

Third Sunday after Trinity
The Feast of Peter and Paul
A service by Ryder and Heather

Invitation

'Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, for He who promised is faithful.'

Collect

Almighty God, whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul glorified you in their death as in their life; grant that your church, inspired by their teaching and example, and made one by your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Spirit one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Confession

For failing to love you with all our heart, mind, and strength,
Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy

For failing to love our neighbour as we love ourselves,
Christ have mercy.

Christ have mercy

As we confess our shortcomings we trust Christ to cleanse us,
Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy

We receive God's promise:

If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **Amen**

First Bible Reading 2 Timothy 4: 6-8, 17-18

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

Second Bible Reading Matthew 16: 13-19

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

14 So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

19 "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Reflection

Do we sometimes feel alone, unwanted, and undervalued? Are we finding this time of isolation, stressful? If so, never forget what God says through Isaiah (43) 'I have loved you ... you are mine' or as both Peter & Paul wrote:

Paul in Titus 2:14 *Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us and purify us for Himself as **His own special people***

And Peter in 1 Peter 2:9 *you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, **His own special people***

Some years ago Heather gave me a T-shirt that says 'God made me like this' (however, because I am still on a journey of change, I would like to write on the back, 'and He is making me more like Himself'.)

Science and Scripture tell us We are all unique. We have unique finger prints, unique eye retinas, and unique DNA. You are you. I am me. We are unique, we are special! I like singing the song 'The King is among us' that says '.... each child is special, accepted and loved.' That is us!

In these days of concern about colour, community and culture we remember we are (as both Peter & Paul wrote) God's special people, given special gifts of service and ministry. Peter & Paul (whom we celebrate today) had two very different lives, characters, giftings, callings and ministries.

Peter was a Jew; a Galilean (with a northern accent); he was a family man; a poor village fisherman; a rough sort of character (The elite in Acts said he was 'uneducated'); he was impetuous; he spoke before he thought, he acted before he assessed; and he let Jesus down. Yet Peter was called an Apostle to the circumcision, the Jews.

Paul was a foreigner from Cilicia; an Asian (maybe like Timothy of mixed parentage); by birth he was a Roman citizen; by choice a 'single'; a Pharisaical perfectionist; an intellectual; an educated 'university' man; a man who considered things (who thought before he spoke). Paul was called an Apostle to the Uncircumcised - the Gentiles.

How different. But that's whom God chooses and uses! God calls us as we are, commands us to do what He says, equips us with what we need; commissions us to go where he sends; challenging us to share what we are given, in a way that others can understand and receive.

Only you can do the job Christ calls you to do. Only I can do the task Christ calls me to do. We can rejoice that we are unique, and our work is unique. We are who we are. We are not to compare or compete, but complement one another in the body of Christ. How we do things may be very different, but our message is (like Peter and Paul) one. It is Christ the Rock on which we build. It is Christ in me, the hope of glory. It is Christ, the light of the world.

And, now we pray

In silence: *let us first consider how special we are to God.....and then.....let us remind ourselves that Jesus is our Rock*

Great God, our God, we worship you as our amazing Creator. We praise you for the diversity of your creation - for such beautiful sea creatures and coral reefs, so many varied butterflies and different finches in our gardens, and for the glory of the night sky.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

O God our Father, we are privileged to be both your children and your servants. We pray for those who had anticipated their ordination as priests and deacons this weekend and are now disappointed. Encourage and inspire them that they may not lose their vision. We pray peace for those serving you in hard places facing drought, covid19, locusts, and persecution.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

O God our Saviour, we thank you that we are all unique and special to you. We thank you for our brothers and sisters throughout the world - people of every race, culture and language who worship around your throne. We thank you that one day we shall see your face and theirs as we adore you together.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

O God our Helper, we pray that here in the Bride Valley we may all serve you in whatever way you may direct, during these unusual days and in the days to come. Bless our Rector, Jane, and all who minister in our Valley in Jesus' name.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Teach us, good Lord to serve thee as thou deservest,
to give and not to count the cost;
to fight and not to heed the wounds;
to toil and not to seek for rest;
to labour and not to ask for any reward;
save that of knowing that we do thy will. **Amen**

Lord's Prayer (modern version)

**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**

Finally let us say the prayer that binds us together in fellowship, despite all our differences and distances - 'The Grace'

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all, evermore. Amen**

Link to hear children sing the song: 'I'm special':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZgA0w4ecqw>