

The Bride Valley Service for Sunday 26th September 2021

Trinity 17

Welcome and Notices

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure and gives light to the eyes. Psalm 19.7-8

Hymn: O for a thousand tongues to sing ACNY 04

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing
my dear Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace.

3 He speaks; and, listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice;
the humble poor believe.

2 Jesus - the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life, and health, and peace.

4 My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim
and spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of thy name.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788) Public Domain

Invitation to Confession

St Paul says 'Be imitators of God, love as Christ loved; do not grieve the Holy Spirit; put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice' Let us confess our sins to God who forgives us in Christ.

Confession

God be gracious to us and bless us, and make your face shine upon us:

Lord, have mercy, **Lord have mercy.**

May your ways be known on the earth, your saving power among the nations:

Christ, have mercy, **Christ have mercy.**

You, Lord, have made known your salvation, and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:

Lord have mercy, **Lord have mercy.**

Absolution

Almighty God who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, *forgive us our sins*, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Collect

Let us pray: **Gracious God, you call us to the fullness of life: deliver us from unbelief and banish our anxieties with the liberating love of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Old Testament Reading: Numbers 11:4-6,10-16, 24-29

The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.'

Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the Lord became very angry, and Moses was displeased. So Moses said to the Lord, 'Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favour in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, "Carry them in

your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child”, to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, “Give us meat to eat!” I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once—if I have found favour in your sight—and do not let me see my misery.’

So the Lord said to Moses, ‘Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you.

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, ‘Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.’ And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, ‘My lord Moses, stop them!’ But Moses said to him, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!’

New Testament Reading: James 5.13-end

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner’s soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Hymn: Be still for the presence of the Lord

1 Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here;
Come bow before Him now with reverence and fear.
In Him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground;
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

2 Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire, with splendour He is crowned.
How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

3 Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace.
No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from Him;
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place. Amen.

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Gospel: Mark 9:38-50

John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power

in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

“For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Let us pray: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Ps 19.

Reflection

I can't begin to tell you how refreshing the last couple of weeks have been, on paper it may look as though we've been rushed off our feet: 3 weddings in a fortnight, the launch of Breakfast Church, Big Q Church, Back to School services, Reception Class quizzing me on what a vicar does and Tots have started back! Not to mention a funeral, the Living and Dying Course, baptism preparation and ongoing talks about whether or not we should join with Abbotsbury, Portesham and Langton Herring!

It sounds exhausting when put like that, but the reality is when you're doing God's work, he gives you the energy and resources required.

He also provides the team: to focus on just one of these things – Big Q Church - we could have been put off by the lack of people to help, when it came to it, but actually because we have the support of the school, which is unusual these days, and for which I'm extremely grateful, we have ploughed ahead and the first two sessions have gone really well.

The two sections of today's gospel do not seem to connect straightaway, firstly you have some people who are not immediately part of Jesus' circle yet they have discovered the power of his name. They have accepted a share in the power of God's name even if they don't yet know exactly what goes with it.

From just a slight sense of belonging, people can go on to become followers of Jesus, Christians, but they have to start somewhere. Nothing is wasted. The responsibility of it all comes later on, we are in this together, as grown-ups, looking out for each other.

We have heard how the Israelites continued to identify as slaves even after they escaped from Egypt. Moses got fed up with their complaining and moaning and expecting him to have all the answers, but that is all they had ever known. Freedom was a completely new experience for them and they weren't able to recognise it ... they still expected to be told what to do, how to live their lives.

Sometimes I wonder if we're bound up by the past too. Things are not the same anymore and in a sense they never will be. Some of us long to go back to the way things were, before the pandemic, but what if this is a new time, with different responsibilities. We have an opportunity to move into a new and exciting time across our churches, engaging with people in our communities in a new way. People have been challenged by recent events and some are reflecting and open to new conversations.

As Christians, James speaks to us of the joyful, healing, saving power given to each one of us. Not something reserved for the heroes and saints, like Moses and Elijah, for those licensed or commissioned across our churches even. It's for all of us, as churchgoers in this area, we are seen as believers. James suggests that when you live in close and truthful community with God's people then you know what you are doing and why. We are all sharing in God's great mission to bring people out of slavery and into a glorious future. What a privilege we share!

Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Though he was divine, he did not cling to equality with God, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a slave, he was born in human likeness. He humbled himself and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Therefore, God has raised him on high, and given him the name above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom. Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

You sent your Son to bring good news to the poor, sight to the blind, freedom to captives and salvation to your people: anoint us with your Spirit, rouse us to work in his name.

Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to bring help to the poor and freedom to the oppressed.

Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to tell all the world the good news of your healing love.

Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

Send us to those who mourn, to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.

Father, by your Spirit **bring in your kingdom.**

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit you have made us one with your saints in heaven and on earth: grant that in our earthly pilgrimage we may ever be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer, and know ourselves surrounded by their witness to your power and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn: Through all the changing scenes of life

1 Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.

2 O magnify the Lord with me,
with me exalt his name;
when in distress to him I called,
he to my rescue came.

3 The hosts of God encamp around
the dwellings of the just;
deliverance he affords to all
who on his succour trust.

4 O make but trial of his love:
experience will decide
how blest are they, and only they,
who in his truth confide.

5 Fear him, ye saints, and you will then
have nothing else to fear;
make you his service your delight,
your wants shall be his care.

6 To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
the God whom we adore,
be glory, as it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Nahum Tate (1652-1715) and Nicholas Brady (1659-1726) Public Domain

Final Prayer and Blessing.

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, there is no end to his greatness.

One generation shall praise your works to another and shall declare your power.

All your works praise you, Lord, and your faithful servants bless you.

They make known the glory of your kingdom and speak of your power.

Let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever. **Amen.**

Glory to God, whose power, at work among us, can do infinitely more than all we ask or conceive; to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.