



The Benefice of Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme

Sunday 16 August 2020 Trinity 10

Preparation

We have come from scattered lives to meet with God.
Let us recognise his presence with us.

The Greeting

Silence is kept

As God's people we have gathered;
Let us worship him together

O Lord, open our lips
And our mouth shall proclaim your praise
O God make speed to save us
O Lord make haste to help us
Glory to the Father and to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit:
**As it was in the beginning is now
and shall be forever. Amen.**

Praise the Lord
The Lord's name be praised.

Lord speak to us
That we may hear your word.
Move among us
That we may behold your glory.
Receive our prayers
That we may learn to trust you.
Amen.

God shows his love for us
In that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Let us then show our love for him
By confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

God of mercy

We acknowledge that we are all sinners.

**We turn from the wrong that we have thought and said and done,
and are mindful of all that we have failed to do.**

**For the sake of Jesus, who died for us,
forgive us for all that is past,
and help us to live each day
in the light of Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May almighty God have mercy on us,
Forgive us our sins,
And bring us to eternal life,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers before you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The First Reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel?

For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

This is the word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

The Gospel: **Matthew 15:10-28**

Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.” Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”

He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”

“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”

Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

“Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

This is the Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Reflection from **Suzy McCarter**

Isaiah 56: 7,8 “For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus, says the Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.”

Matthew 15: 17-20 “Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person,”

Matthew 15:24 “I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.... Let it be done for you as you wish.”

Prayer and the power of prayer is clearly encapsulated in the cry of the Canaanite woman who is so persistent that Jesus hears and answers her despite his claim that he was not sent to the Canaanites but to the Israelites. He receives her and welcomes her by commenting on how great her faith is and granting her request. God is merciful and God will hear and answer us. Isaiah says that God will gather in both the Israelites and others besides those already gathered. This is the clear message that the Kingdom of God is open to those who seek admittance and the harvest is continuing. We are not an exclusive club or a closed shop. On Sunday we read about Paul telling the Romans that in Christ there is “no distinction between Jew and Greek, the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him.” This message has not changed, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” For us living in the shrinking world of today this is the message that we must be careful to guard against prejudice and discrimination. We must ensure that the good news and a welcome into our Christian communities is equally available to everyone whether they are ‘like us’, or not. We all want to spend our time with people like us, we are more comfortable when we have shared backgrounds and interests and education and lifestyles; but God does not make those differentiations. He sees the heart and not the colour or the education or the nationality or the language. How can we ensure that our church is truly welcoming regardless of status, financial level, education or other factor of social exclusion? I wish I knew the answer. I do recognise the problem though and I believe that to be the first step in the right direction. The next one would be to pray continually and seriously for a broader mix in our congregation but that would probably start with our community needing to become a more mixed community and it will only happen gradually over time. What is

important is keeping pace with our community and not being left behind as society around us changes.

The last bit is probably the most important and the most difficult to fulfil. We must guard our tongues. What we say and how we say it is so important. Jesus warned his disciples that it was what comes out of our mouths that reveals our hearts, and evil intent or sin in the heart can unfortunately escape via the lips. Unkind words cannot be taken back. Seeming to agree with prejudice and discrimination is unchristian; and casting aspersions via gossip is too easy. I will be the first to hold my hand up and say that I am a chatterbox. I speak too much, and too often without careful thought. I hope that God is working via his Holy Spirit in me to help me to learn to pause and think before I speak or email, but I have a long way to go yet. I pray constantly that God will be in my speech and that he will give me the right words. I am less good at remembering to hold my tongue unless God has given me the right words. Fortunately, we are all promised that our sins will be forgiven as long as we are truly repentant and ask in faith. We do the best we can each day and we get a fresh start and a new opportunity each day. God be in your hearts and minds and speech and may our prayers be answered. Amen

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 Intercessions led by Michael Richardson

Lord, you are our refuge and our strength
You make a high place for us to dwell in safety
You surround us and protect us
You turn our enemies into friends, and our friends into family
You are our refuge and our strength

O Lord, bless your church and the work that is being done in your name throughout the world., Covid-19 has reminded us that your church is not buildings, but people. We thank you that we can worship and pray together, and feel that we are in your presence, even if we cannot congregate fully in our church buildings.

Similarly, we pray that whilst we cannot fully and properly enjoy church fellowship by meeting together physically, we can continue to keep in touch by other means.

Lord, we thank you that we have so many communication tools to use – we can telephone, write letters, e-mail, text, zoom, FaceTime and use other social media outlets. We pray for the resumption of church normality as soon as possible. Lord, we pray for our clergy and church leaders at this difficult time, and we ask that you pour down upon them your love, guidance and encouragement. O Lord, help us to be a warm, welcoming and caring church within our communities.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we pray for our world and its people. We pray that it is not destroyed or spoilt by wars and fighting; by our failure to respect our surroundings and resources, or by pestilence and other disasters.

We pray that when countries of the world have finished fighting the common Covid-19 enemy, they do not return to fighting amongst themselves. We pray that where cooperation and sharing has been generated during the present world uncertainty, it may be carried forward and built upon when some sort of normality returns to our lives. We pray for those people in Asia, Africa and

South America – as well as those in immigration camps – who do not have the money, facilities or expertise that we have. We pray for the discovery of a vaccine to protect us against Covid-19. We pray also that, once discovered, it is shared throughout the world and not selfishly restricted in its distribution.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear or prayer.**

O Lord, we pray for our communities and our families. We thank you for the wonderful work that is being done in our villages – the many acts of care, support, encouragement, help and sharing that go on every day. O Lord, for a time many family members have been kept apart physically. Yet in many ways, because of this they have been brought closer together. Lord, we pray for all the people, especially those in our own communities and families, who have lost income, jobs or livelihoods through the economic fallout from the pandemic.

May we try to support businesses in our own villages which might be struggling.,O Lord, help us to use the gifts and talents you have given each of us, for the benefit of others and not just for ourselves.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

O Lord, we pray for all the people who are, or have been in hospital; the people who have had operations or treatment postponed or cancelled, and those who might experience longer term suffering or problems as a result of this. We pray for doctors, nurses and medical staff, and for all NHS and care workers. We thank you for all those people who have recovered from their illnesses, and we ask you to bless those who have not. In particular we remember all who have passed away without their families and friends being able to be present or to properly show their respects. We remember especially those known to each of us.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Lord's prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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.**

Closing prayer

God of glory,
You nourish us with your Word
Who is the bread of life:
Fill us with your Holy Spirit
That through us the light of your glory
May shine in all the world.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
through the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with us all, today and always.
Amen.

Sending Out

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
All in the name of Christ. Amen.