

**Sunday 12 September 2021**  
**The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity**  
**Led by Michaela McNeill, ALM**

LORDSBRIDGE TEAM  
OF CHURCHES



### **Greeting**

Welcome in the name of Christ,  
God's grace, mercy and peace be with you  
and also with you.

### **Opening Prayers**

Loving God, we have come to worship you.  
**Help us to pray to you in faith,  
to sing your praise with gratitude,  
and to listen to your word with eagerness;  
through Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

### **Hymn - May the mind of Christ the Saviour**

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 through His power.

May the peace of God my Father  
Rule my life in everything,  
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.

May His beauty rest upon me  
As I seek the lost to win,  
And may they forget the channel,  
Seeing only Him.

### **Prayer of Penitence**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess we have failed you as did your first disciples.  
We ask for your mercy and help.

Our selfishness betrays you:  
Lord, forgive us.  
**Christ have mercy.**

We fail to share the pain of your suffering:  
Lord, forgive us.  
**Christ have mercy.**

We run away from those who abuse you:  
Lord, forgive us.  
**Christ have mercy.**

We are afraid of being known to belong to you:  
Lord, forgive us.  
**Christ have mercy.**

## Meditation

We shall concentrate on these words from Psalm 19:

- 7 The law of the Lord is perfect,  
reviving the soul;  
the decrees of the Lord are sure,  
making wise the simple;
- 8 the precepts of the Lord are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the Lord is clear,  
enlightening the eyes;
- 9 the fear of the Lord is pure,  
enduring forever;  
the ordinances of the Lord are true  
and righteous altogether.
- 10 More to be desired are they than gold,  
even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey,  
and drippings of the honeycomb.
- 11 Moreover by them is your servant warned;  
in keeping them there is great reward.
- 12 But who can detect their errors?  
Clear me from hidden faults.
- 13 Keep back your servant also from the insolent;  
do not let them have dominion over me.  
Then I shall be blameless,  
and innocent of great transgression.
- 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable to you,  
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

## Bible readings by Clare Crang

### James 3.1-12

3 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with

greater strictness.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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!<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species,<sup>8</sup> but no one can tame the tongue - a restless evil, full of deadly poison.<sup>9</sup> With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God.<sup>10</sup> From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.<sup>11</sup> Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water?<sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can saltwater yield fresh.

## Mark 8.27-end

<sup>27</sup> 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?”<sup>28</sup> And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”<sup>29</sup> He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.”<sup>30</sup> And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.<sup>31</sup> 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.<sup>32</sup> He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.<sup>33</sup> 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.”<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?<sup>37</sup> Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?<sup>38</sup> 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.”

### **Sermon by Chris Westgarth**

Words, words, words... just words...

A couple of weeks ago I had the joy of attending the Oasis Holiday Club... it was fabulous...there was lots of chatter but as we thought about trying new activities, I heard some people talking about things their teachers had said to them at school...such as at the end of lesson of woodwork, ‘it’s probably better if you don’t come back to class next week and you tidy the library instead’, ‘I really don’t think you have the ability to sew’ and ‘that’s not art, it’s a mess’...

These were the memories of people in their late 70’s or early 80’s...and yet some 60 plus years later they still could vividly remember the words and how it made them feel...

Equally I remember as a 9 year old being told I could not learn to play the violin because I had the wrong shaped fingers... for years I felt imperfect... but the truth was there was nothing wrong with my fingers - just they didn’t have enough violins for the class!

Our passage in James highlights the importance of the tongue and the need to control it. James speaks of perfection and he uses the word 'perfect' 7 times in his book... it means with integrity and wholeness... isn't that how we would like our speech and our life to be? But we fall short... we miss the mark...

Sticks and stones....I am sure we know that old rhyme so well... but it is not true... words and more importantly our words have the power to build up or the devastating power to break down, to crush, to scar and to wound.

The Christian group '2nd Chapter of Acts', wrote a fabulous song called 'That's not nice to say'...

'*Words confuse or bruise, words can style or file you away, be careful what you say...*

*Sticks and stones will break my bones but words will break my heart....chew, chew, chew, let's bite another back...*

Do we feast on critical words, hurtful, negative speech?

Our reading cautions us about the power of the tongue - *How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire!* YES words are so very powerful. We see this theme in James chapter 3

played out, but it's also a theme strung through the entire book of James. Indeed words can do great good. We can use words of encouragement, and peoples spirits will be lifted. We can pray with someone, and those words will bring life.

BUT...

There's a great Jewish story that talks about our words. 'A man had told so many malicious untruths about the local Rabbi that, overcome by remorse, he begged the Rabbi to forgive him. 'And, Rabbi,

*tell me how I can make amends.*' The Rabbi sighed, 'Well...take two pillows, go to the village square and cut the pillows open. Wave them in the air. Then come back to me'.

The man quickly went

home, got two pillows and a knife, rushed to the village square, cut the pillows open, waved them in

the air and then rushed back to the Rabbi's house. 'There, I've done it...I did just as you said, Rabbi!'

'Well done' The Rabbi smiled. 'Now, to learn how much harm is done by gossip, go back to the square...'

'Ok', he said 'And?' 'And collect all your feathers.'

That's an impossible task!

If we look at the first book of the Bible, Genesis, we see the power of words. God spoke, and the world was made. That's how powerful words are. Mankind shall not live by bread alone but by every spoken word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Deut 8:3, Mt 4:4)

Words can lift up, but words can also put us down... how many of us heard the good news of Jesus through spoken words, or by someone reading the Bible to us.

That is how powerful words and speech are! They can bring great life.

BUT words can also bring great destruction.

Now we might say... '*well that's ok... I don't gossip, I don't complain about others', 'I don't speak*

*about others behind their back*' – and that may well be true... but what do we do instead, we belittle

ourselves... Our inner voice wrestles with us day and night. Some of the ways we talk to ourselves

are ways we would never talk to our worst enemy. We need to speak to ourselves, with the same

love, and forgiveness and patience that we give others. When we

let our inner voice shame us, we  
need to stop, and ask ourselves, would we talk to a friend like  
this? Then change that inner voice to  
encouragement, and reciting what God's word says about us.  
I am a child of God, I am loved, I am forgiven, I am a new creation,  
That's why it's important to memorise little portions of scripture  
to repeat in our minds, or out loud,  
when we start having negative thoughts. When we start thinking,  
what's the point of life, no we are  
born again of the Spirit. We are destined for paradise, We are holy  
as God is holy. We need to  
change that internal conversation. It is important to fill our heart  
with the word of God and allow  
the fruit of the spirit to grow, for as it says 'out of the overflow of  
our heart, the mouth speaks'...

We need to fine tune our communication mechanisms to hear  
the voice of the Lord, the gentle  
whisper or the thunder roar...to know when to remain silent or  
when to ponder things in our heart,  
or when to speak out.

I have heard it said we need to learn to gossip the gospel... we  
need to be eager to use our voice and  
our words for good, for God!

I remember hearing the Bible teacher and evangelist, Alan  
Redpath, speak at Spring Harvest, many  
years ago... During a time of difficulty in his ministry, he set up an  
method before speaking of others  
or about controversial issues: he would use the word THINK...

T--Is it true?

H--Is it helpful?

I--Is it inspiring?

N--Is it necessary?

K--Is it kind?

If it didn't pass the test he would remain silent...

In conclusion we see the final section of James 3, which speaks of 'True Wisdom that comes from God.' And really that's what verses 1 to 12 are talking about, being wise with our words.

We are called to live humbly, honourably, doing good deeds. It challenges us to not live in bitter jealousy, or selfish ambition, or boasting, or lying. But let's hide the word of the Lord in our heart.

What an amazing way to live, let's all aim for that... because if we don't aim, we'll never hit the target, using our words to spread goodness or the good news, faith, love and truth. May our words be seasoned with grace, integrity, love and leading to wholeness.

## **Creed**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his son Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.**

**Amen.**

### **Intercessions by Fiona Whelan**

Dear Lord, we give you thanks and praise. We pray to you for strength, for peace and for stillness in this often loud and frantic world. We pray for your peace in all the places experiencing war and ongoing fighting at the moment. We pray in particular this morning for the people of Afghanistan and Syria. For their families hoping for news. For all the people trying so hard to achieve diplomatic solutions to what must feel at times are intractable problems. Dear Lord hold them fast in your love and strength as they seek to achieve peace.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

Father, we pray this morning for the many families so badly affected by 9/11. May they find strength, peace and stillness as they commemorate the 20th anniversary of that sad day. We pray that your peace may still and strengthen the hearts of all those affected by terrorist atrocities wherever they may be. We pray for those who mourn their loved ones and for those whose lives have been changed forever by their injuries. Father we pray that they will find it in their hearts to strive for peace and not continue the hatred that has led to these attacks.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

Father we pray for all those affected by changing climate issues, and for all those seeking solutions to the challenges our planet faces. We pray for all those affected by recent heavy storms, flooding and natural disasters and for those affected by ongoing

drought and ever-increasing temperatures. May we be ever mindful of the unique opportunities we have been afforded and treasure this beautiful planet that you have made. May we strive to be worthier guardians of our world as we pass it on to future generations.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

Dear Lord, our God and Father, in this time of transition give us eyes to see Your presence in our communities, ears to listen to Your will, lips to speak Your words, and hands to do Your work. Grant us grace and go before us, as we seek Your Holy Spirit's counsel to guide us in the appointment of a new team rector. We pray this through Jesus Christ, and for the sake of His Kingdom, in sure and certain hope of Your promises to us.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer**

Dear Lord we pray for your peace and stillness for all those currently struggling with the seen and unseen effects of the pandemic. We give thanks for all those helping in such difficult situations. Whilst there are many things that trouble us we give you thanks and praise for all the many wonderful things we occur in our day to day lives.

We give you thanks for the opening up of church services. For the increasing reunions of families and friends separated over the last 18 months. For the stronger communities we have built in our time of need. For children able to return to school and students looking forward to returning to College and University. For all the many steps we take towards a return to our normal lives we give you thanks and praise.

In silence now we bring before you all the issues that have troubled us and the things we give thanks for - and ask for your strength, peace and stillness as we look to the week ahead.

*Silence is kept*

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. 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 Lord's Prayer**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

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

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 yourself 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 let the blinded see  
if I but call your name?  
Will you set the prisoners free  
and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean  
and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean  
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.

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## Conclusion

Most merciful God,  
by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ  
you delivered and saved the world:  
grant by faith in him who suffered on the cross  
we may triumph in the power of his victory:  
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.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen**