



The Fourth Sunday after Trinity: 5th 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 450: Morning has broken

Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing
Praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven
Like the first dew fall on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where His feet pass

Mine is the sunlight
Mine is the morning
Born of the One Light Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day

Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing
Praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the 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

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal; grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

New Testament Reading: *Romans 7:15-25a*

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Hymn 590: Seek ye first

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God
And His righteousness
And all these things shall be added unto you
Allelu Alleluia

Ask and it shall be given unto you
Seek and ye shall find
Knock and it shall be opened unto you
Allelu Alleluia

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 11:16-19, 25-end*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

“To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: “We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and

you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. “All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Revd Alan Partridge

If you are anything like me, I am sure that there are times, perhaps these times, when life seems too much to handle. It is overwhelming at so many levels; global, national, our community, our neighbours and friends and families. The headline of our gospel this morning is that our anguish is of great importance to God. That is good news, isn't it? The other headline, the paradox of the passage, is that they are also irrelevant. These words “Come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest”, they are surely some of the best known of Jesus sayings. We may personally, daily cling to these for encouragement or latch onto them in our times of greatest need. No matter when we hear these words, they tell us something of the character of God and instil in us hope.

When we read this passage, we think of consolation in troubled times. A God who cares, who we can depend on when “the rubber” hits the road. However, I want us to read these words in a different way today. When we read these words, we can hear God talking to us. This is an invitation to me and to you to come to God, to know God. That's how the paradox exists, because in this passage we learn of a God who is interested in all the things that weigh us down in life, but we also learn that nothing in life is so important as the business of knowing that same God. Everything else is irrelevant by comparison.

So this invitation, an open invitation from God to us, prompts us to ask three questions; firstly who can know God; second how can they or we know God; and thirdly exactly what does it mean to know him?

Who can know God? Please look at verses 25 and 26. For some reason Jesus makes a difference between the wise and the learned, who will never understand these things and the children to whom God has given understanding. Is this talking of a prejudice in God against the intelligent? Is it talking about positive discrimination in favour of the under-twelves? Surely not!

Here Jesus categorises people into two classes: those who are self-assured because of their own intelligence and learning, who rely on their own wisdom and understanding, and those who are like children, in that they accept that they have a lot to learn, they accept that they need the help of their elders and the instruction of those wiser than them (well, **some** do!). This category speaks of

people who recognise their limitations and their need for dependence, rather than self-reliance and independent isolation from others, whose opinions do not march alongside them! I know my self that I judge the world by my own experiences and the opinions I have formed. We naturally assume that our way of doing things, thinking things is right. It is so hard for us as adults to be told that what we are doing is wrong! Be careful then which category you fall into!

Matthew has made it clear from chapter one that Jesus had come to call his people to repentance, that is to turn away from what pleased them and to turn to what pleases God. Chapter 11:20 shows us that Jesus has been teaching in cities, showing miracles and wonders, but they did not get it, they did not repent. A little earlier v16 to 18 the people have denounced John the Baptist, too weird and demanding and Jesus too accessible! Neither Jesus nor John nor their lifestyles met up with the people's expectations of what they thought God was going to say to them. They did not want to hear God say you are wrong! Change what you are doing, they are of fixed opinions and they will not let them go. They will not accept that what God has to say to them is right. These are the people who will never hear the invitation to come to meet God. So to answer my question, who can know God, we have to say that it is those who genuinely accept that they don't know all the answers. Those willing to be taught Gods ways. Those whose self-esteem is not so great as to leave no room in their lives for God's truth to be at variance with their own. Anyone of us may be or may become like the wise and learned people here, when we say do it my way or I will walk away. That blocks us from coming to God, to listen and to learn from him as his little children.

How can we know God? The answer starts in verse 25. We can only know God through God who reveals or hides himself. This does not mean we have a capricious God who hides himself from his creation, it is simply a reflection of the character of God. God is God. For him to be worth anything at all, He must be the supreme being, the creator, greater than anything else in his creation. What is the point in believing in a God who is anything less than that?

God has the power to show himself to his creation. We cannot build a model of life, the universe and everything and see how God fits our model! The God of the bible is too big for that, only He can show you who he really is. And how has he chosen to show himself? See verse 27 "no one knows the father except the son", so we can only know God by God showing himself to us through Jesus Christ his Son.

Jesus says "come to me all who are weary", a message for all to hear. Jesus calls to himself all those who have acknowledged that they cannot get by without his help, those who have to realise that their own goodness, their own opinions, intellect, success, wealth and anything else the world tells us to put our trust in is not enough. In fact worse than not enough they are completely useless for us to put our eternal trust in. This is a call to those who have recognised their need to know God. As God calls, we respond, it is the way of love is it not? We need his help in our lives.

Finally, **what does it mean to know God?** Verses 28-30. We are to take his yoke upon us. Two oxen yoked together sharing the load of the work to be done. If there is a stronger animal, the yoke allows it to take the load, the burden, from the weaker animal or lead it in the right direction. Jesus offer this to us, he offers to take the weight of our lives upon his shoulders and lead us in God's way. But we have to take that yoke submit to him. We have to ask to be helped by him. He is gentle and humble. When we come to him he is not going to give us a hard time, but we will learn to live lives that please God, no matter what strenuous circumstances we find ourselves in.

"Rest for our souls", the eternal reality of being with our creator as we were created to be. It also

means that if we come to Christ now, we need not be spiritually restless. We are not left to fend on our own. Jesus has given us his Holy Spirit and we have His word to learn from and the church, the gathering of believers who daily are concerned, about the practical issues of those who are weary and burdened.

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

Let us pray: our prayers today are based on key verses in our Gospel passage

...like children sitting in the market-places calling to one another, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn."

Father of all, we, the church of Your Son Jesus Christ, confess that we do not always get things right; teach us here in Your church how to rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep. Lord, help us to catch the mood and music of our times and to be Your salt and light as we endeavour to make disciples of those around us; We pray for the church around the world, in all her difficulties and persecutions, and all practical problems of these days; show us the worship and priorities we need to adopt in response to these times and their hazards.

We pray for the PCCs of St. Mary's and St. Peter's, and for their Wardens, Marian and Andy, Mary and Sheena, as they take responsibility for opening the churches and resuming worship.

We pray for Alan and Liz entering their last month with us, that You will keep them well, enable them to make a good end of their time here, and to prepare well for their new rhythm of life.

We commit to You all decisions needing to be weighed as we move forward, for new ways of doing things and being church. We remember also Petra and the wardens as plans are made for services and ministry in the coming months. Lord, help us all to be faithful to Your calling as we praise You for all that is past, and trust You for all that's to come.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners."

Holy God, we place our world into Your hands and ask Your guidance as we face all kinds of unwisdom, and prejudices between people and between world faiths and factions, within and between different countries. We pray You will give to us all a sense of perspective, and determination to end discrimination and judgementalism against different races, groups and minorities. We remember all who have insufficient to eat and all who have plenty, all who try to make peace with difficult people, and all who befriend those in serious need. We pray that all world leaders may seek to understand the plight of the poor and disadvantaged and continue their efforts for a fairer world even in the face of misunderstanding and insult.

We remember the nation of Israel, Your Holy Land, and pray for the serious conflicts of interest between her and Palestine and the minority nations within her borders. We commit to You the ongoing tensions in China and Hong Kong, and between various ethnic and religious groups and systems across Asian lands.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and revealed them to infants..."

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You for the variety of our communities and for the way you give many beautiful qualities to those who are weaker or younger, giving us the task of caring for them.

We remember all families and streets in Sawston, all who seek to live lives of integrity and goodness – and all for whom this is hard. We especially think of all who are in some sense hidden - in our care homes, Orchard House and Bircham House, other sheltered developments and institutions, and all who work in these places to bring care and humanity.

We think of all who are isolated, maybe missing family, friends and customary activities these past months, and bless all who are able to offer companionship, care and simple assistance like shopping. We remember all children able to attend school and all who will have to wait until the autumn, all schools and colleges where there are problems to solve. We remember especially all cut off from normal company and contact for some months, and households where technology is not available.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest."

Lord Jesus our Saviour, we bring to You all who are in special need at this time, through illness, weariness, depression or ongoing anxieties. We remember those who are sick, including Agnes, Tom, and others known to us... We pray for all who today are discouraged or mentally and emotionally challenged, We come to You with our own needs and those of others for whom You have given us a concern.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

"All things have been handed over to me by my Father.."

Lord Jesus, we know that both life and death are in Your hand and yet we are never separated from You. We pray alongside the family of Renee Philips whose funeral is tomorrow, for Your

strength and comfort for them. We give thanks for all in our community who have died, especially those who have died recently, and those whose anniversaries of death fall this week, We bring to You with great sadness all victims of violence, tragedy and injustice.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

We are all unfit to count as scholars in Your school – but in your wonderful kindness, You, Lord, have named us friends – help us rejoice in Your love and Your direction.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. 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 736: When I needed a neighbour

When I needed a neighbour,
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?

*And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter,
Were you there?*

I was hungry and thirsty,
Were you there, were you there?
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?

I was cold, I was naked,
Were you there, were you there?
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?

When I needed a shelter
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a shelter were you there?

When I needed a healer,
Were you there, were you there?
When I needed a healer, were you there?

Wherever you travel,
I'll be there, I'll be there.
Wherever you travel, I'll be there.
And the creed and the colour
And the name won't matter,
I'll be there.

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 161: Father, hear the prayer we offer

Father, hear the prayer we offer:
Not for ease that prayer shall be,
But for strength, that we may ever
Live our lives courageously.

Not for ever in green pastures
Do we ask our way to be;
But the steep and rugged pathway
May we tread rejoicingly.

Not forever by still waters
Would we idly rest and stay;
But would smite the living fountains
From the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,
In our wanderings be our Guide;
Through endeavour, failure, danger,
Saviour, be thou at our side.

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 195: From heaven you came

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
Entered our world, your glory veiled;
Not to be served but to serve,
And give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,
My heavy load he chose to bear;
His heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours,' he said.

Come, see his hands and his feet,
The scars that speak of sacrifice,
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered.

So let us learn how to serve,
And in our lives enthrone him;
Each other's needs to prefer,
For it is Christ we're serving.

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