



Thursday 17th September 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 God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was

not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Luke 7:36-end

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.

"Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Rosemary Feuell

How much do you enjoy food, drink, socialising – being invited out, sitting down with friends and associates, locking into discussion? It might depend on the occasion, though sharpness and relief of appetite are among life's special pleasures.

Jesus was famous for His eating and drinking, accused of gluttony and of knocking back the wine. This side of His ministry certainly distinguished Him from His cousin and envoy, John the Baptist:

in the desert with locusts and wild honey, possibly part of the ascetic Essene sect. In Jesus' public lifestyle, meals, food and drink are commonly mentioned, often from necessity (eating corn on a journey), or celebration (wedding feasts/Lazarus), and sometimes they figure in more abstract discussion of what knowing Him means: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work." (John 4: 34). A meal Jesus attended often became a focus for debate and challenge.

Today we have a passionate gatecrasher into a meal Jesus was invited to, plus a parable. The woman brings her alabaster jar of ointment to anoint Him - probably not the same woman who did this at Bethany, but we should not be amazed if several people responded to Jesus similarly within that culture. The encounter matters, rather than personal identity here. The supper seems to be passed over, after the triangular interchange between Jesus, Simon the host, and the Pharisees - and the uninvited woman, hardly worthy of their notice, is poised to depart - in pardon and peace. Was there an awkward silence?

What really happened? The woman demonstrated lavish love to Jesus, deliberately yet lightly, was accepted by Him - her love seeming to have won His forgiveness from a shameful life. However, Jesus lectures the host, over the heads of Pharisees who snort condemnation at His tolerance and unspiritual lack of awareness of the visitor. Jesus tells a story suggesting that receiving forgiveness is what causes love. The order appears *different* in His development of the parable.

Yet it is about giving and receiving: Simon had been an indifferent host: no water for tired feet, no kiss of welcome; no anointing with oil. The woman treated Jesus to all 3 forms of welcome, probably at cost to her reputation; expressing her love attracts unwelcome attention. His verdict, though, is "**therefore**, her many sins have been forgiven." But, he had just suggested, the opposite; that forgiveness itself begets love. Is the point confused, or wide open for us to ponder the connection?

I like to think that somewhere on the other side of the room a servant girl heard Jesus say, "Your sins are forgiven" and put down her platter in amazement. "Who is this?" she asks herself. "Human beings can't do this, though may say it.. maybe a prophet can express it, but .. Oh dear, oh yes," she thinks: "is he more than a prophet?" She might have heard this from John's hearers, on the town. "My heart," she says to herself, "is somehow warmer than it was, my hope stronger, though I've done a lot of wrong in my off-duty hours, sometimes in the dark: frolicking, tumbling outside with the men, egging them on; lying, stealing those coins; helping my brother take that goat.

"The feelings of shame are melting away. This Jesus is here, saying folk can be forgiven, start again, not surely because we give Him the VIP welcome, pour out the oils.. but, yes, if we welcome Him anyhow, feel our load lighter, our guilt dissolving.. then it isn't all about **our efforts**. We notice our shame disappear, our feelings change, - and for love, sheer love, and the freedom of wanting to change, we will **give** the VIP treatment, reach out to Him in love. Oh, can I be that generous, turn around my ways, to get His favour, prolong this peace? There **is music in my heart...**"

So - we observe Jesus' kindness and words take effect.. how He turned yet another meal into focus for something else. We are left with an enigma: which comes first, chicken or egg? Love, then being forgiven, because we love; **or** being forgiven, which compels us to love accordingly? Is Jesus mixing things up? Or is the scene giving us 2 opposite lessons, - and which one counts most?

Or is it a glimpse of a circular experience that will bring us freedom and joy as it moves on and on? We are drawn to Jesus, love Him, find forgiveness, and how very far it goes.. then love Him more. Or do we come up bang against His forgiveness, and our need to forgive when something awful maybe has happened .. and then we come to love Him?

In loving Him we aim to walk with Him, we falter, He forgives us again, and we love Him still more. It could be seen as a mystery, or rather an open secret, as Bible mysteries often are – a good surprise. It might be confusing, or a story incomplete, like Simon's dinner. Jesus often leaves us with questions and musing, especially if there is a parable, as here, of 2 debtors. Debt was very onerous in first century Israel. The dinner itself is a living parable .. where we have enough clarity to learn that He forgives, that this gift affects our love for Him and maybe for all around us. And He is the One Who can truly offer this, just as He was the One, the only One, to still the storms and heal the long paralysed.

The servant girl might pick up her platter wondering how many others in future days might **hear that music in their hearts**, knowing He welcomes us more finely than any upstanding host.

Today the church remembers Hildegard of Bingen, a visionary German abbess whose music has become popular again these days: "I am," she said, "a feather on the breath of God." And so we can be, for Jesus also tells us His yoke is easy, His burden light, as we are trained by His love and His forgiveness.

How do you think Simon the host responded to the suggestion that his love was still quite small, though of the listening kind, for he urges Jesus to say more. What of the questions from his guests: "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

What if that was only one of His characteristics on offer to us – and a bigger heart were needed?

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.

Father, you made the world and love your creation. You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour. His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death. And so we gladly thank you, with saints and angels 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.

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said: 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. So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith

Christ has died

Christ has risen

Christ will come again.

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with all the saints to feast at your table in heaven. Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, 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

Lord God, the source of truth and love, keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, united in prayer and the breaking of bread, and one in joy and simplicity of heart, in 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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