

Tuesday 30 July 2024

William Wilberforce



William Wilberforce was born in 1759 in Hull. Converted to an Evangelical piety within the Church of England, Wilberforce decided to serve the faith in Parliament instead of being ordained, becoming a Member of Parliament at the age of twenty-one. He was a supporter of missionary initiatives and helped found *The Bible Society*. He settled in Clapham, London, and became a leader of the reforming group of Evangelicals known as the 'Clapham Sect'.

Of the many causes for which he fought, he is remembered best for his crusade against slavery. After years of effort, the trade in slaves was made illegal in the British Empire in 1807 and Wilberforce lived to see the complete abolition of slavery, just before his death on this day in 1833.

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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 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 [Jesus Christ is waiting](#)

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

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

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 William Wilberforce

God our deliverer,
who sent your Son Jesus Christ
to set your people free from the slavery of sin:
grant that, as your servant William Wilberforce
toiled against the sin of slavery,
so we may bring compassion to all
and work for the freedom of all the children of God;
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 Job

Job said, 'If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the orphan has not eaten from it -- for from my youth I reared the orphan like a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow—if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or a poor person without covering, whose loins have not blessed me, and who was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; if I have raised my hand against the orphan, because I saw I had supporters at the gate; then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket. For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced his majesty.' *Job 31:16-23*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Galatians

In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Galatians 3. 26-29; 4. 6-7

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Seek ye first

(version 1)

Seek ye first

(version 2)

Seek ye first

(version 3)

Seek ye first

(version 4)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus] he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'

Luke 4. 16-21

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

It's not so long since I was sitting on a tram next to a young man wearing far too much aftershave. As soon as I walked away, I realised that I smelt of his scent: something had rubbed off. More recently, I was speaking to a different person in a refuge and, again, afterwards, shall we say that a certain something had rubbed off. The concept continues in different ways: during the week, I was cooking, and I noticed that the closer my hand got to the grill, the hotter it got—hot enough, in fact, to singe the hairs on the back of my wrist. The heat had rubbed off.

In worship, we approach God. If the worship is sincere, we enter His presence, and somehow an interaction occurs: we actually enter Him and He enters us. And like encounters with people, an encounter with God has results: something rubs off. This time, though, it's not a smell, either good or bad, or heat, but we somehow change a little. Similarly, with God, during any authentic encounter with God the consuming fire, we change as something of our impurity is burnt off and we grow in purity. It's inevitable: it's the principle of purifying precious metals in a fire. As it said in Hebrews, 'our God is a consuming fire'.

But how do we know that we have changed? Simple: we change to become more like Jesus. The creed tells us he was a man but also entirely God, so in him the encounter between human and divine occurred to the ultimate degree. When we say that we have changed as a result of worship, we could also say that the result of authentic worship is to make us Christ-like—we remain entirely human but increasingly with the traits of God. We start the process of 'participating in the divine nature' (2 Peter 1:4).

The scriptures everywhere describe God as desiring the best for us, His children. It's not just a desire for our own moral perfection, although that desire is essential, but also a yearning for God's way, for social justice: the Scriptures clearly depict our God yearning for an end to all wrongdoing, and end to all bigotry such as ageism, racism and others '-isms'. He wants the world to change away from its disease and disaster, its hatreds and pain, and transform into something beautiful.

So, as we assemble these various jigsaw pieces from today's readings, we see that a natural result of worship will be that we develop the same desires as God: whereas we once found it easy to ignore injustice and greed, as we worship more often and enter the heart of God during our worship, we will increasingly find ourselves deeply offended by the existence of greed and pain and so on. Like God, we will see inequality or any sort as deeply, deeply wrong. Like God, we will yearn that the world will be a better, nicer, cleaner, less war-filled place. Indeed, we can go so far as to say that the determination to change the world is the litmus test of how sincere we are in our worship.

For God the Son, the desire for a better world did not stop at the level of desire, but filled him, drove him to work for its improvement. In the Gospel reading we see him reading scripture and sensing the need for a response. Similarly, our own worshipping communities will find themselves changed by our worship and will find ourselves campaigning against poverty in our sink estates, but wider afield—battling against debt in the emerging world or the arms trade. It's inevitable: an encounter with God changes us: something rubs off.

At this point, many people will say, 'But I do care for the poor and marginalised! I pray for them!' Good. If we are indeed becoming like Jesus, we will certainly start by praying, asking God to help change the world and God will tell us how to effect a change. In our case, He will probably point out to us the ways in which we are part of the problem. For example, if we pray 'Lord! Do something about global warming' he may say, 'I have done: I've shown you what's causing it. Now change your lifestyle to something more holy.'

Again, we might pray, 'Lord feed the hungry' and He will say 'I have already: there is enough food and money in my world. I've given *you* vast material riches [compared to much of the world]. The problem is those who hoard it. If you really care about the hungry, notice where your money goes: buy Fairly-traded goods; make sure your money goes to the producers in the third world and not to multi-national companies.'

Deciding prayerfully how we spend our money *is* worship—it's a way of giving worth to God. Each, if genuine, changes the way we live. Some are small but their cumulative impact is to alter the person we are, and thence change our relationship with God, which is surely one of the key reasons why we should worship. Similarly, we can weigh up the use of our time and the use of our talents. Suddenly, we are looking outwards instead of inwards; our worship becomes a means to an end rather than an end itself. In fact, to use the words of Isaiah, we may call

⁹ ... and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.
"If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
¹⁰ and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday. *Isaiah 58:9,10*

To summarise, we can choose to merely *attend* church, or we can consciously ask God to enter His presence and worship Him. If we do choose to worship, we will

find it costly. It will divide families and friends. It will involve much work, but you knew, didn't you—deep down—that being a Christian required more than going to church once a week. You don't crucify a man who says 'Let's be nice to each other and attend a church service for one hour a week.' No. Those with power crucify the person who shows the way to an authentic encounter with God, who in consequence demands that the world be changed, upside right, and who then demands we actually change our lives in order to make the lives of others more bearable. This was the life that William Wilberforce adopted, and which God wants of us, too.

Sitting on the tram, rubbing shoulders with people in the supermarket, we will find that something rubs off. It may be a scent, or a smile. In the same way, when we enter God's presence in worship, something will rub off. That something is mediated by God the Holy Spirit, and it will change us to become Christ like. And as proof positive that we are growing into Christlikeness, we will be driven, just as Jesus was driven into the desert. But we will be driven to change the world.

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

Dear Mother earth, who day by day unfolds rich blessing on our way, O Praise God! Alleluia! The fruits and flowers that verdant grow, Let them his praise abundant show. O praise God, O praise God, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. *St Francis of Assisi*

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it:
a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God, you have given all peoples on common origin.

It is your will that they be gathered together
as one family in yourself.

Fill the hearts of humankind with the fire of your love
and with the desire to ensure justice for all.

By sharing the good things you give us,
may we secure an equality for all
our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

May there be an end to division, strife, and war.

May there be a dawning of a truly human society
built on love and peace.

We ask this in your name.

Unknown author

O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others

Open my ears that I may hear their cries;

Open my heart so that they need not be without succour;

Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong,

Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.

Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,

And use me to bring them to those places.

And so open my eyes and my ears

That I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee. *Alan Paton*

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

May the God of peace sanctify you:
may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness
that you may be blameless before him
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with his saints.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,
All And also with you.

HYMN 3 I dream of a church

[\(click here to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below.

The Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and mind in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
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 Walk in the Light
Walk in the Light

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

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.

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 William Wilberforce 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

Faithful God,
who called your servant William Wilberforce to serve you
and gave him joy in walking the path of holiness:
by this eucharist,
in which you renew within us the vision of your glory,
strengthen us all to follow the way of perfection
until we come to see you face to face;
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.