



Twentieth Sunday after Trinity 17th October

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 450: Morning has broken

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:

God, our light and our salvation: illuminate our lives,
that we may see your goodness in the land of the living,
and looking on your beauty may be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ our Lord.

New Testament Reading: Romans 3: 21 - 30

²¹ But now, irrespective of law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law. ²⁹Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

Hymn 446: May the peace

Gospel Reading: *Luke 11: 47 - end*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

⁴⁷Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your ancestors killed. ⁴⁸So you are witnesses and approve of the deeds of your ancestors; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, "I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute", ⁵⁰so that this generation may be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, ⁵¹from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation. ⁵²Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.'

⁵³ When he went outside, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile towards him and to cross-examine him about many things, ⁵⁴lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Kathryn from Thursday 14 October

When we think about the Pharisees, I wonder what we imagine them to be like? Perhaps we think of them as school prefects, enjoying the power that they hold over the younger pupils, ensuring that all the school rules are kept, and issuing draconian punishments if they are not adhered to. Or maybe we think of the Pharisees as harsh Sunday school teachers we may have encountered in our past telling us all the things we must and mustn't do – you must read your Bible every day, but don't go out, and don't wear fashionable clothing

But the Pharisees were far more than just religious leaders and teachers in Jesus' time. The pharisees held a very strong political position. The lawyers weren't trying to ensure that people would be saved by keeping all the laws. Instead, they insisted that the people keep the Jewish law as best they could so that Israel would be Holy, and that God would bring in the long-awaited Kingdom. They were looking forward to the time when finally, Israel was free of its many enemies.

The Pharisees were also a socio-political pressure group. They were encouraging the people to live their lives in certain ways – perhaps not dissimilar to some of the environmental action groups in our modern society. It is not that we necessarily disagree with what they are saying but it is the way they go about it. The press is often all too quick to point its finger at various misdemeanours

and offences especially amongst the rich and famous. Yet some journalists, but not all I hasten to add, are not exactly shining examples of moral virtues themselves. They do not help people cope with life around them. The Pharisees certainly didn't help the people live their daily lives. They said one thing and did another. Their predecessors had killed the prophets, yet they were now building tombs for them.

Therefore, Jesus' polemic against the Pharisees who have given the people unnecessary burdens by imposing the law on them, which we have an abstract from this morning, is not against religious leaders as such, but against people who had used their religious learning for their own ends to gain status and political power. In contrast, Jesus had a very different understanding. For him, learning and religious practices were about fostering a relationship with God – something that some of the Pharisees would have agreed with – they weren't all bent on political action and furthering their own ends.

Jesus was concentrating on demonstrating and preaching God's love and Grace whilst many of the Pharisees concentrated on a myriad of petty laws that would foster the national life of Israel. Jesus was aware that the woes that he was condemning would not help the people. The petty laws were not helping to bring the people closer to God. They wouldn't bring salvation. And he could see that the leaders were going in the wrong direction, one that would cause devastation. Given the political and social position of the Pharisees it is understandable that Jesus' reprimands caused so much opposition. They didn't like being challenged.

Paul in his epistle to the Romans carries on the opposition to the law. Paul says that it is not that the law is a bad thing in itself but rather that it is not the way to God – Jews are no better than the gentiles, even though they have the law. All have fallen short and have sinned. It is only through faith in Jesus as our Lord and saviour that we can be reconciled to God. We are justified or put in a right relationship with God not by works, not by what we do, not by keeping the laws, but by faith. Paul says that the laws are there to help people to know how to live God's ways.

It feels as though we are currently in a rather protracted period of coming out of lockdown. I know many people want life to be back to normal and are desperate to start doing all the things that they used to do. We all need to interact with others, we have missed it so much over the last year and a half and it is really important, but we are also keen to start serving God in the ways that we used. But perhaps it is an opportune moment to remember that it is only through faith in Jesus that we can have a relationship with God. We can't earn God's love; God loves us just as we are. So perhaps we need to heed Jesus' warning and examine our actions and our motivations for doing them.

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 573: Praise to the Lord

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 649: The King of love

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

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