

Ashburton and Moorland Team

TRINITY 15

12th September 2021



¶ The Gathering

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

Hymn – O Lord my God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mTb-cN6lvk>

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
consider all the works thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
thy power throughout the universe displayed;

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee,
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze:

Then sings my soul...

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
sent him to die – I scarce can take it in
that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
he bled and died to take away my sin:

Then sings my soul...

When Christ shall come with shouts of acclamation
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, 'my God, how great thou art!'

Then sings my soul...

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

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church
in the burning fire of your love:
grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel
that, always abiding in you,
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backwards.

I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

The Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;

therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me.

It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

James 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn – I heard the voice of Jesus say

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUVCpF8-VuE>

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
so weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till travelling days are done.

Gospel Reading

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

Mark 8:27-38

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' And they answered him, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

I have rather a dim memory of one of my grandmothers – we lived in Scotland and she was in Hampshire, so I didn't see much of her, and I was only about seven when she died.

One very early memory I have is of her comforting me in her four-poster bed during a thunderstorm – lightening flashing all round, but her bed had curtains that could be pulled round to make it feel a safe haven. She got out a children's book called the Veggie-man's revenge, and read me the story. I guess I just fell asleep, safe!

Another memory I have still haunts me. I think Granny was quite short and fairly plump. We were staying with her, and one morning I was having breakfast with my family and my aunt – I guess Granny was still in bed, anyway, she wasn't around, and I asked in innocence "Why does Granny look pregnant?"

There was complete silence. No-one could think of what to say! I gradually realised that this wasn't the sort of question one asked. Everyone was embarrassed, and I expect my aunt or mother said "You shouldn't make personal remarks."

And so I learnt a painful lesson – speaking without thinking wasn't on and I presumably learnt to think a little harder before speaking? But I still even now come out with things that I regret saying, that sound critical but weren't meant that way – I guess everyone does?

By contrast, being enthusiastic about something and making positive remarks is pretty safe, indeed is to be encouraged.

Peter in our gospel story gives us perfect examples of both these responses.

Firstly we hear Peter in burst of enthusiasm saying “Yes Lord, you are the Messiah.” Jesus’ life was starting to make sense to him. Jesus was healing people, forgiving their sins, consoling the poor and the unhappy. And Peter had worked out that this was exactly what God had promised would happen – God would send a leader to save the people. “Yes. You are he.”

Peter spoke naturally, straight from the heart, and Jesus must have been delighted, though he didn’t want it broadcast about as that would seem presumptuous. Peter was the flavour of the moment,

But, oh dear, it didn’t last long at all. When Jesus went on to explain that he would suffer and be killed, Peter’s natural reaction was to say “That’s not right. That shouldn’t happen.”

He was right – it shouldn’t happen. The Son of Man should not have been crucified. But we can imagine Jesus’ internal struggle, coming to terms with a fate that he was beginning to realise was inevitable if he continued to challenge an unjust society. So it seemed to Jesus that Peter was tempting him to avoid his fate – Peter, his best friend, was undermining his resolution. “Get behind me Satan” is not saying that Peter was Satan, but that Satan had found a way, through Peter, to weaken Jesus.

If Peter had thought it through, he might well have offered to stand beside Jesus through his trials and support him instead. But he spoke without thinking it through.

“Thinking it through” is really today’s theme. James writes about how essential it is that we do the thinking before the speaking. In particular thinking very carefully before saying anything negative.

And James is so topical – every day there is some new headline from Social Media about trolls and abuse. James would today be writing about typing rather than speaking, fingers rather than the tongue. Thousands of people creating abusive posts and tweets.

Deliberate abuse that can be so hurtful seems to have always been part of the human condition.

He might also have offered advice about never replying quickly to an email that upsets us – rather, give the sender a call and talk it over, or at the very least, sleep on it....

At a school safeguarding meeting this week I was very distressed to hear again of so many families in our communities where children become the unwitting victims of marital breakdown or domestic abuse. Hurt and pain caused by people who are themselves hurting – and who struggle to bridle their tongues, particularly when they have been drinking or taking drugs. Extreme cases, I agree, but I don't suppose there is anyone who has never had a row?

It's part of our commitment to following Jesus that we work away at thinking through the potential consequences of what we say before saying it or typing it. We do this in a whole variety of ways...

- Quietly praying to God about what to say
- Going for a walk to let our thoughts cool down
- Lying awake at night and coming up with a better plan
- Talking it through with someone we respect
- Trying to imagine what Jesus would want us to do

The important thing is that I've learnt that I need to think before I speak into a situation. It's like catching the impulse as it heads to my tongue, or as James says, like putting a bridle in my mouth to prevent an outburst.

But then at a deeper level, with God's help, to see if I can set aside critical thoughts and tell them to go away. Perhaps working at trying to understand why someone else behaves the way they do, and thinking of sympathy rather than criticism.

You may have come across G K Chesterton's detective priest called Father Brown. A man of great virtue and gentleness, he solved his cases by learning to think like a criminal – training himself to understand how he might have committed the crime himself.

By understanding how thoughts can be controlled in this way, I can understand that there is a way of breaking free from quick and hurtful responses. That's my target!

But still things go wrong, I find myself wishing I could unsay something. It's bound to happen, and that's where God's encouragement to seek forgiveness is so helpful. To confess my sin, apologise to God, and perhaps most importantly to apologise to the person I've upset. And if someone upsets me, to forgive them.

That's the plan – but it's very reassuring to me that even Peter kept making mistakes and yet kept becoming more loyal and more faithful – a perfect example to follow.

Amen.

The Nicene Creed

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

***// 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 – I cannot tell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zltma-BImM8>

I cannot tell how he whom angels worship
should stoop to love the peoples of the earth,
or why as shepherd he should seek the wanderers
with his mysterious promise of new birth.
But this I know, that he was born of Mary,
when Bethlehem's manger was his only home,
and that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
and so the saviour, saviour of the world, is come.

I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,
nor how his heart upon the cross was broken,
the crown of pain to three and thirty years.
But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted,
and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,
and lifts the burden from the heavy laden,
for still the saviour, saviour of the world, is here.

I cannot tell how he will win the nations,
how he will claim his earthly heritage,
how satisfy the needs and aspirations
of east and west, of sinner and of sage.
But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,
and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,
and some glad day his sun shall shine in splendour
when he the saviour, saviour of the world, is known.

I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
when, at his bidding, every storm is stilled,
or who can say how great the jubilation
when all our hearts with love for him are filled.
But this I know, the skies will sound his praises,
ten thousand thousand human voices sing,
and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer:
at last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King.

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 bridle our tongues,
to think before speaking,
and to be sympathetic rather than critical.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

That people whose lives have been damaged
by abuse on social media and in other ways
may regain confidence and trust.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

That people living in homes where there is violence
or substance abuse
may be supported and helped,
and that children in such homes may find safe places
to work and to play.

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 – At the name of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZGskYF88-g>

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him King of glory now;
'tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

Humbled for a season, to receive a name
from the lips of sinners, unto whom he came;
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious when from death he passed;

Name him Christians name him, with love strong as death,
but with awe and wonder, and with bated breath;
he is God the Saviour, he is Christ the Lord,
ever to be worshipped, trusted and adored.

In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not true.
Look to him, your Saviour, in temptations' hour;
let his will enfold you in its light and power.

Surely, this Lord Jesus shall return again,
with his Father's glory, with his angel-train;
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

¶ Ending

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy;
and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall,
keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful,
and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation;
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.