



The Fifth Sunday after Trinity: 12th July

Take some time to be still, perhaps light a candle and offer your own prayer to God. You may find the following words helpful.

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 359: Jesus Shall Reign

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLLevsV6QuoM>

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
does its successive journeys run,
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

People and realms of every tongue
dwell on his love with sweetest song,
and infant voices shall proclaim
their early blessings on his name.

Blessings abound where'er he reigns:
the prisoners leap to lose their chains,
the weary find eternal rest,
and all who suffer want are blest.

To him shall endless prayer be made,
and praises throng to crown his head.
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
with every morning sacrifice.

Let every creature rise and bring
the highest honors to our King,
angels descend with songs again,
and earth repeat the loud amen.

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 and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever.

Amen

Old Testament Reading: *Genesis 25: 19 to end*

This is the account of the family line of Abraham's son Isaac. Abraham became the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, 'Why is this happening to me?' So she went to enquire of the LORD.

The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the elder will serve the younger.'

When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so, they named him Esau. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so, he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

The boys grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, 'Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!' (That is why he was also called Edom.)

Jacob replied, 'First sell me your birthright.' 'Look, I am about to die,' Esau said. 'What good is the birthright to me?' But Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright.

New Testament Reading: *Romans 8: 1 - 11*

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Hymn 84: **Breathe On Me, Breath of God**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elu0nuPX4Us>

Breathe on me, breath of God:
fill me with life anew,
that I may love as you have loved
and do as you would do.

Breathe on me, breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until my will is one with yours
to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, breath of God;
fulfil my heart's desire,
until this earthly part of me
glows with your heavenly fire.

Breathe on me, breath of God;
so shall I never die,
but live with you the perfect life
of your eternity.

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 13: 1 – 9, 18 - 23*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory to you, O Lord

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.'

'Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Rebecca Herrick

"And you know you can't go back again to the world that you were living in, 'cause you're dreaming with your eyes wide open, so come alive!" Lyrics from the film "The Greatest Showman". I confess they sound better sung, but I wonder if they make you stop and think. Can you recall a time when something has happened in your life, something that changed you? Something that made you reflect on what it is to be alive? For Jesus' disciples, I wonder if they often reflected on their lives, as they lived alongside Jesus, daily experiencing his transforming power in themselves and others. Shouldn't that be our experience as followers of Christ too?

In today's gospel reading we see the disciples as part of a crowd gathered in front Jesus, who is telling one of his many parables. Stories. Have you ever noticed how much of our conversation is stories? How we relate to one another's experiences by telling stories about our own? Stories help us understand, help us to illustrate what we are trying to say, which is why it is interesting that Jesus says that the reason he speaks in parables is that some will understand, yet others won't. The parable of the sower helps demonstrate this. As Jesus explains to the disciples, some will hear God's word, the good news of Jesus and will ignore it, or accept it for a while and quickly move on, or become overwhelmed by the worries of life, so that other things become more important. They hear the story, but just don't get it. Others will hear God's word, the good news of the kingdom, and they understand and accept it. They quite literally come alive, and the consequence of that is evident in their lives. This is a reminder that we should expect that some people will not listen or not get it when we try to share Jesus with them, but also an

encouragement that we should not give up sharing God's word with others, because we never know when it might grow in someone's life. We may plant a seed that others may get to nurture, so no opportunity is wasted. Let's keep praying that our family, friends and neighbours would know the transforming power of Jesus in their own lives.

The parable of the sower also would have spoken about life to the crowd gathered around Jesus. A failed crop, a failed harvest, would have meant no food to eat that winter. Seed that did not grow would have meant hunger and starvation, as families were reliant on their own produce to survive. Something too many people in our world today still have to worry about. This is hard for many of us to identify with when we are largely not responsible for growing our own food, but an abundant crop really is the difference between life and death. The seed falling on good soil brings life.

The good news about the kingdom, about Jesus' saving work on the cross, Jesus the word become flesh, has the power to produce abundant crop or fruit in our lives. We see throughout the Bible, that God's word brings life, right from the very beginning, where God speaks and the world begins. As God says in Isaiah 55, "my word... will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it..." Every time God's word is read or spoken, something happens. What power there is in the word of God! That power is producing a crop in us, transforming us, not just when we first profess Jesus as Lord, but every time we read God's word or hear it. God's word helps us to grow more like Jesus, to love God more wholeheartedly, to love our neighbour more authentically, to desire to share Jesus with others, to cry out for justice for the many injustices in the world, to care for God's creation. That is what it is to be fully alive in Christ. But as in the parable of the sower, sometimes we don't really listen, sometimes life just gets too tricky or sometimes we get overwhelmed by worries or busyness to let God's word have that affect on our lives.

That doesn't mean we shouldn't try. I love reading the bible. I'm not saying that just to gain brownie points from the vicar(!) - I genuinely do. But I also know that sometimes I struggle with it, sometimes it's dry, sometimes I don't make the time. Don't give up on God's word. If you don't like reading, listen to it. Read it with a friend or a group. If you are short of time, just read one verse at a time. If you find reading the bible boring, why not try re-reading bits you think you know well. See what hits you afresh. When we really read or hear God's word, we notice new things. It sparks thoughts and ideas in our minds and hearts. We see things in a different light, as we see it through the filter of how we are feeling and what is happening in our lives here and now. Through His Holy Spirit, God's word becomes alive in us, helping us to understand God, ourselves and our world better. We need to let that understanding transform us, not just let it be knowledge, but something that we live.

However, before you feel guilty for not reading your bible enough, Romans also reminds us that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus". As followers of Jesus we may not always feel like we are being transformed, but little by little as we trust in Him, his Holy Spirit is at work in us setting our minds on what God desires. "They are making me be unkind" was uttered in our house recently. Clearly no-one can make a person be unkind, it is our choice to respond that way. God won't make us do things, but God's word will always be at work in us, when we are

receptive to it being so. And we can trust in Him that His word will achieve the purposes that He sent it for, in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

As the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to God's word, we are transformed. We can't "go back again to the world that we were living in", as the song lyrics say, because we are changed, we are coming alive. We don't want to be the people we were, we want to be more like Christ. We also long for our world to change too. This time of lockdown has opened our eyes to injustice in the world in a new way, as well as shifted our perspectives about what is important in life. It's also forced us to be church in a different way, which has perhaps challenged our preconceived ideas too. Let's keep "dreaming with our eyes wide open" as we seek to prayerfully bring before God the things that have challenged our hearts individually and collectively during this time, so that as we face the challenges ahead of us, we might choose as followers of Jesus to come alive in Christ.

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:

Spirit in our weakness be our strength. We do not know how to pray as we ought. As we love you, work in us that which is good; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord, as you have called us to fulfil your purpose, work in us and through us to do your will. Make us the people you want us to be. Guide us to do what you would have us do. We pray for all who are seeking to grow in the faith, for all seekers and enquirers.

Lord your will be done,

your kingdom come in us.

We pray for all who are suffering hardships or persecution, for all who are in peril or danger. Strengthen all who seek to bring in your kingdom by striving for peace, for justice and for liberty. May we be conquerors of darkness and evil through him who loves us.

Lord your will be done,

your kingdom come in us.

We give thanks for those who have shared with us the riches of the kingdom, for those who have been examples to us, for those who taught us the faith. We pray for those who seek to pass on those riches in their homes and in the community.

Lord your will be done,

your kingdom come in us.

Lord, have mercy on all who are suffering persecution, peril or the sword. May they know your love and your saving power. We remember people who are suffering through tyranny and violence and for all who have fallen to sickness or disability. We pray for all suffering from or because of Covid 19 across the world, for all healers and comforters.

Lord your will be done

your kingdom come in us.

We give thanks that in Christ we are more than conquerors. In him you have brought us to the great riches of the kingdom. We pray for the saints and the faithful departed, that we may all be one with you in your eternal kingdom.

Lord your will be done

your kingdom come in us.

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 572: Praise to the Holiest

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

Praise to the Holiest in the height,

And in the depth be praise,

In all his words most wonderful,

Most sure in all his ways.

O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! That flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against blood refine,
Should strive and should prevail.

And that a higher gift than grave
Should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and his very self
And Essence all divine.

And in the garden secretly,
And on the Cross on high,
Should teach his brethren, and inspire
To suffer and to die.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise,
In all his words most wonderful,
Most sure in all his ways.

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 156: Faithful Shepherd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY8hIC1VleU>

Faithful Shepherd, feed me
in the pastures green;
faithful Shepherd, lead me
where thy steps are seen.

Hold me fast, and guide me
in the narrow way;

so, with thee beside me,
I shall never stray.

Daily bring me nearer
to the heav'nly shore;
may my faith grow clearer,
may I love thee more:

Hallow ev'ry pleasure,
ev'ry joy and pain;
be thyself my treasure,
though none else I gain.

Day by day prepare me
as thou seest best,
then let angels bear me
to thy promised rest.

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.

Hymn 188: Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I Go

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-X-4HRj8III>

Forth in your name, O Lord, I go,
my daily labour to pursue,
you only, Lord, resolved to know
in all I think or speak or do.

The task your wisdom has assigned
here let me cheerfully fulfil;
in all my work your presence find,
and prove your good and perfect will.

You may I set at my right hand,
whose eyes my inmost secrets view,
and labour on at your command
and offer all my work to you.

Help me to bear your easy yoke,
in ev'ry moment watch and pray,
and still to things eternal look
and hasten to that glorious day.

Then with delight may I employ
all that your bounteous grace has given,
and run my earthly course with joy,
and closely walk with you in heaven.

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

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

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