

**THE BRIDE VALLEY CHURCHES:**

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

**Trinity 15**

The service for today has been prepared by The Reverend Ryder Rogers  
and can also be accessed by telephone on **01308 293062**.

Allelujah. The Word of the Lord endures for ever. **Allelujah. Amen**

The Lord be with you, **And also with you**

**CONFESSION**

*As we come into God's presence we confess our faults and failings*

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sins.

Lord have mercy **Lord have mercy**

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Christ have mercy **Christ have mercy**

Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me

Lord have mercy **Lord have mercy**

**ABSOLUTION**

May Almighty God, who sent his Son into the world to save sinners, bring us pardon and peace, now and for ever. **Amen**

**THE COLLECT** (*special prayer for today*)

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your church in the burning fire of your love, grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen**

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS** Exodus16:2-15

2. Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

3 And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.

5 "And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

6 Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, "At evening you shall know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt.

7 "And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD; for He hears your complaints against the LORD. But what are we, that you complain against us?"

8 Also Moses said, "This shall be seen when the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you make against Him. And what are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD."

9 Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, 'Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.'"

10 Now it came to pass, as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

12 "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

13 ¶ So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all

around the camp.

14 And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground.

15 So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat

#### **NEW TESTAMENT READING** Matthew 20:1-16

1. "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard.

2 "Now when he had agreed with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 "And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 "and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went.

5 "Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 "And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?'

7 "They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'

8 "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the labourers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.'

9 "And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius.

10 "But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius.

11 "And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner,

12 "saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'

13 "But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?'

14 'Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.'

15 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

16 "So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

#### **REFLECTION**

Our Old Testament reading is about God wonderfully rescuing his people from slavery in Egypt where they were made to work building pyramids and getting little reward for all their work.

When they cried for help God saved them & did a miracle at the Red Sea - He opened a way across to the other side and He took them on an amazing travel adventure through the wilderness & into the Land he'd promised to give. But it didn't take long before gratitude turned to grumbles.

Exodus 16:2 says '*The whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness*'. Yet the Bible shows us that we can bring our complaints to the Lord in Ps 142:2 David says: '*I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare before Him my trouble.*' So what's the problem?

There are two sort of 'complaints'. One is healing, the other is harmful

When I go to the Doctor she looks on her computer at all my complaints and asks 'What's the problem?'

The other is when you don't like something & complain - moaning about the problem and the people.

Instead of turning to God they turned on Moses.

How soon Israel's celebrations, led by Miriam with guitars and tambourines became complaints.

How soon they forgot God's deliverance and their suffering in Egypt saying - the old was better.....*in the land of Egypt, we sat by the pots of meat and we ate bread to the full!* Really??

If life was so great why then did they cry to God for help in the first place?

It's a bit like us and Covid-19 We turn to God for help when life is threatened and then return to our old ways.

Us older people talk about "the good old days" But, were they really that good? Or was it just that life was simpler & less dangerous after the War?

Moses tells us in the book of Exodus how, despite people's complaints, God graciously sent them meat (quails) & manna (bread from heaven). But it didn't take long before they complained again. Despite freedom and despite food they moaned.

It's been said: Though God got his people out of Egypt, they needed to get Egypt out of them. God provides, and we can either respond with contentment or complaint, with gratitude for what we have or with grumbles.

Something similar happened in the story Jesus told in Matthew.

A group of unemployed men started the day (like many in the world today) at the side of the road. A boss would turn up at **6am** & give work to the best, agreeing a price - probably the minimum wage of One Denarius.

There was so much work that he went out again at **9.00** & employed some more workers agreeing the Minimum Days Wage of One Denarius.

He did the same a **midday**, at **3.00** in the afternoon and finally at **5.00 pm** when there was just one hour left. Then at the end of the working day he called them together, undid his money bag and called for those who'd work for one hour and gave them One Denarius.

He then called those who'd worked for 3 hrs & gave them One Denarius, and those who'd worked 6 hours, 9 hours, and finally 12 hours & gave them all One Denarius

Led by the last what did the workers do? They grumbled & complained. Imagine it "We work all day & we only got one denarius. That's not fair!!"

The Boss said '*Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Am I cheating you? Didn't you agree to work for one Denarius? Isn't it my money - to give as I want?*

Then he went to the heart of the problem - to their hearts and his '*Is your eye evil because I am good?*

Don't grumble because I am generous.

Jesus' story asks the question: What is our heart like? In my heart and your heart?

Is it like God's heart - good, generous, and full of grace?

God's grace gives to us ALL who trust him the salvation, rescue, and help we need and joy that goes with it.

Let's be honest with God with our questions, but let's be a content people not complaining;

Let's be a people who celebrate God's undeserved goodness he generously lavishes on us.

What does God so graciously give? He gives us JESUS. That's why St Paul says in Phil1:21 '*For me, life is Christ*'.

In suffering we have all we need; we have Jesus. So let's rejoice in him together.

## **DECLARATION**

*Let us declare our faith in God, saying together*

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named**

**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high**

**We believe in one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit Amen**

## **PRAYERS**

*And so, in the presence of God, we pray*

**Thank you God that** you liberated the oppressed and judged their oppressors.

Guide the leaders of the nations to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with you our God.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

**Thank you God you** fed the hungry with good things

Help those suffering from drought, infestations of locusts, and many ailments, and help those who bring them aid.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

**Thank you God** in the wilderness you turned your wandering people into a nation of faith.  
Help all bishops, priests and deacons to preach the good news of generous grace, and form your church into a people of living faith.  
Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

**Thank you God** you revealed yourself as the one who holds the keys of life and death.  
Help the sick and suffering, and those who are dying to find in you help for this life and hope for eternity.  
Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

**Thank you God** you gave your people all they needed, not what they deserved. Help us to find all our needs met in Jesus our Lord.  
Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

*We gather all our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus taught us*

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen**

*Finally we pray God's blessing on each other*

**The Lord bless us and keep us; the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us; May he turn his face towards us, and give us peace. Amen**

And the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be with us and remain with us, and those whom we love and pray for  
this day and for evermore. **Amen**

Song: Amazing Grace [www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtteRD5bBNQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtteRD5bBNQ)  
Or <https://youtu.be/AtteRD5bBNQ>