

Ashburton and Moorland Team

TRINITY 13

29th August 2021



¶ The Gathering

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Hymn – Fight the good fight

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YppcFC8mxKM>

Fight the good fight with all thy might.
Christ is thy strength and Christ thy right.
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
thy joy and crown eternally.

Run the straight race through God's good grace;
lift up thine eyes, and seek his face.
Life with its path before us lies;
Christ is the way, and Christ the prize.

Cast care aside; lean on thy guide.
God's boundless mercy will provide.
Trust, and thy trusting soul shall prove
Christ is its life, and Christ its love.

Faint not nor fear: his arm is near.
He changeth not, and thou art dear.
Only believe, and thou shalt see
that Christ is all in all to thee.

Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

The Summary of the Law

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Confession

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ
to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven,
and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God's commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

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

Gloria in Excelsis

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Collect

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

.¶ The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

Moses spoke to the people; he said: So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you.

You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!' For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

James 1:17-27

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfilment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn – Lord, thy Word abideth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3-dMvkZM-A>

Lord, thy Word abideth,
and our footsteps guideth;
who its truth believeth
light and joy receiveth.

When our foes are near us,
then thy Word doth cheer us,
Word of consolation,
message of salvation.

When the storms are o'er us,
and dark clouds before us,
then its light directeth,
and our way protecteth.

Who can tell the pleasure,
who recount the treasure,
by thy Word imparted
to the simple-hearted?

Word of mercy, giving
succour to the living;
word of life, supplying
comfort to the dying!

O that we, discerning,
its most holy learning,
Lord, may love and fear thee,
evermore be near thee!

Gospel Reading

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark
Glory to you, O Lord.

Mark 7:1-8, 14, 15, 21-23

When the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, ‘Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?’ He said to them, ‘Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

“This people honours me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.”

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.’

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, ‘Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.’

For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

Imagine you are in a shop, buying fruit. There are all the different fruits laid out before you – apples, pears, oranges, grapes, kiwi fruit, mangoes, grapefruit, strawberries, blueberries, nectarines, plums, bananas, dates, and so on. What to buy?

Maybe money is tight, so you go for the cheapest?

Maybe you always have the same fruit, so you just go for that?

Maybe you like something different each time, so you try and remember what you had on the past few trips to the shop?

Maybe you just go for the freshest, or ripest, or best looking?

Maybe price is no object, so you go for the most expensive?

All sorts of factors come in to play, which you juggle in your mind, I guess.

Maybe you can only afford your favourite when the price comes down? My mother wouldn't buy peaches until they came down to sixpence each.

Maybe you are tempted to buy more than you need, or tempted to be really extravagant this time, and blow the cost.

Maybe you have to guess what someone else would like, and wonder about setting aside your own preference.

Maybe you just can't decide, so you leave it till later.

Making decisions about what to do, is what we do all the time, every day. It's part and parcel of being human. And much of the time it just comes down to our personal preference.

But deciding which fruit to buy doesn't often have a moral dimension, though there may be a temptation to buy something we can't really afford every week, like strawberries or mangoes. When they look so fresh and juicy, prominently and cunningly displayed in the shop, it can be very hard to resist.

Whether we resist or not, in this case, this is a moral decision we have to make, albeit on a very small scale.

A moral decision is one where there is a right choice or a wrong choice for us. It may be a tiny thing, trivial, say when buying fruit, but it's only the scale that changes in other decisions, not the process.

In deciding whether or not to buy expensive strawberries, it often feels as though there are two voices, one saying "You shouldn't buy those" and the other saying "Why not, indulge yourself!"

For parents, there's often a real squeaky voice saying "Pleeease!" coming from a small son or daughter!

Or someone may come up to us and enthuse about their preferences. Or there may simply be a customer behind us saying "Get on with it, you're holding me up."

Quite often it's not just a cool, relaxed, decision. My feelings start to come into it too. Am I feeling hungry while I'm deciding? Am I in a hurry? Am I feeling happy-go-lucky or a bit depressed?

Eventually there comes a point when I make the decision – "I'll have these."

The purchase is made, and it's out of the shop and on with the rest of the day. But then, on the way home, sometimes doubts begin to come in. "I shouldn't have bought these. Why was I so foolish? What will she (or he) say? "

There's a saying "Act in haste, repent at leisure." We have to live with the consequences of even very small decisions that turn out to be the wrong decision.

The chances are that deciding which fruit to buy is not going to really matter – they are all healthy! But on a bigger scale, it's still the same thought-process that kicks in when buying a new car or "that dress". Or deciding to have that extra pint, or place the next bet, or go out on the tiles.

Making a wrong moral decision when buying fruit is unlikely to be called "evil", but that's a problem, because it is a tiny example of evil working in us. All wrong decisions or mistakes have consequences somewhere on the scale of evil.

Jesus gives a very shrewd list of things that are the evil consequences of our wrong decisions. I don't think his ordering of the list is particularly significant, so here's my re-ordering of Jesus' list to reflect the frequency of me getting things wrong in the past:

Folly, deceit, pride, avarice, slander, envy, wickedness, theft, licentiousness, fornication, adultery, murder.

And it's no use me saying to myself that because I've avoided the last two or three in the list, I am doing really well!

Even the least significant failing is actually a sign of my deciding to do wrong – Jesus calls them "evil intentions", coming from within me. Of course we are always making wrong decisions, and for these we seek and receive forgiveness.

Jesus' message is that on the outside it's relatively easy to appear virtuous and good, but it's what goes on inside, in our minds, where we make the crucial decisions about our lives.

It turns out that making good moral decisions is not just for God's benefit, but also for our neighbour's benefit and for our benefit.

And it's the moment just before making a decision that really matters. Once the strawberries are in the bag, it's too late!

James' letter gives us really good advice on how to make the right choices. "Welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. Those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing."

Week by week in our services we are implanting God's word into our hearts, and drawing on the power of that word. With the aim of making it second nature that, just before the moment of deciding, maybe even subconsciously, we automatically think "What would Jesus want me to do?"

That's all! That makes all the difference...

Amen.

The Nicene Creed

***I / We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.***

***I / We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.***

***For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.***

***I / We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.***

**I / We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
I / We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
I / We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

The Peace

We are the body of Christ.
In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.
Let us then pursue all that makes for peace
and builds up our common life.

The peace of the Lord be always with us.

Hymn – May the mind of Christ my saviour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qE5fOXSymBc>

May the mind of Christ my Saviour
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do and say.

May the word of God dwell richly
in my heart from hour to hour,
so that all may see I triumph
only in his saving power.

May the peace of God my Father
rule my life in every thing,
that I may be calm to comfort
sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me,
as the waters fill the sea;
him exalting, self abasing,
this is victory.

May I run the race before me,
strong and brave to face the foe,
looking only unto Jesus
as I onward go.

Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

In joy and hope we pray.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy
of his glorious and life-giving resurrection,
and that he may fill us with his love.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

That God may grant us the ability to make good decisions
when we face choices,
and to always consider the needs of others.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

That people whose lives have been damaged
by making wrong decisions
may find a path back to wholeness and healing.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

That God may enable us not to be greedy
in our use of the world's resources,
and enable us to seek to address the needs of all those who lack
food, work, or shelter.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

That people in all countries and places of oppression
may find fresh strength and support in their struggles
for a place of safety, and for justice and fairness.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

That God may comfort all those suffering from loneliness, isolation or fear at this uncertain time.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick, the weak, the dying and those who mourn, to comfort and strengthen them.

In a moment of silence, let us bring before God those whom we know to be in particular need at this time

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, 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 those who 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.**

Hymn – Dear Lord and Father of mankind

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk7SX3r59sc>

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways;
re clothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard
beside the Syrian sea
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm!

¶ Ending

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us,
and make us continually to be given to all good works;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Blessing

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.