



Thursday 9th 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

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**

Old Testament Reading: Hosea 14:2-end

Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips. Assyria cannot save us; we will not mount warhorses. We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion."

"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. People will dwell again in his shade; they will flourish like the grain, they will blossom like the vine— Israel's fame will be like the wine of Lebanon. Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? I will answer him and care for him. I am like a flourishing juniper; your fruitfulness comes from me."

Who is wise? Let them realize these things. Who is discerning? Let them understand. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 10:16-25*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

“Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

“The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Revd Alan Partridge

When we look at the last verses of chapter 9 we see that Jesus' ministry brings him face to face with the crowds and he responds not with doubt and despair to see so many, so lost, but with compassion and with a plan: “Ask the Lord to send out workers”. Then at the opening of our chapter we see, no sooner said than done, the 12 invested, commissioned for a ministry pretty much identical with that of Jesus. It is a ministry of grace. The gospel comes freely. They are to come freely, travelling at need, led by the Spirit. God will underwrite all the expenses of their journeys. But it will also be a test for the households of Galilee. They will be put on the spot by the disciple's arrival. Would they welcome them and the message they brought or reject him? The test was Jesus, as it has been ever since.

So we come to verse 16 a turning point indeed, instructions over the major part of this discussion is not about what the disciples should do, but how they should respond to the consequences of making the offer of a world turned right way up!

Frankly, the consequences are appalling! Verse 14 shows us the possibility of rejection but now Jesus tells them they will be arrested, flogged, put on trial, betrayed, hated, put to death. As sheep among wolves, what a metaphor, what do wolves do to sheep? I have seen the sad result of a dog loose in a field of sheep, that is bad enough, but these are wolves!

What a sales pitch! Here is Jesus' plan to bring mankind back to God and he advertises it like this! How can he say these things to these men at this moment? What would you and I have done? He would have had my resignation on his laptop as soon as I could type it up!

Christianity has always been an advertiser's nightmare. It is not just our ability to do and say things wrong! Christianity is not marketable, it cannot be packaged up. This is not a call to heroism, against all the odds. These words are clearly not the world's way to win adherents to a cause. If this were a human cause it would surely have been doomed failure long years ago.

So if Jesus said these things clearly he wanted to make a point! That they must be ready to be opposed. Jesus insists that the world does not welcome the gospel, it rejects it. This is his repeated emphasis, men and women reject him and his kingdom. Indeed, Jesus describes that rejection here in the most lurid tones, but he expresses no regrets about that. Look back to his response to the crowds, those untouched by faith, he was filled with compassion. But the prospect of his disciples being hunted by "wolves" does not seem to bring a similar emotion to him. No sympathy, no hand ringing, no apologies "I am terribly sorry, this is just the way it is". No apologies at all, instead there seems to be a quiet and joyful confidence.

Despite all appearances, there is encouragement for us here. He tells us how to face the awesome prospect, so we are to expect opposition and not be surprised by it. We are to use it and not be frightened by it, and we are to look beyond it, past it, above it and not be obsessed by it.

Verses 16-18 the only hope for these sheep is to be the presence of the shepherd himself at their side. The shrewdness of the snake is in avoiding trouble. We are to be prudent but not deceitful. We are to be on our guard, the spiritual battle they have been equipped for will express itself in the opposition of human beings, especially the powerful who have things to lose! Spiritual forces can use men and women and the authority structures of society to oppose God, and the gospel of His Son (v18) "on my account you will be brought before governors and kings". The perspective is wider now kings, rulers and then gentiles, a big word that includes every single nation on earth, right down to Sawston!

This shouldn't surprise us. Mankind does not love God. If we had been left to ourselves we would still be in rebellion against God. Is that not true of you? It is of me, I would be a rebel against God today if he had left me to my own devices. So it shouldn't surprise us that others oppose God but nor should it cause me to retreat into my shell.

Fear is a real possibility. Look on down to verses 26, 28, 31, "do not be afraid", Jesus says. He knows these words taken seriously will instil fear in our hearts, but he says do not fear even in court. The principle is clear, opposition is to throw us back onto God, where else can the sheep turn as the wolves close in? Have you learnt that lesson? Words will be given to you in conversations when your faith is under test, and opposition.

So how can we face the task in the light of the warnings of family strife and rupture (v 21)? We are to look up. He who stands firm to the end will be saved. There is an end and that end is salvation. If we are Christians, we have seen a different vision beyond the present press of events. We are to hold to the triumph of goodness, the final overthrow of evil and the coming and dwelling among us of our saviour God. You can see in verse 23 the disciples are to use persecution to move their

mission on and that of course happened after St Stephens death in Acts 8. Persecuted in one place, move to another. We cannot bear the burden of others rejection of God. We cannot carry that burden. We have to leave it between them and God, even if, as we have often commented together and prayed about, it is found in our and among our own families, wives, husbands and children.

It is going to take God himself to finish this work. It was his work in the first place, to change human nature, only God could undertake such a thing and bring it to completion. We look past that, and above it, opposition must not distract us from seeing God.

We are to be content to be identified with Jesus, verses 24-25. It is the highest goal in our life to be like such a teacher. He walked this way, we must too. We must look above our own pettiness, our own preferences and walk with him.

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

Eternal God, comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken, you have fed us at the table of life and hope: teach us the ways of gentleness and peace, that all the world may acknowledge the kingdom of your Son 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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