



**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 4 October 2020 Trinity 17**

Preparation

The Greeting

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

Silence is kept

O Lord, open our lips

All and our mouth shall proclaim your praise

O God, make speed to save us

All O Lord, make haste to help us

Glory to the Father and to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit;

**All as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Praise the Lord

All The Lord's name be praised.

Faithful One, whose word is life:

Come with saving power

to free our praise,

inspire our prayer

and shape our lives

for the kingdom of your Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

We come to God as one

from whom no secrets are hidden,

To ask for his forgiveness and peace.

In a dark and disfigured world
We have not held out the light of life:
Lord, have mercy: **Lord, have mercy.**
In a hungry and despairing world
We have failed to share our bread:
Christ, have mercy: **Christ, have mercy.**
In a cold and loveless world
We have kept the love of God to ourselves:
Lord, have mercy: **Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of love
bring us back to himself,
forgive us our sins
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Praise Response from Psalm 34

Honour the Lord with me!
Celebrate his great name.

All Honour the Lord with me!
Celebrate his great name.

I asked the Lord for help
And he saved me from all my fears.

All Honour the Lord with me.

I was a nobody, but I prayed,
And the Lord saved me from all my troubles.

All Celebrate his great name.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
And to the Holy Spirit.

All Honour the Lord with me,
Celebrate his great name.

The Collect

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city
where we shall see you face to face;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading. Philippians 3:4b-14

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God

Gospel reading Matthew 21: 33-46

“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

“The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.

“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes’?”

“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection by Suzy

The frustration of the landowner whose tenants are not sending in the produce that he is entitled to can be clearly felt in this reading. There is also the frustration of the tenants who are doing all the work and don’t see why the landowner, who is doing no work, should be in receipt of anything from their labours. I wonder whether you feel more sympathy for the landowner or the tenants? What about the slaves and the son who are only seeking to do the job assigned to them and have neither slaved in the fields to produce the harvest,

nor will they benefit from the produce, but are slain because they are caught in the middle? The messenger being killed.

The Vineyard is a regular image used for Israel and the Jewish people. God loves and tends the vineyard and Israel flourishes – usually. The audience to the parable (important Jewish leaders), were used to being owners of the Vineyard, or to identifying as the Vineyard itself, and found themselves cast as the tenants in Jesus' story. They are told by Jesus that they are not paying the rent to God that He is entitled to. Indeed, they are being reminded of the long line of prophets that God has sent, and Jesus places himself in that line. They are not pleased to hear this, they are not pleased to be cast as ungrateful tenants, and it is one example of the way in which Jesus set himself on a collision course with the leaders of the Temple and the powerful Jews of his time. There was a plentiful harvest, but the produce was not being sent where it was supposed to go.

God created our beautiful world and everything in it. 'All things come from you and of your own do we give you'. Do we remember in our daily lives that all that we are and all that we have comes as a gift from God? Do we give back to God that which is His due? The original listeners to this parable were offended to be told, 'The Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.' Are we any better than them?

It is not a cheerful thought, I'm sorry. Human nature hasn't changed that much in over 2000 years. We are the tenants in the story now. We are the recipients of the amazing gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. It is completely free. We are like the lepers who are cured, 10 are cured, but only 1 says thank you. We want to think that we are better than the original audience to whom this story was directed, but the real question is – are we? Are we doing the work? Are we labouring towards a fruitful harvest? Are we sending in the produce?

It is going to be our Harvest Sunday next week and we will be collecting food and money for the poor and homeless. I think now is the time to consider the generous bounty of God's gifts in our lives and to ask ourselves "How can I send in the produce from my Vineyard?" Both spiritual and physical. Let us prepare to celebrate the good gifts of God in creation by being more aware of the needs of friends and neighbours, being aware of the poverty that is hidden in our society. Let's think about the farming communities at this time and how they are

affected by current world affairs, Covid 19 and Brexit and changes to transportation, mobility and labour forces. We can also pray for the leaders in our world and our Church as they seek to lead us through a changing landscape and are increasingly confused by the competing demands of safety for people versus economics. As economic realities bite it will only become more difficult to remember to prioritise the gathering of the produce for God. Let us thank God for our blessings and seek to be good tenants. Amen.

Affirmation of faith

Let us affirm our faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

All I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**All I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**All I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercessions by Jasmin Smith

Blessed are you, Lord our God, for you are our Creator and you have called us to know you and proclaim your love. Help us to be aware that you speak to us through the Scriptures and through those who tell of your presence and power today.

Lord and Saviour of all, **hear us and help us.**

Father Creator, raise up among us preachers and followers who will tell of your mighty acts and your saving power. Bless your Church with an awareness of and living relationship with Christ, that it may witness to the power of the resurrection. We pray for all Christians who are suffering from persecution or rejection.

Lord and Saviour of all, **hear us and help us.**

Father Creator, we thank you for all our food. For farmers, producers and supermarket workers. We give thanks for those who provide transport and those who deliver to people who are shielding or unable to shop for themselves. We praise those running the food banks and those who generously support them remembering that we should all share the fruits of the earth with those less fortunate than ourselves.

Lord and Saviour of all, **hear us and help us.**

Father Creator, we ask your blessing upon leaders of peoples and all who influence our lives by their decisions. Give them wisdom and respect in all their dealings. We pray for all who work in the field of medicine, especially for those working to produce an effective Coronavirus vaccine. We ask you to bless and support those who are weary from caring for others either at home, in hospital or in care homes. May they find rest and peace from their tiredness.

Lord and Saviour of all, **hear us and help us.**

Father Creator, we give thanks for our homes and our loved ones. In this time of pandemic and new restrictions, we ask your blessing upon all homes where there is tension or misunderstanding. We pray for marriages that are struggling and families that are in danger of falling apart. We remember all who feel neglected or rejected. We give thanks for those who seek to support the needy and who offer a lifeline to the lonely.

Lord and Saviour of all, **hear us and help us.**

Father Creator we give thanks for all you have given to us. We pray for the world poor, the oppressed and all who are suffering from violence. We remember those who have been driven off their own land by war or natural disasters and all who are refugees. Bless those who are helping to provide

furniture, clothes and the everyday essentials which we take for granted. We ask your blessing upon all who are ill or who have been injured and all who are fearful for their future.

Lord and Saviour of all, **hear us and help us.**

Father Creator, we give thanks for Jesus Christ the living Lord and for the power of his resurrection. We commit to your keeping our loved ones departed, that they may rejoice in the fullness of your kingdom, and we pray that we may share with them in the knowledge of your love.

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

The Lord's Prayer

**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

**In darkness and light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust your love,
to serve your purpose,
and to praise your name;
through 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.