



Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity 26th September

Father God, help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

Amen

Hymn 565: Praise my soul the King of Heaven

Welcome

The Lord be with you,
and also with you

Prayer of Preparation

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

Prayer of Confession

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." 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.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

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.

**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

Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy

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. **Amen**

Gloria

**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.**

Collect for today:

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself, and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see you face to face; 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.

Old Testament Reading: Haggai 1: 1 - 8

¹In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest: ²Thus says the LORD of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD's house. ³Then the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying: ⁴Is it a time for you yourselves to live in your panelled houses, while this house lies in ruins? ⁵Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have

fared. ⁶You have sown much, and harvested little; you eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill; you clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; and you that earn wages earn wages to put them into a bag with holes.

⁷ Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider how you have fared. ⁸Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured, says the LORD.

Hymn 161: Father hear the prayer we offer

Gospel Reading: Luke 9: 1 - 6

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

⁷ Now Herod the ruler heard about all that had taken place, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, ⁸by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had arisen. ⁹Herod said, 'John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?' And he tried to see him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Kathryn from Thursday 23 September

This morning's first reading is taken from the book of Haggai, one of the shortest of the books of prophecy, and one that we don't encounter very often. The name Haggai is derived from the Hebrew word *hagg* meaning to make a pilgrimage. So perhaps he was called this because of his efforts to bring about the reconstruction of the centre of pilgrimage, the Temple, or perhaps he was born on the day of a festival on which the people made a pilgrimage. But apart from that, we know very little about the author of this book, although he is named in the book of Ezra as well. Some people think that he was an older man, perhaps in his eighties who had seen the first temple in Jerusalem destroyed by the Babylonians, although others suggest that he was born in exile in Babylon and therefore much younger.

So, what has been happening? Well, the nation of Judah had been overrun by Babylon and King Nebuchadnezzar who had destroyed Jerusalem, including the Temple, in 586BC. Many of the Jews including Daniel and Ezekiel, were taken into exile by the Babylonians. However, the Medes and the Persians subsequently invaded Babylon and a Persian King called Cyrus came to power. Unlike the Kings of Babylon and Assyria, Cyrus who we come across in Isaiah, allows the captives to return to their homeland where they are allowed to rebuild their temples and worship their own Gods once more.

It was therefore with Cyrus' blessing that Zerubbabel led some 50,000 people back to Jerusalem from Babylon, fulfilling the prophecies that that a remnant would return to Jerusalem. These people started the rebuilding of the temple in 537BC but there was opposition for the project the Jews became dispirited, and the work was discontinued. Fifteen years or so have passed without any work being done, and King Darius is now on the throne dating this passage to around 520BC

And that is the situation into which Haggai is now speaking. Haggai's message was a relatively simple one: 'start rebuilding the temple -now!' His words seem to have been remarkably successful because, within 24 days of his words being spoken, the work starts again once more. I am sure we all wish that the words we say would have such a dramatic and immediate response – wouldn't things be better if people listened and did this or that?

So, why did the people respond? Well, like many of the prophets before him, Haggai spoke God's words, that is after all what a prophet is, one who speaks the words of God into a particular situation. His words are prefaced with 'Thus says the Lord of hosts.' But unlike his predecessors the people did respond to the message that he brought. On this particular occasion, they listened and understood that the words originated from God, and they acted on them.

The Jews had convinced themselves that it was not the right time to rebuild the temple – and it is easy to do. We procrastinate, we simply don't get on with something that needs to be done. We tell ourselves that we need to do something else first, to get some more experience, for our family situation to change, for things to be more favourable. But God tells the Jews to stop procrastinating, that it was the right time, and that they needed to reconsider where their priorities lay. God told them to consider how you have fared or consider your ways. The word consider literally means to 'set your heart' on your ways. In other words, to give it heartfelt or serious consideration. Perhaps it was their heartfelt consideration of their circumstances that led them to respond to God's words.

For they had panelled their houses – which may have meant they had put coverings or roofs on their houses rather than smart wood panels, but it still indicates that they had been sorting out their own houses rather than rebuilding God's house, the temple. And the result of not putting God and God's house first was that things were not going well for them – they have sown seeds but reaped little, they had clothes but were not able to keep warm and they worked but never had enough money. Things just don't go so well when we don't put God at the top of our list of priorities. Of course, Jesus never said that life would be easy following him, indeed we may face

persecution for our faith, which many of our brothers and sisters do across the world. But there is certainly the implication in this passage that things won't go well unless we do put God first.

So I wonder...what are the things that we need to get on with that we have left to one side? Do we always put God first? Perhaps we need to give some heartfelt consideration of our ways and perhaps to change where our priorities lie...

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

The Peace:

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Hymn 144: Dear Lord and Father of mankind

Lord's Prayer

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.

Hymn 54: At the name of Jesus

Remembering the Lord's Supper:

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen