



The Fifth Sunday after Trinity: 4th July

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 467: New every morning

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:

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.

Old Testament Reading: *Genesis 22:1 - 19*

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' ²He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.' ³So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. ⁴On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. ⁵Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.' ⁶Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on

together. ⁷Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' ⁸Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together.

⁹ When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. ¹¹But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' ¹²He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' ¹³And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. ¹⁴So Abraham called that place 'The LORD will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.'

¹⁵ The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, ¹⁶and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, ¹⁸and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.' ¹⁹So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.

Hymn 315: Immortal love

Gospel Reading: *Matthew 9: 9 - 13*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

¹And after getting into a boat he crossed the water and came to his own town.

² And just then some people were carrying a paralysed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.' ³Then some of the scribes said to themselves, 'This man is blaspheming.' ⁴But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵For which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Stand up and walk"? ⁶But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he then said to the paralytic—'Stand up, take your bed and go to your home.' ⁷And he stood up and went to his home. ⁸When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Revd Kathryn Waite

I must admit that when I looked at the Lectionary readings for today my heart sank rather – Genesis 22 and God's command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. A story in which the tension mounts as we read in graphic detail the preparations that Abraham makes to sacrifice his son. I think that all of us, whether or not we are parents, find the command to kill a child abhorrent. And

this is no ordinary child, but one that has been so longed for and who fulfils God's covenant promises with Abraham, that he would be the father of the nations. Would a father really be prepared to sacrifice their son? Would God really ask someone to commit such a heinous crime? And it is because this text poses such difficult questions that I think that it is important that we do engage with it.

This episode is the final climax of the story of Abraham. However the narrative starts ten chapters earlier in Genesis, with God's call to him to pack up and leave Haran. The packing up of all your goods and chattels of course resonates with me at the moment, although thankfully unlike Abraham we didn't have very far to travel, or to travel on foot with herds of livestock or camp on the way. Abraham obediently responded to God's call without any question. However, as we read on through the story, Abraham demonstrates considerable doubt that God's promises would be realised. Twice, he tries to pass his wife Sarah off as his sister, which ends up with her in the bed of the local ruler, Abraham apparently acting out of fear. Then, in response to Sarah's encouragement Abraham himself sleeps with Sarah's slave-girl Hagar, in an attempt to produce an heir, which led to the birth of Ishmael. Abraham laughs when he is told that Sarah will produce a child and become the mother of nations. As the story unfolds Abraham hardly acts as though he is someone who has complete trust in God and that God's promises would be kept does he?

So as a result of these actions, God tests Abraham's faith to see whether he does truly trust God. God tests him with his one and only son, Isaac, his illegitimate son Ishmael having already been sent away. The fact that this episode is described as a test from the outset, suggests to us that God never really intended for Abraham to carry out the grisly deed, although he gets very close to it, Abraham being prevented from the killing by an angel or messenger of the Lord. In this testing Abraham was forced to decide where his loyalties lay, although in rather a dramatic manner.

Abraham passes the test, showing that he fears God, although I am not sure that it really should be described in quite that way as a test that can be passed or failed. Nevertheless, it serves its purpose. Abraham shows that he does trust God completely, in God who provides, provides in ways that we can hardly imagine. Abraham discovers that God has been there all along, even though there were many times when this was not clear to Abraham. Perhaps we can identify with Abraham. Perhaps we have found it difficult at times in our lives, even now, to trust that God is with us...perhaps.

But this testing of Abraham by God leads to a change in the relationship between them. God knows that Abraham fears him – something that is absolutely right and proper in a relationship between human and the divine – humans should act with fear and awe towards God the Father

Almighty. Abraham learns in a new and far deeper way to trust God. Their relationship is renewed and altered irrevocably. And that relationship between God and the human race and God continues through the course of the Bible – again and again God demonstrates that he is faithful, despite humans turning away from God, which would lead to God paying the ultimate price in giving up his son to be killed. Often this story of Abraham and Isaac is described as a prototype, of what was to happen on the cross, but there is of course, one distinct difference; Isaac was spared, but Jesus died so that we could be saved.

So we might still be struggling with the idea that God asked Abraham to kill his son, and the possibility that Abraham was prepared to actually go through with the act, but this story reminds us that God is and always has been faithful, that God provides, and that our response should be one of awe, holy fear, and reverence. It also leads us to be thankful, thankful not only for God's faithfulness, but also that Christ did die for us, so that our relationship with God could be changed, just like Abraham's was, whoever we are and whatever we have done, if we come to him seeking true repentance. So, as we receive Christ this morning in the Eucharist either physically or spiritually, receive Christ with awe and thanksgiving.

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:

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 485: O for a thousand tongues

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 167: Father we love you

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 379: Lead us heavenly Father

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