



Open Door on Zoom: 22nd November

For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Welcome and Notices

At home, at work and at school; in the garden and in the street; in church and on zoom; in our heads, our hearts and all around us:

God is with us.

God is with us

Muddy Church: Seeing God (Katy Holloway)

'For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities- his eternal power and divine nature- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made'. Romans 1:20



Song: Lord Reign in Me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSdthxieYp4>

Saying Sorry

Reading: 2 Corinthians 4:1-12

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.



Talk: Anna Lovewell

In the 5th century Saint Augustine wrote about how all new Christians were taught the Lord's Prayer at their baptism. Augustine described it like giving these people a precious jewel. 'Keep it', he told them, 'receive this prayer which God himself has taught us to bring to God'. This is the value of the Lord's prayer- the gift of Jesus himself. And we have spent our time over these past few weeks doing nothing less than discovering how to pray in the will of God. In his own words, Jesus has taken us through all the essential elements of prayer.

-We have praised the holy name of our glorious creator God. And we have been invited to pray to him as a child does to a Father.

-We have prayed for His kingdom to come, the kingdom of Jesus, the servant king.

-We have prayed for our Father's will to be done rather than our own.

-We have asked for our daily bread, knowing we are dependent on God for those physical and spiritual things that sustain us each and every day.

-We have prayed for the ability to forgive as we are ourselves are so very forgiven in God's eyes.

-And we have come to God in our trials and testing times, in the face of evil, knowing that clothed in God's own armour, we stand in His strength and won't be overcome.

And so finally, we end our prayer: 'For yours is the kingdom, the power and glory, forever and ever. Amen'. Now, I'm afraid you won't find this last line anywhere in the manuscripts of Matthew or Luke. It was not part of the prayer as Jesus taught it, rather it was added at an early stage by the church as the Lord's Prayer began to be used widely in worship. But you can see why. Having started our prayer with praise and adoration of our holy father in heaven, this is a fitting way to end it, doing exactly what we did at the start: acknowledging that the kingdom, the power and the glory comes from God alone.

'For **yours** is the kingdom, the power and glory, for ever and ever.' It's the acknowledgement that King David gave in 1 Chronicles chapter 29 (10-14) near the end of his life. When all had been prepared for the building of the temple, he said

"Blessed are you, O Lord,
the God of our ancestor Israel,
forever and ever

Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the majesty and the splendour,
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

Yours, LORD, is the kingdom;
you are exalted as head over all”

Here are David’s words in summary, ‘for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever’. And what an acknowledgement this is! So at the end of our time of prayer, we stand again in praise, awe and wonder. And as we gaze upon God, from whom all things come, we are praying that we, and the world would see things from his heavenly perspective.

For yours is the kingdom. All rule and authority belong to God. A radical alternative to the kingdom of this earth. God’s kingdom is ruled by the servant king, who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and wore a crown of thorns. A true prince of peace, sacrifice and love. When we pray for ‘yours is the Kingdom’, we long for **His** kingdom to come on earth. We long for the time when Christ reigns in all hearts. We long for the time when every knee will bend and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

For yours is the power. God’s power is far above any earthly rule or authority. It is not brutal or oppressive but rather it is the very power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him at the right hand of the Father. It’s more than we can comprehend. As Paul rightly tells us in Ephesians 3:20 ‘He is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.’

For yours is the glory: all credit, praise and honour belong to God. And again, this is not the glory of an earthly king, but it is the glory reflected in the life and work of Jesus himself. As John puts it in Chapter 1:14, ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld **his** glory, the glory of the one and only son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.’ God’s glory is a different glory. Its the kind that reflects the family likeness of God himself, full of grace and truth.

And so, as we pray these words, we pray to see things with God’s knowledge and understanding.; through His eyes and in His way. And what we are actually praying for is a radical and total redefinition of kingdom, power and glory not seen in the ways of men but seen in the manger and on the cross.

But more than this, recognise in our prayer that the kingdom, the power and the glory belong to God. **His** kingdom come, **his** will be done, all power and glory belonging to **Him**. If this is truly something we pray for, it changes everything. Knowing this means that we come to God empty of our own desires and, as Paul says in his Prayer to the Ephesians, we come ready and waiting to be ‘filled to the measure with the fullness of God’. We pray that our **eyes** would be filled with God’s kingdom vision. We pray that our **lives** would be filled with God’s power. And we pray that our **hearts** would be filled with the light of the knowledge of God’s glory.

You see we were made to be filled by God. In our passage from 2 Corinthians, Paul describes us like clay jars. Some of us are smooth. Some are rough. None of us are perfect. We are jars that are being constantly being moulded by the hands of our creator, however hard that might be. We are jars that are fragile and easily damaged. **And yet**, God has chosen **us** as his vessels.

He has chosen to fill our hearts with His light and His goodness gives off an unmistakable glow. It shines out of our inner being, such that those who see it can’t help but wonder where the light is coming from. And Paul quite rightly says, ‘we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that this all surpassing power is from God and not from us’. Your pot. His power.

Just think about the enormity of it for a second. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

God has chosen to fill **us** with his presence. He has chosen **us** to live our lives shining out His glory and power. No pressure then! But sometimes, this can feel like an immense challenge. Living up to Christ’s glory in us! Sharing the light of the gospel. Opening people’s eyes to God’s kingdom. Well, not me you might say. we can often say nothing for fear of saying the wrong thing. There are other people more eloquent, more confident, more talented we might say. But the reality is that it is just **you** that God has chosen, however ordinary and inadequate we might all feel. It is us that God has trusted to announce his kingdom. Paul reminds us that we don’t need fancy speeches or clever sermons. We need only speak the truth plainly.

In the beginning of John’s gospel, Philip meets Jesus and starts to follow him. He wants to share the good news with Nathanael. Does Philip come up with a fancy speech to tell him about Jesus? No. Does he need to convince him when Nathanael scoffs about nothing good ever coming out of Nazareth? No. He simply invites Nathanael to ‘come and see’. And this is our calling. To say, ‘come and see’. The rest is up to God.

In fact, it’s not even about what we say. Because every day we carry Jesus around in our bodies for all to see. As we are moulded by God into his likeness, Jesus’ life and death becomes visible in our very being. Our ordinary lives tell His glorious story. And this is the thing is with clay jars, they are nothing special. They are not fine china but instead they are made such that you can see the finger marks of the one that made them. And more than that, they are easily cracked and frequently broken. And that’s just fine. Because, it is precisely **in** your ordinariness and **in** your brokenness that God has chosen to reveal the great treasure of Christ. We need the cracks for the light to shine through.

So, God uses us, broken vessels as we are, so that people around us might catch a glimpse of the light of God’s kingdom, his power and his glory. It is in our very brokenness and humanity that we find God.

‘We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed’. 2 Corinthians 8-9

It is through and despite our weaknesses and trials that that God’s power is revealed.

No guilt in life, no fear in death. This is the power of Christ in us. Knowing that we are loved and forgiven by our glorious and heavenly Father and offering that same love to others, building his glorious kingdom right where we are. People will see His light shine more clearly through the darkness that we face but that doesn’t consume us. And our lives will point visibly to the hope, joy, and peace that we have in our heart which can never be explained by us alone, but only by God at work in us.

SONG: In Christ Alone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16KYvflc2bE>

The Lord’s Prayer

Let us pray thoughtfully, the words our Saviour taught us:

**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.

Prayers: Sue Lowdell

Let us pray:

Lord of life, we pray for our families, for our friends and their families, for our church family, for those whom we love who are nearby and those whom we are unable to meet together at present due to lock down. We are weary after so many months of the pandemic; the hopes and then the fears as the virus which had appeared to be under control, and which has returned once again, but this time the days are shorter and colder and the prospect of the winter ahead brings concern to many. There is the hope of a vaccine and there is you, Heavenly Father, you are our one unchanging light; you bring comfort and hope where it is most needed and we give thanks for your presence in our lives.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord of all, we pray for peace in our world. We pray for all who work for peace and those who uphold law and justice for all people. We pray for an end to fear, for comfort and support to those who suffer, for calm in our streets so that people may go about their lives in safety. We pray for the United States of America at this time. We pray that they will come together and that they will be able to heal their divisions as the outcome of the presidential election becomes clearer. It is hard to accept when feelings are so entrenched, but there is so much healing that can come from letting go and in the end the wellbeing of everyone is really what matters most. Your presence dear Lord is their peace and comfort; your nearness is their hope.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Dear Lord, we pray for our country, for our Queen and for our Government. This year has brought so much tension and worry and the men and women responsible for governing us are also under considerable strain. We pray for them as they find a safe pathway for our country through this extraordinary time and that they too will find hope and peace.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Merciful God, we pray for the elderly and for the many challenges they face at this time. We pray for those who may be lonely, ill or sad and we pray for all those in care homes throughout the country and for their families, some of whom have been unable to see their loved ones for many months. We pray for everyone in Orchard House; and all those working so hard to keep them safe. We pray for Age UK, our home charity for this quarter, and for the support they bring to the elderly. Please be with them all dear Lord and give them your peace.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We bring to you Heavenly Father the congregations at St Mary's and at St Peter's. Please shine your light on the Ministry Team as they bring your teaching and love, and the opportunity for us all to come together in your name. We pray for Petra and her family, for our Church Wardens, the

members of our PCC and for our sub-committees. We pray for 'Open Church' and 'Muddy Church' and for the opportunity to reach out to our community and to fulfil a need at this difficult time.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Dear Lord we pray for those we know who are ill, please give them ease and comfort. We pray for Isobel, Janet, Mary and Margaret and for their families... We pray for all those who are seriously ill with coronavirus and for those undergoing treatment for cancer and heart disease and other serious conditions... we hold them all up to you, dear Lord.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for all those who have died and the families who mourn and who miss the companionship of those who were so dear to them. We remember before God all those who have died in the First and Second World Wars and in all the conflicts and wars since then...

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, please help us to live together in a way that brings glory to your name. May the word of Christ dwell in us. What we do, in word or deed, may we do everything in the name of Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, the Father – 'for thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen'.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, Amen.

SONG: Build Your Kingdom Here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqZX08DDWiA>

Blessing:

'Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.' *1 Chronicles 29:11*

May God give to you his comfort and his peace, his light and his joy. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Breakout Rooms: Time to be together

Do take time to catch up with each other in the breakout rooms, perhaps over a cup of tea!

If you have any prayer or pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact
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