

Welcome to our Service, wherever you are, on this 6th Sunday of Trinity

God's Word says: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*

Collect Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such things as pass our understanding, Pour into our hearts such love towards you that we, loving you in all things and above all things may obtain your promises which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen**

Song All People that on earth do dwell
All people that on earth do dwell *For why the Lord our God is good*
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice *His mercy is for ever sure*
him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell *His truth at all time firmly stood*
come ye before him and rejoice *And doth from age to age endure*

'All People that on earth do dwell' By William Kethe permitted by CCLI Music licence 2370586

As we come to God we hold up the plumbline of his word that shows us our shortcomings and **confess** our sins Jesus said: *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'* There is no other commandment greater than these.

So we pray
For failing to love you with all our heart, soul, 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**
We turn to you for forgiveness and ask Lord have mercy **Lord have mercy**

God' Word promises *If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness* So.....

May Almighty God forgive us by the death of his Son and strengthen us to live his risen life in the power of his Spirit all our days **Amen**

Readings

Amos 7 :7-15

7 Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall made with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand.
8 And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said: "Behold, I am setting a plumbline in the midst of My people Israel; I will not pass by them anymore.
9 The high places of Isaac shall be desolate, And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste. I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam."
10 ¶ Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words.
11 "For thus Amos has said: 'Jeroboam shall die by the sword, And Israel shall surely be led away captive from their own land.'
12 Then Amaziah said to Amos: "Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, And there prophesy.
13 But never again prophesy at Bethel, For it is the king's sanctuary, And it is the royal residence."
14 Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit.
15 Then the LORD took me as I followed the flock, And the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.'

Ephesians 1: 3-14

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,
4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,
5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.
7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace
8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,
9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,
10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.
11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,
14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Reflection

For my birthday I was given a pen with a 'spirit level' in it. In Bible times they didn't have a 'spirit level' but they did have plumbines. Amos in chapter 7 had a vision of God with a plumbline

Those who are builders will understand all about the importance of plumbines

A plumbline shows us two things: 1. when things are crooked and 2. when things are correct

In Southend (where I was born) there was an amusement park by the pier and in it was this Crooked House (with irregular walls and slanting floors) You could hear the amplified shrieks of the visitors for miles!!

Plumbines give us a standard 'norm' for 'right' and 'wrong' (though these days we're told to say *it's unacceptable*)

Amos's vision show us that God has clear standards and how people didn't like that (like people don't these days)

They reacted to God's interference in their lives telling them when things weren't true & straight

Mark 6 tells us that King Herod (like Matt Hancock) had pinched someone else's wife (Herodias his sister-in-law),

John, as God's spokesman, brought out God's plumbline and said That's WRONG.

Herodias hated John's moral stance and determined to silence him. She not only got him beheaded but tradition says John's head was delivered on a platter with a bodkin in his tongue to stop him from saying anything else - a bit like the preacher Watchman Nee in China who had his tongue cut out to stop him.

Those who speak God's Word can suffer for standing by it

Amos was opposed, mocked, belittled, and rejected for showing God's plumbline: Hey Mr Seer; Vision Man: *Leave us alone. Go home. Earn your money in your own land*

To which Amos answered *I'm no paid professional, I'm a simple shepherd called to be a prophet. The LORD said to me, 'Go, speak my Word to My people Israel. Give them the plumbline of my Word*

Thank God we have this plumbline that originates in God's character and is revealed and recorded in his Word to show us what is **wrong** and what needs correcting

But then God's plumbline also shows us what is good, **true, and right**, and something to celebrate

Paul wrote to the Ephesians in Asia Minor using God's plumbline to show them, and us, God's good, perfect and pleasing purposes.

Ch1:4 shows God plans for us (who are in Jesus and in his love) *to be holy* or godly (to be godlike), and also to be harmonious and gracious

Paul with God's plumbline points out in v9 God's perfect plan of *redemption (or freedom); his grace (to forgive us through Christ's blood); and his wisdom and prudence, (to bring all things 'in Christ' whether in heaven or earth into perfect harmony and perfect holiness)*

When the Ephesians understood and received this Word from God they were revolutionized by it

They were filled with both praise and with purpose

And when people today ask us the *BIG* questions: The **Whys**; the **When** will it all end? questions; the **How** will it turn out? the **Where** are we going? questions; we can turn to the plumbline/ the 'Spirit level' of the *mysteries* that Paul refers to in Ephesians 1, and we can show people that there is security and certainty to be found in Christ, and in Christ alone

Paul ends today's passage, as we do, by holding out God's plumbline in v12 saying

we who first trusted in Christ ... praise Him for His glory. And you who also trusted in Him, after you heard the word of truth and salvation were sealed (separated and secured) with the Holy Spirit of promise. Blessed be God

Song Bless the Lord Refrain from '10,000 Reason'

Ref: Bless the Lord O my, oh my soul

worship his holy name

Sing like never before, oh my soul

and worship your holy name

'Bless the Lord' by Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin © Atlas Mountain songs, permitted by CCLI Music licence 2370586

Creed Response: **We believe and trust in Him**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in Him

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died, and rose again?

We believe and trust in Him

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God, and makes Christ known in this world?

We believe and trust in Him

This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father Son, and Holy Spirit **Amen**

Prayers ending: Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We worship you as a Creator God. In the beginning you made all things 'good'. We praise you for the perfection of

your creation and ask that we may be good stewards of our world. We pray for those who are concerned for our environment to be enabled to reach the targets to preserve our world

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We worship you as a Holy God. You made us in your image writing your law in our hearts. Teach us to seek and follow your purposes for our lives. To be holy even as our Father in Heaven is Holy. Help those in the places of power - in Parliament and in the judiciary, and the police and armed forces - to implement what is good, right, just and true. And direct the leaders of the world to seek peace not division, and the good of others not self

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We worship you as a loving God. You have mercy on our frail, fallen, and fractured lives and relationships. You pardon the penitent, you bind up the broken-hearted, you direct the disobedient, you heal the hurting, and instruct the ignorant. Help all who work in the caring professions, all counsellors, & all who work in education and industry

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We worship you our saving God. You came into our world as a babe, as a man, as a victim, an overcomer, and a transformer. You give us the Bible to direct us, your gospel to change us, and your Spirit to empower us. Help your people, both clergy and laity, to faithfully and fearlessly hold out your Word as your plumbline to challenge both society and your church. And as bishop Nicholas retires may our diocese be given a new bishop who will be a prophetic voice to the nation.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We worship you as a God of quietness with grace sufficient for anything that we may be facing. Still our hearts to know that you are God (Silence)

And so we join our prayers together in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to say:

Lord's Prayer

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 them that 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

Song In Christ alone

*1. In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here in the love of Christ I stand*

*2. No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand*

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Blessing

The peace of God that passes all understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you, your loved ones, and all those for whom you pray, this day and for evermore **Amen.**

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