



Thursday 16th July Holy Communion

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

Prayers 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 us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us 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.

Collect

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: Isaiah 26:7-9, 16-19

The path of the righteous is level; you, the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth. Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws, we wait for you; your name and renown are the desire of our hearts. My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you. When your judgements come upon the earth, the people of the world learn righteousness.

LORD, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer. As a pregnant woman about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in your presence, LORD. We were with child, we writhed in labour, but we gave birth to wind. We have not brought salvation to the earth, and the people of the world have not come to life. But your dead will live, LORD; their bodies will rise— let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy— your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 12:1-14

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath." He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, and a man with a shrivelled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Jose John

I wonder if any of you are feeling weary and burdened by the restrictions Covid 19 has brought upon us? It's now almost four months since many of us have needed to self-isolate due to age or underlying health issues. Some have only within the last month or so been able to venture outside their homes due to their being especially vulnerable. It is a totally different way of life to that which we are used to, in many ways alien to our nature – social distancing, no personal contact and until recently visits to relations being taboo. We've been living with a list of do's and don'ts, some not completely clear. However, for our own good and that of others all of these needed to be adhered to in order to reduce the rate of infection. We are now finding ourselves in a period where restrictions are being slowly lifted. We also have the hope that there will be a time when we can return to a 'new normal' life.

For the Jewish people in Jesus' time this was not the case. The commandments given by God to Moses, called the Mosaic Law, difficult as they were to keep, and still are, had been significantly added to by the Pharisees, to the point where they had become a burden for the Jewish people and almost impossible to keep. The law of the Sabbath was no exception. The law given to Moses by God only required people to rest on that day, but to this had been added a 39 further do's and don'ts to be followed.

The passage this morning contains two stories of Jesus being challenged by the Pharisees

about what He and his disciples were doing on the Sabbath. In the first, the disciples feeling hungry were plucking ears of corn as they walked through the cornfields and eating the grain. In the second Jesus and the disciples are in the synagogue where Jesus spots a man with a withered hand, whom he calls to Him and heals. In both these stories what was being done was deemed by the Pharisees as work and therefore unlawful.

The disciples were in fact not breaking the law in plucking ears of corn to eat for Deuteronomy 23:25 says *'If you go into a neighbour's standing grain, you may pluck the ears with your hand, but you shall not put a sickle to your neighbour's standing grain.'* The issue was that they did it on the Sabbath. The law given to Moses by God, Exodus 20: 8-11 states: *'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter....For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord rested on the Sabbath day and made it holy'*. It has its origins in Genesis 2:2-3. To the original Sabbath law, which was intended by God to be a day of rest and refreshment for his people, the religious leaders added a further 39 do's and don'ts. In plucking and eating the grain from the ears of corn, in the eyes of the Pharisees, the disciples broke four of these added rules. They were guilty of reaping, threshing, winnowing and preparing a meal, four violations in just one mouthful. Laws to them mattered far more than people.

Jesus never broke the original commandment to observe the Sabbath, nor did he allow His disciples to do so, but often broke the legalistic additions to that law, sometimes it seems deliberately doing so.

In verses 3-8 Jesus defends the actions of his disciples, referring the Pharisees to the story of King David's experience with the priests and the holy bread in 1 Samuel ch. 21, 1-6, which they should have known well. David had been anointed by the prophet Samuel but Saul was still the actual king. David was on the run from Saul who not surprisingly wanted to get rid of him. He and his men arrived at the house of God in Shiloh hungry and in need of food and were given the holy bread only priests were allowed to eat. He uses this story to remind the Pharisees that human needs are more important than observing ceremonial rituals or, in the case of the disciples man-made additions to the original law. It would, of course have been a sin if David and his men had eaten the bread for any other reason than that of hunger and may well have led to a sentence of death. To eat it because they were in urgent need of food did not occasion blame. In using the story of King David Jesus is saying that he is the true king. He has been already been anointed at his baptism, but like David not yet enthroned. His enthronement will be the cross, for it is there that the Roman centurion says after the earthquake and the things he and others saw, *'truly, this was the Son of God.'*

Jesus goes on to point out that the Temple priests break the Sabbath law all the time and yet are never challenged. Did the Pharisees not understand the Sabbath law as well as they thought they did, or was it more the case of one rule for priests and another for the ordinary person? The Temple ritual always entailed a lot of work which was doubled on the Sabbath, as offerings were doubled in accordance with Numbers 28:9 *'On the Sabbath day, two male lambs a year old without blemish, two tenths of an ephah of fine flour for a grain offering, mixed with oil, and its grain offering: this is the burnt offering of every Sabbath, besides the*

regular burnt offering and its drink offering.' The priests had to kindle fires, slaughter and prepare the animals, lift them on to the altar and a whole host of other things, all of which were forbidden to the ordinary person. They were guilty of far more than the disciples but it would seem they were above reproach.

At the end of chapter 11 Jesus speaks of the heavy yoke, the yoke of the Torah and the heavy burden of the Jewish law with all its commandments, and offered them a different 'yoke', one that came with mercy and love and was therefore easy to carry and available to all who cared to come to Him. This would have angered the Pharisees. Now in this passage, Jesus claims to be the Lord of the Sabbath, claiming, quite rightly, to have authority over it, v.12:8 *'For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.'* The Son of Man is used, as in other places in this gospel, to refer to the one who is carrying God's authority. As Lord of the Sabbath he knew whether his disciples were breaking the law or not. This must have added fuel to the fire and he wasn't done yet.

He then goes to the synagogue. The man with the withered hand is there and the Pharisees, hoping to catch Jesus out, ask him the question *'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?'* Jesus, as usual, doesn't give a straight answer but replies with a question *'Supposing one of you has a sheep and it falls into a ditch on the Sabbath, would you not grab it and haul it out?'* People are surely far more important than sheep. So to do good on the Sabbath must be permitted. Their attempt to find a charge they could lay against him was foiled, as it would be on future occasions. Jesus then told the man to stretch out his hand, which must have been difficult to do, and it was immediately healed and restored. Jesus showed compassion and love to this man and gave him back his life. It is like that he would have been unable to work and support his family, but now he was able through this healing to do so. Instead of seeing a miracle brought about with love and compassion, all the Pharisees could think about was how they could bring about Jesus' death.

That same loving and compassionate Jesus is with us now as we face the uncertainties of the Covid 19 pandemic. He will not leave us to face it alone. He knows our fears and our anxieties, our sense of not knowing what is going to happen next. With Him walking alongside us, we have nothing to fear for He is our good shepherd and will lead us safely out of these unprecedented times to a new life, different from that we knew and possibly better.

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

The peace of the Lord always be with you
And also with you.
Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you
and also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. For he is your living Word; through him you have created all things from the beginning, and formed us in your own image. Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin, giving him to be born of a woman and to die upon the cross; you raised him from the dead and exalted him to your right hand on high. Through him you have sent upon us your holy and life-giving Spirit, and made us a people for your

own possession. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Accept our praises, heavenly Father, through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and as we follow his example and obey his command, grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be to us his body and his blood; who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

To you be glory and praise for ever.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

To you be glory and praise for ever.

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross; we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; we look for the coming of your kingdom, and with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty, renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

To you be glory and praise for ever.

Through him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.

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.

The Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you and his blood which he shed for you. Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen

Prayer after Communion

Grant, O Lord, we beseech you, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by your governance, that your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

Blessing

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **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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