if we are to make sense of this concept of God's abundance.

First, God is not an individualist. God has created us in solidarity with each other, and that is how God sees us. God might choose to help you, by giving to me; so that I can then share what I have and help you. With that giving / equalising, I am building up my spirituality by being able to exercise generosity; in turn, you are inspired to gratitude, not to me, but to God; and we are bound together with bonds of practical love. In terms of the practical economy, there is only hunger in the world because we do not share. Hunger is not a result of God's lack of provision. The world, as a whole, produces more than enough food for everyone: starvation is the result of waste, war, inequality, and greed.

There is a theory, that the actual miracle happening at the Feeding of the Five Thousand was that people were inspired to bring out and share their food generously—food that they had been hiding away selfishly for their own personal consumption. However, explaining away the miracles of the Bible doesn't really appeal to me very much—if we believe that God was born as a man, and that Jesus was resurrected, then I don't see why we can't accept the miraculous multiplication of loaves and fishes.

Second, God sends provision for our needs, not our wants. I think this is a particularly important for those of us who live in consumer heavy societies. Growth of the economy relies on us discovering our ever-greater needs, we are bombarded from childhood to the grave with brainwashing advertisements that link our basic well-being to buying stuff and/or services. It's really hard, in today's world, to get a clear sense of what we actually need, as opposed to what we want. But is it worth trying? Most people who get a clear view of their own need will also come to understand that they have a surplus, and this can lead towards a light heart, freed from anxiety. The distinction between needs and wants is also important in relation to running a parish. Being a worshipping congregation is really simple and cheap: we just need a place to meet (which could be a home, or a hall); perhaps a source of music (which might just be a phone); and for the sacraments, we need a loaf of bread and some wine. Yet, 'church' as we know it has become burdened with so many overheads, with buildings and rules, many parishes, ours included, struggle to survive financially. That said, my first principle may also be relevant to church life: that God gives us enough, but we do not always choose to share. The 'norm' for Christian giving, in both Bible and tradition, is 10% of our total income, a so-called tithe. Many Christians do tithe in their giving to church and charities, and churches whose members tithe tend not to struggle as much financially. But across Manchester and Oldham in particular, typical giving is way less, people can't afford bills and food let alone to tithe.

Let me end by returning to the Gospel story, and I encourage you to engage with it as you would with any story, that is, using your imagination. I want you to imagine yourself into the story. Think about who you are ...

- Are you one of the hungry crowds? What are you expecting from Jesus? Anything? Nothing?
- Are you like the little boy with the packed lunch, a person who knows they have a little, but not enough. Are you frightened that what you have will be taken from you? Or are you willing to share, however foolish that might seem?

- Are you like the disciples—a practical person, full of sensible explanations why what we truly desire is not going to happen?
- Or are you like Jesus: ready to trust the Father, and to act in faith?

We may not be able to answer where right now, so pray on it: think about it and try discern what is God asking of you. Some days God's provision and care may seem distant, but it will be ever-present in eternity.

Our hearts ache under the pressures of this life, but it is only because we were made for another world. I am going to end with a verse from 1 Peter: 'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.'

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 mercy and healing, you who hear the cries of those in need, receive these petitions of your people that all who are troubled may know peace, comfort, and courage.

A brief silence

Bless your church with all of the gifts it needs for ministry, O Lord; and bind us together that we may properly work toward your kingdom of peace, justice, and love. Hear us, O God.

All Your mercy is great.

Bless plants and animals, and all who care for them, O Lord; and grant that we better see the inter-connectedness of all life on earth and work for the healing of creation. Hear us, O God.

All Your mercy is great.

Bless the leaders of the nations, O Lord; and bless all those who work to hold those leaders accountable to your vision for the world. Hear us, O God.

All Your mercy is great.

Bless us with the Spirit, O Lord; and work through us that we may grow and mature in discipleship and evangelism to the glory of your name. Hear us, O God.

All Your mercy is great.

Bless all who suffer in mind, body, or spirit, O Lord (especially ...); and use us to bear one another's burdens and pains. Hear us, O God.

All Your mercy is great.

Bless all the members of your body, the church, O Lord; and grant us unity with all the saints — past, present and future. Hear us, O God.

All Your mercy is great.

Life-giving God, heal our lives, that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds and offer you thanks from generation to generation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The Peace

The peace to this house from God our heavenly Father.
The peace to this house from his Son who is our peace.
The peace to this house from the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All And also with you

HYMN 3 [Cast your eyes upon Jesus](#) [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 [Come Holy ghost our souls inspire](#) [\(click to hear the hymn\)](#)
[Come Holy ghost our souls inspire](#) [\(different version\)](#)

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

Holy Father,
who gathered us here around the table of your Son
to share this meal with the whole household of God:
in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace,
gather people of every race and language
to share in the eternal banquet of 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.