

Ashburton and Moorland Team

TRINITY 19

10th October 2021



¶ The Gathering

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

Hymn – Will you come and follow me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnXOEUS7BBM>

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave your self behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

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

O God, forasmuch as without you
we are not able to please you;
mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;
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

Old Testament Reading

Amos 5:6-7, 10-15

Seek the Lord and live,
or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire,
and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.
Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,
and bring righteousness to the ground!
They hate the one who reproves in the gate,
and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.
Therefore, because you trample on the poor
and take from them levies of grain,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not live in them;

you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.
For I know how many are your transgressions,
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and push aside the needy in the gate.
Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time;
for it is an evil time.

Seek good and not evil,
that you may live;
and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,
just as you have said.
Hate evil and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading

Hebrews 4:12-16

Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn – Amazing grace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKnEB6UV25c>

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch; like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

The Lord hath promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.

Gospel Reading

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

Mark 10:17-31

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother." ' He said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.' Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.'

When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' They were greatly astounded and said to one another, 'Then who can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'

Peter began to say to him, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you.' Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon

As so often, Peter is the one who speaks out what he (and probably everyone else listening) is thinking!

Peter hears Jesus saying that it is almost impossible for anyone with any sort of possessions to be saved – as hard as a camel passing through the eye of a needle. That's what Jesus said – and Peter was completely thrown – he might almost have said "That's impossible. It's unfair – is no-one going to get to heaven?"

A camel through the eye of a needle! I've often heard it said that Jesus was referring to a small gate called "The eye of the needle" in Jerusalem's city wall, rather than a real needle. A gate a camel could wriggle through if they really worked at it.

But my suspicion is that Jesus was, as he did so often, making a ridiculous exaggeration to force his listeners react strongly to the image of something impossible – and Peter, true to form, reacted very strongly:

‘Look, we have left everything and followed you – what more can you expect?’

Jesus was very aware that in our worldly thinking – when we commit to doing something and work really hard at it, like an exam, we expect that if we reach the pass-mark, if we reach an acceptable level, then we can sit back and think “Phew, I’ve done that.” Isn’t that how it works?

Like taking a driving test? Mind you, I failed my first time, and I was really upset. Then I passed the second time and thought I was brilliant!

Whereas the reality was that I had made the transition from an almost good enough driver to a just good enough driver, improving a little bit between the two. But I know that fifty years later, I still have so much to learn about driving really safely and really well – there’s no limit to this – I will never be able to say “That’s it – I know it all.”

Peter wanted Jesus to say – “Ok, you’ve passed.” But Jesus gave us a deliberately impossible target – “For mortals,” he said, “it is impossible.”

To the man with many possessions, Jesus said that he would have to give them all up – everything. And the man was shocked, and went away grieving. To him, too, it seemed impossible to get to heaven.

But suppose the man was poor, and kept all the commandments, would Jesus have said “Yes, you’re in!”

I don’t think so. It’s my understanding of Jesus’ teaching that it’s what we do with what we’re given that counts.

CS Lewis, the writer of the Narnia books, describes two people sitting in a congregation in church. One is a friendly, outgoing, caring person that everyone warms to. The other is an unattractive person whom no-one wants to sit next to. And he asks “Which one has travelled further on their journey towards heaven?”

To which the answer is that we cannot tell. Say the friendly person was just born that way, it just comes naturally, they’ve always been just the same. And the unattractive person has had a terrible

upbringing with a violent father, and has fought and fought to break free from that, and has come to church and found God's love warming their soul – a very hard journey that has cost them every ounce of determination, but that can't be seen.

Whether we are born, or grow up to be, poor and grumpy, or rich and happy, or silent and depressed, or the life and soul of the party, or angry and liable to violence, or the kindest person around. Whatever our natural character is, in God's eyes that counts for nothing – it's just a base line, a starting point.

It's how far we journey towards the person God wants us to become that matters.

Imagine God (or Jesus) saying "Come, follow me, come on a journey. In your lifetime see how far you can travel towards a more caring, generous, loving life."

The man that Jesus met with many possessions had never realised that what mattered was how much of a struggle, how much effort was required to become a different person, a better person.

Peter, unwittingly, hit the nail on the head when we said "Look, we have left everything and followed you."

Jesus called everyone to follow him, to start their journey of faith towards God, and then travel as far as they can.

For all of us, our Christian lives are a journey – like the Christians in Pilgrim's Progress. Moving, growing, changing as we set aside our selfish ambitions and seek to discover who we can become, with God's help.

Can you see what was wrong with the question that the man with many possessions asked Jesus - "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

He wasn't interested in loving God, or loving his neighbour, he selfishly just thought to secure his own place in heaven.

Jesus, of course, gave his life, in every sense, to serving all those around him, everyone he met, setting such a high standard that we could never dream of matching him.

But we know that it is our calling to follow him wherever he will lead us – leading us to a life of true fulfilment – Lord Jesus, you've called us, help us to follow you.

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 – Thou didst leave thy throne

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5jeNx6xAY>

Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown,
when thou camest to earth for me;
but in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
for thy holy nativity:

*Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
There is room in my heart for Thee;*

Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
proclaiming thy royal degree;
but in lowly birth didst thou come to earth,
and in greatest humility:

*Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
There is room in my heart for Thee;*

Thou didst come, O Lord, with the living Word
that should set thy people free;
but with mocking scorn, and with crown of thorn,
they bore thee to Calvary:

*Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus!
There is room in my heart for Thee;*

Heaven's arches shall ring, and a choir shall sing
at thy coming to victory,
let thy voice call me home, saying, "Yet there is room,
there is room at my side for thee!"

*And my heart shall rejoice, Lord Jesus!
when thou comest and callest for me;*

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 strength
to be generous to those around us,
to focus on other people
rather than our own possessions and our own security,
to acknowledge wrong actions and our own failings,
and to seek forgiveness.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

That all those who live in poverty
may find justice and fairness in society
and receive financial support when in need.

Lord, in your mercy

hear our prayer.

That the rich may use their wealth for the whole of society
and not just for themselves.

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 – Lord enthroned in heavenly splendour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV9wUIZJFAA>

Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour,
first begotten from the dead,
thou alone, our strong defender,
liftest up thy people's head.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus, true and living bread!

Here our humblest homage pay we;
here in loving reverence bow;
here for Faith's discernment, pray we
lest we fail to know thee now,
Alleluia, alleluia!
Thou art here, we ask not how.

Though the lowliest form doth veil Thee,
as of old in Bethlehem,
here as there Thine Angels hail Thee,
branch and flower of Jesse's stem.
Alleluia, alleluia!
We in worship join with them.

Paschal Lamb, Thy offering, finished
once for all when Thou wast slain,
in its fullness undiminished
shall for evermore remain,
Alleluia, alleluia!
Cleansing souls from every stain.

Life imparting Heavenly manna,
stricken rock with streaming side,
heaven and earth with loud hosanna
worship Thee, the Lamb who died,
Alleluia, alleluia!
Risen, ascended, glorified!

¶ *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.