

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION 7th August 2022

8th Sunday after Trinity

Prepared by the Reverend Sue Linford and available on the telephone on 01308 293062

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

1 All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2 Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3 God's great goodness ay endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of nought.

Joachim Neander (1650-1680) Paraphrased Robert Bridges (1844-1930) CCLI Licence 2370586

As Christians, we are called to be servants of God and of one another. Service calls for unselfishness and generosity, and we don't always find these easy. It is the Lord who calls us to service, so let us turn to him, and ask forgiveness for our failings, and for the help we need.

Lord Jesus, you call us to be good and faithful servants.

Lord, have mercy, **Lord, have mercy.**

You call us to be wise and prudent servants.

Christ, have mercy, **Christ, have mercy.**

You call us to be humble and joyful servants.

Lord, have mercy, **Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by God's Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn All my hope on God is founded

Evermore,
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

4 Daily doth the almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

5 Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

The Collect (special prayer for today)

Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven and became poor for our sake: when we prosper save us from pride, when we are in need save us from despair, that we may trust in you alone; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

READINGS

Hebrews 11:1-3,8-16

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore, from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, ‘as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.’

All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

Luke 12:32-40

‘Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

‘Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

‘But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.’

REFLECTION

An Irish priest once wrote, ‘there are two ways of approaching life; one is either a planner or a pilgrim.’

According to him, the planner likes to have total control over his life, and to be able to plan each stage according to pre-set goals. Planners take their cue from what society considers success, and spend most of their time trying to match the lifestyle and values of others. They then become bitterly disappointed if they fall short of these objectives.

The pilgrim, on the other hand, is someone who accepts life as a gift that unfolds as we live it; for however hard we may try, we can never have complete control over what happens. The pilgrim is not deterred by failures and disappointments, but sees them as opportunities for spiritual growth. Unlike the planner, the pilgrim never feels entirely comfortable or at ease with society’s values.

It is by faith that the pilgrim lives. They know that life is full of risk, yet it is something they affirm; sensing the full insecurity of the human condition, the pilgrim rejoices in it. They put themselves into God’s hands, thereby being fully open to the grace of God’s protection. As Jesus said, ‘Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’

Abraham is the great biblical model of faith; the quintessential pilgrim. Trusting totally in God, he uprooted himself, and his family, and set out for a land God promised to show him, and where he

would become the father of a great nation. It was a journey into the unknown; no satnav, no map; the only compass he had was his faith in God.

As spiritual descendants of Abraham, we are called to have faith like his. Life is full of uncertainty, and like Abraham we are journeying into the unknown. None of us knows what lies around the next bend in our life's journey. Yet, in spite of frustrations and failures we are called to journey on trusting in the strength and protection of God, homesick for his kingdom.

Meanwhile, like the servants Jesus talks about, we must strive to be faithful to God and to one another. The real test of faith is to be faithful in spite of setbacks and failures, even when that just means being faithful in small things, believing that our life **does** matter, and that we **can** make a difference. Amen

Hymn Be thou my vision

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee Lord;
be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong
tower:

O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my
power.

4 Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

5 High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

*Irish, c 8th century translated by Mary Byrne (1880-1931) versified by, Eleanor Hull (1860-1935) © Revived
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Prayers

As God's beloved children, let us come to him and open our hearts to him.

Father, you have given gifts to each one of us, we ask that you will help us to use them wisely, in your service, and in the service of all those around us. We pray that you will bless our own baptismal ministry as well as that of our church leaders; deepening our faith and our hope. Lord our God, **we believe and trust in you.**

Father, heal our nation and all the nations of all that is in the past and still corrodes the present, so that we may build on good foundations and learn to govern ourselves with honesty, integrity and compassion.

Lord our God, **we believe and trust in you.**

Father, be present in our daily living, in our homes and in all our relationships; make us trustworthy in our friendships, and strengthen our resolve to put our faith into action.

Lord our God, **we believe and trust in you.**

Father, we lay before you all whose capacity to trust has been damaged; for those who are victims of injustice or oppression; for the very young and the very old, the frail, the vulnerable and the bereaved.

Lord our God, **we believe and trust in you.**

Father, we remember those who have completed their earthly life in faith; may they rest in peace, and rise again in glory.

Lord our God, **we believe and trust in you.**

Father, we thank you for the glorious hope you have set before us

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

Prayers by Susan Sayers

Gathering together all our prayers, we say the prayer that Jesus gave us

**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: Great is thy faithfulness

1 Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not,
as thou hast been thou for ever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

*Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -
great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!*

2 Summer and winter, and spring-time and
harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Chorus

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Chorus

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*We give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us
now*

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen**

We pray God's blessing on each other

May the Lord be your strength in times of weakness.

May the Lord be your refuge in times of adversity.

And may you be faithful pilgrims on this earth.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and
those whom you love and pray for, this day and for evermore. **Amen**