



Last Sunday after Trinity 24th 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 684: Thou, whose almighty word

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:

Merciful God, teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty, that trusting in your word and obeying your will we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

New Testament Reading: Romans 6: 19 - end

I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hymn 45: As the deer pants

Gospel Reading: *Luke 12: 49 - 53*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Rosey Feuell from Thursday 21 October



"Fire! Fire!" I expect we have all heard of Matilda, who was not believed when she shouted "Fire" down the telephone.. but of course she had made a prank of this on earlier occasions. Jesus, though, starts our encounter today with a declaration of "Fire!" – and He seems to mean it very much: "Fire on the earth." It's no jest.

Luke's chapter has been exploring what it means to seek Jesus in sincerity and truth –and how to be alert to His kingdom coming around and among us. But now we hear not only of fire, but also of trouble, division, ruptured households, people divided against each other, biting back: "father against son, *and son against father.*"

Some fearful mechanisms are set in motion; even the in-laws are drawn in and disturbed. Not what we expected; the explanation finishes with notes of contention and gloom. What is really heading our way? Misery, turning back, endless strife between me and the next person, between him and me and others? Peace on earth? Certainly not, Jesus tells us – and is this because we are hopeless and contentious anyhow, quite beyond improvement?

These verses are indeed among Jesus' difficult sayings, like others we might recall:

"be wise as serpents"; "make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth"; "from those who have *nothing*, what they *have* will be taken away."

So what is this fire and division Jesus threatens the earth with? And the uncomfortable baptism He longs to get through? Jesus seems, though, to be looking through this to some release of power and taking of sides in response. And the key action here is likely to be His own descending into death and His later exaltation – a sequence the disciples did not quite believe and were mostly afraid to ask about. All this too is likely to be quarrelled over, to raise more opposition and division. So how should we take this?

We are certainly being shown we don't understand the half of it, or don't quite realise what we are giving ourselves to; and we must be prepared to be utterly surprised, disoriented, maybe acted against. There is no easy victory for Jesus – and none for us, once we have joined forces with Him, taken His hand, marked with those nailprints.

We may love Jesus while His teaching soothes and comforts us, and we feel Him supporting us in our projects, fears and weaknesses – but something deeper is revealed here.

We may also agonise while following Him, observing His activity in the world, feeling unsettled by its turbulence, its hidden-ness, its incompleteness – or by others' resistance to it. Yet it seems we are being invited to share His pain, *His projects*, upholding His priorities –and to hold on tight to His generous, if widely rejected, love against all other claims, against all other baffling relationships and outcomes –and to keep all this together - until He comes at the end of life or of time

So – is the coming fire bringing judgment or purification, condemning us or making us purer and single-minded? Paul in today's Epistle tells us our bad record has been undone, and we are given a free gift of a new life. And yet we know we hang back and have some way to go – like a famous Norwegian heroine, we might confess" Lord, You know how much I want to do Your will – but also to do my own. "and maybe some kind of shock or paring down is needed while we and others fight our way to the spiritual through others- who may also be fighting for their own freedom and clarity, fighting Christ or what they know of Him, or what is wrongly attributed to Him.

So then let us look again at the various words and explanations of Jesus as He presents His kingdom to us; we could see in them that which, like the fire and the knowing predictions of our errors, reveals an absolute, knowing love of us and an absolute determination to give Himself to us. This may strengthen us to tolerate all kinds of contentions from those near, because He has already captured us.

Let us hear another voice that doesn't always shout "Fire!", a voice that bubbles through Scripture, offering us the secure sustaining and nourishment that comes from life's source, beyond all dispute and division.

This comes through, for instance, in our psalm for this morning:

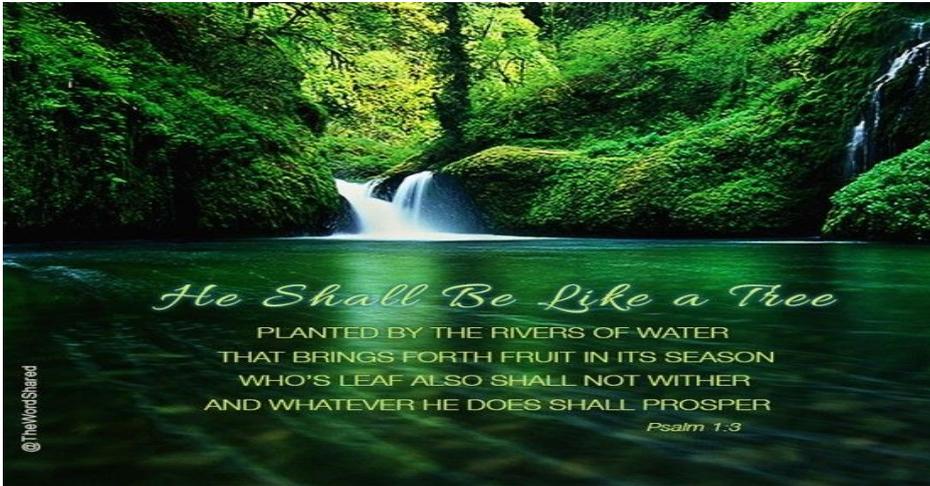
"Happy those who do not sit in the seat of scoffers, but their delight is in the law of the Lord. They are like trees planted by streams of water – which yield their fruit in its season – and their leaves do not wither." *from Psalm 1:1 - 3*

Jeremiah takes up the same ancient illustration and adds that this kind of supported tree, "...shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious." Jeremiah 17: 8

Christ is not asking us to be divided in ourselves – He is inviting us to lose ourselves and our waywardness (which resembles other people's waywardness) in Him and His far-reaching designs.

Let us pray:

“Blessed are those who trust in the Lord. they shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.” Jeremiah 17:7 - 8



Lord, let us be wholly open to You – and able to manage our experience of opposition and conflict roundabout us, and to focus on Your strategy for the world.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

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.

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 716: We have a Gospel to proclaim

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.**

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 409: Lord for the years

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