



**The Benefice of  
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme  
Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
Trinity 20 'Bible Sunday'**

**Preparation**

We gather in God's name.

**We claim Christ's promised presence.**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Thank be to you, O God, that we have risen this day.

**To the rising of this life itself, thanks be to God.**

May the purpose of God be between us and each purpose,

**the hand of God between us and each hand.**

The pain of Christ between us and each pain,

**the love of Christ between us and each love.**

O God who brought us to the bright light of this new day,

**bring us to the guiding light of eternity.**

Let us praise God together.

**Alleluia!**

**Hymn** - Praise the Lord, ye heav'ns, adore him!

My brothers and sisters,

not out of dread and fear,

but believing that God is faithful to forgive,

let us rid ourselves of what we need to carry no longer.

**The Greeting**

**We confess to God**

**Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy  
forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be;  
that we may do justly,  
love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God.  
Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## The Collect

Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scriptures  
to be written for our learning:  
help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them  
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,  
we may embrace and forever hold fast the hope of everlasting life,  
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**First Reading: Colossians 3:12-17**

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Second Reading: Matthew 22:34-46**

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: "What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"?'"

If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

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

### Reflection by Rev'd Mavis Nevill

Today is Bible Sunday.

When I realised this, I was reminded of the story of Mary Jones. This was the young 15 year old Welsh girl, in the 18th century, who, having learned to read, longed to own a Welsh Bible for herself. Such was her longing, she saved for six years for enough to buy one. When she had enough she walked 26 miles, barefoot, over mountainous country, to the house of a Minister who had them for sale. She treasured that Bible all her life and it is now in a Museum in Cambridge complete with the inscription she wrote inside. It was her supreme effort to secure a Bible that inspired the formation of the Bible Society, the Society that still has as its aim, to make the Bible readily available in every language.

It's hard for us to imagine such determination to acquire a Bible. But Christians in many parts of the world still have to make supreme efforts to obtain the Bible in their language and most are unlikely to achieve it. We are so fortunate to have the Bible so easily available and these days in so many readable versions. How much do we treasure the Bible and how much do we allow it to speak to us?

To be honest, not all Scripture is inspiring. I signed in to Morning Prayer when Richard was reading about the bloody death of Queen Jezebel. Not very edifying at all! But the New Testament especially is full of words both to encourage as well as to challenge us, and God can speak to us powerfully through them.

Our Epistle reading this morning is such a passage. We have just 5 short verses, but they contain all we need to know about living an authentic Christian life.

Just four ways to live:

- To put on love.
- To let the peace of Christ dwell in our hearts.
- To let the Word of God dwell in us. and
- To do everything in the name of Christ.

**The love Paul is talking of "putting on"** is that costly love that makes every effort to forgive those who do us wrong. It is that love that is willing to go the extra mile.

**Letting the peace of Christ dwell in our hearts** was the phrase that jumped out at me when I was preparing for this morning so I'll come back to it later.

**Letting the Word of God dwell in our hearts**, makes this an obvious reading for Bible Sunday. Let all of us challenge ourselves in these difficult days to turn to the Bible more regularly to find words which give us strength to get through. We can then share this treasure with others.

**Doing everything in the name of Christ** is about allowing our lives to be stamped through and through, with the name of Christ, like the place name is embedded in a stick of Blackpool rock. It is about being authentic Christians where we not only "talk the talk" but strain everything in us to "walk the walk" as well!

But, let us go back to the words, "**Let the peace of Christ dwell in our hearts.**" At every Eucharist we share "The Peace". We say to one another "the peace of the Lord be always with you", to which the response is, "and also with you". It is an important part of the service, because it is where we ensure we are in the right frame of mind to receive the bread and wine, and with them a fresh experience of the "coming" of Jesus into our lives.

The peace of Christ is like a temperature gauge by which we can know how things are with us in our spiritual lives. Maintaining the peace of Christ in our lives isn't easy. It takes discipline that many of us, myself included, find very challenging. When life is throwing everything at us, it's so easy to show our anger or dismay. It's so hard to hang on in there - it takes a supreme effort of heart and mind.

There is a comfort though. To get the real feeling and meaning of any one passage of scripture, we need to line it up against the whole range of the Bible's teaching. If we do, we can appreciate that to "let the peace of Christ" dwell in our hearts means it doesn't disappear when we are struggling on the surface of our lives. It doesn't desert us when the waves are buffeting us about and maybe even threatening to overcome us. That peace of Christ is a gift of the Holy Spirit that resides deep within us.

The peace of Christ is a bit like a compass. We may be going in the wrong direction, but it will always bring us back and point us to true North if we let it. Scripture is full of teachings about how compassionate God is and how he longs to gently bring us back onto the right path.

In this time of the Coronavirus Pandemic we need to be walking in the peace of Christ. On occasions it will mean we can sail along on calm seas even though fierce storms are forecast. At such times we can be a witness and encourager to others who are struggling with the restrictions and loneliness of these days.

However, we must not beat ourselves up in the hard times, in those 'shout out in raw frustration' times! Those times when the waves are so strong that they threaten to overcome our little boat, The Psalms are full of examples of individuals doing just that, and yet, amidst it all they often cease their rantings with a deep truth like "the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases."

In your most difficult of times, those times when the Bible seems like sawdust and prayer seems to bounce back from the ceiling, in those time, just breathe deeply, and bring to mind those words of a familiar prayer of blessing "the a Peace of God which passes all understanding." I promise you it is there. You will eventually see that the compass is pointing to North. Rant and rave at life or at a God as you need, but hold on for the Peace of Christ. It was a Baptismal gift that can never be taken from you. That light of Christ resides deep in you and will never leave.

**Hymn - God's Spirit is in my heart**

**Let us declare our faith in God.**

**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 of Intercession led by Michael Richardson**

Often the way ahead is hidden,  
A turn in the road,  
A darkness beyond the headlights,  
Often the shadows surround.  
And yet to the west there is a gentle light,  
And to the east the promise of the dawn.  
Often the things that frighten,  
The looming silhouettes and eerie sounds,  
Are benign in the light of the Son.

O Lord, let the light of your Son point the way forward for us through our present misty world where it is often difficult to see where we are going. Please help your clergy to be the ones to show us which switches and buttons to press so that your headlights pierce the gloom. Please help us to proceed cautiously at first with dipped headlights, but also with confidence that you will guide us. Then, as the mist clears – as it always does – help us to accelerate into the full light of your world. As the brightness of summer turns into the gold of autumn, help us to appreciate the beauty of the changing seasons.

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

O Lord, we pray for our leaders.

For our clergy and all who teach the faith. Jesus said, the greatest commandment is to “Love the Lord your God”. We give thanks for all our clergy in keeping your presence alive in our hearts and minds, and for their resourcefulness in devising new forms of worship.

For our community leaders. We give thanks for all those who co-ordinate care and support in our villages, and we give thanks too, for the many acts of kindness and neighbourliness carried out every day.

For our city leaders. May they, in their understandable keenness to preserve the lives and jobs of their own people, also appreciate the bigger picture.

For our government and politicians. Lord we pray that our politicians act for the common good. Please give them wisdom to find the right balance when faced, as they are, with so many conflicting priorities. Young and old. Healthy and vulnerable. Local lockdowns or national. Lives or livelihoods. COVID-19 or cancer/mental health/knee, heart, hip etc, care and operations. We also pray for them as they grapple with the many other non-pandemic challenges facing them.

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

O Lord, we pray for our communities, friends and families.

Jesus said that the second greatest commandment is to “Love your neighbour as yourself”. Sometimes perhaps, when we feel bad about ourselves, we should love our neighbour **more** than ourselves. St Paul said the Colossians should act with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Lord, help us to do all this, especially as we are increasingly kept apart by anti-social distancing.

Lord, we pray for all those we know who are struggling at this time. Those who are lonely. Those who are fed up. Those who have lost jobs or livelihoods. Those who are worried financially or emotionally.

*A short silence for those we know personally.*

O Lord, help us to be lifted and positive, and to remember and give thanks for the many blessings in our lives.

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

O Lord, we pray for doctors, nurses and medical staff, and for all NHS and care workers. We pray for those employed in the emergency services and all who put their health and lives at risk to keep us safe.

We pray for all people in hospital and care homes. We also pray for all those people who have had operations or treatment cancelled, and for those who consequently might experience longer term suffering or problems.

We give grateful thanks for all those people who have recovered from their illnesses, and we ask for your blessing on 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.

*A short silence for those we know personally.*

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

**Our Father in heaven, ....**

**Hymn - Will you come and follow me?**

Blessing

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**