



October 10th 2021 – Trinity 19

Led by the Rev'd David Newton

Hymn

1 Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour,
First-begotten from the dead,
Thou alone, our strong defender,
Liftest up thy people's head.
Alleluya,
Jesu, true and living Bread!

2 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.
Alleluya,
Thou art here, we ask not how.

3 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.
Alleluya,
We in worship join with them.

4 Paschal Lamb, thine Offering, finished
Once for all when thou wast slain,
In its fullness undiminished
Shall for evermore remain,
Alleluya,
Cleansing souls from every stain.

5 Life-imparting heavenly Manna,
Stricken Rock with streaming side,
Heaven and earth with loud hosanna
Worship thee, the Lamb who died,
Alleluya,
Risen, ascended, glorified!

Opening Words

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.

A Meditation: Psalm 90

- 1 Lord, you have been our refuge
from one generation to another.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the earth and the world were formed,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
- 3 You turn us back to dust and say:
'Turn back, O children of earth.'
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday,
which passes like a watch in the night.
- 17 May the gracious favour of the Lord our God be upon us;
prosper our handiwork; O prosper the work of our hands.

Prayer of Confession

**Most merciful God,
we confess to you,
before the whole company of heaven and one another,
that we have sinned in thought, word and deed
and in what we have failed to do.
Forgive us our sins,
heal us by your Spirit
and raise us to new life in Christ. 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.**

Readings

Bible Reading: Hebrews 4.12-end

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.

Gospel Reading: Mark 10.17-31

As he 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.’

Reflection

Written by Ruth Bond (LLM based in Barton)

I was playing “Pirate Race” with my three grandchildren not so long ago.

Roll the dice, move down the allotted squares and pick up a faced down card. It might or might not be one of 6 pieces that make up your pirate. Once the pirate is assembled you can then go after the treasure. And the chatter went something like this. From Harry who is 9, and winning says, "I'll have the most treasure." Matilda at 7 said, "This game is not about treasure, Harry." Elsie who is 5, quick as a flash came in with, "...no it's about making a person." No treasure seeking unless the pirate is made. At the time this of-the-cuff conversation struck me as being worth adding to my Commonplace book.

The Lord moves in mysterious ways, we know that, and when I read this morning's gospel from Mark the winning or losing at "Pirate Race" came to mind, and what those little children said in their innocent way. Here was the young man not wanting to give up his treasure, not wanting to give up his pieces. He thought to gain eternal life he had to give away his possessions, lose everything, and he wasn't prepared to do that. He didn't realise that the game he had to play in order to have eternal life was not to amass treasure but about making a person, his person – for God.

This young man, he had everything, but to decide to face Jesus and ask him the question of what he must do to attain that everlasting life, well, there must have been something missing. We hear so often when people give their testimony, for instance, that something was missing from their life; and the search isn't necessarily for eternal life, it is more likely to feel fulfilment, a feeling that there is more to my life than "this".

Yes, he had every material thing and advantage; he appeared to have it all. And his story is important. We must assume this because it is mentioned in all three gospels. Matthew calls him young, Luke says he is a ruler- and Mark says he had great wealth. Hence the rich young ruler.

So often this character is derided, he is one with a bad reputation, a bit like the prodigal son, or Esau who stole his brother's birth right. The RYM gets a bad press but is that because he is rich or because he doesn't want to give up his riches? A rhetorical question which I feel

will have an answer later on.

However, he was a ruler, young, gifted, respected and on the face of it he was righteous. It would appear he had achieved all this on his own merit but he lacked the one thing that he couldn't buy, one thing that he couldn't acquire by using his influence, he couldn't get that something extra on his own. He hadn't cottoned on that to the fact that to get up he had to give up.

Back in the day religious leaders of the time saw wealth as a positive sign of God's approval. Tick that box. But he could put a cross in the next one for he "ran to Jesus" we read. Now it was thought to be very *infra dig*, undignified, for a successful dignitary to run anywhere and much less to kneel, as he did in front of Jesus. A minor ruler kneeling before a carpenter. All this in broad daylight to, unlike Nicodemus who went to Jesus in the dark of night.

He must have been desperate; don't you think? Desperate, because he didn't have the one thing that would make him feel alive. "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

First mistake, and Jesus immediately tells him that "no-one is good – except God alone." Something of a cryptic crossword clue, you might say - Only God is good, Jesus isn't bad, Jesus is good, hence Jesus is God?

With that fundamental put straight, Jesus goes on to remind him of the commandments, well the last six commandments that is – the ones that concern how we act with each other. And did you notice, Jesus slipped in another one too? don't defraud. This young man has kept all the commandments, he had been good, he was successful so he must have thought that might well go a long way to give him what he was wanting. But Jesus didn't applaud all this, rather, he told him, no, he must, "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven" And here's the rub – "Then come, follow me".

We know that young rich ruler decided he didn't want to give

everything up and follow. He has decided he wanted eternal life but he was not prepared to pay the price. He wanted the treasure before he'd made the life, before all the pieces fitted together. He refused to follow Jesus; the only person we read of in the Bible who refused. Others had dropped their nets and left their boats. People could leave their work, but this man could not leave his wealth.

And yet, before he told the young man to sell everything and follow we read, "Jesus looked at him and loved him". This man was serious in his question, he really did want to know how to achieve eternal life, that special something, and Jesus loved him enough to tell him the truth. This ain't gonna happen, unless you replace your gold with God. Yes, he'd done well in life, yes, he'd been good to other people, but what of the first commandment, had he kept that one? "You shall have no other gods before me." And that is the heart of the matter, or rather the matter of the heart. The young man's riches was his god. Being righteous, being a good man and following his religion made him feel good on the outside but inside was empty, that something missing; and only knowing God, having a right relationship with Him, can fill the empty space inside. "You shall have no other gods before me."

And telling him he would have treasure in heaven sounded as if Jesus was trying to take things away from him now. But I think we know it was quite the reverse of that for Jesus was wanting to give him something more than all of his gold and silver his reputation and his standing in the community; Jesus was trying to give him everything that really matters in a life, in a person. The issue here is what is in the man's heart and, yes, indeed, what is in our hearts.

Jesus takes nothing from us, He give us everything – if we follow him, if we have a heart for Him. For the young man the time had come to realise that all he owned, owned him. His possessions possessed him. We don't have to literally sell everything we have to follow Jesus, but we do have to surrender everything to Him and be willing to walk away from everything for Him.

As Jesus himself said, “In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.” (Luke 14:33)

Note, not give away but give up.

We each must decide on the cost of eternal life –the cost is complete and unconditional surrender to Jesus.

What if Jesus came to us right here and now and told us to sell everything we have, give the money to the poor, and then follow him? Would we be aghast? Would our faces fall as did that of this rich young man? At some point in our lives, we all have to choose in whom or what we place our trust. What we shall value, what will be first in our lives. Right from the time of this story and down the ages, following Jesus means giving up the things that our culture values. It means giving up our own security and comfort and control.

But there is always Jesus’ promise that whatever we give up for him will be returned to us a hundredfold, through the richness of knowing him and sharing eternal life with him. We sing, “I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, the world behind me, the cross before, I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back”
“It’s not about treasure Harry, no, it’s about making a person”

The Apostles Creed

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

**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 day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**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.**

Prayers of Intercession

Written by Deborah Spencer

Loving God, we thank you for your invitation to gather here. We bow before you now in humility and with faith. We pray that our Church life will also be full of life and activity and that day by day we will grow to know you more clearly and love you more dearly.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Thank you, Father, for the priceless gift of your dear Son. Thank you for the wisdom, mercy, and salvation he brings. Thank you most for bringing us close to your heart. Bestow your Holy Spirit upon the Church, so it loves you with heart, mind, and strength. Help us to follow Jesus wherever he leads to preach the gospel, let it equip all people to find their treasure, joy and life in Christ alone.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

We pray for all those who are being driven from their homes in places of conflict and forced to seek refuge in our country. We pray that all the member nations of Europe will all do their best to offer a safe refuge to those in need. We especially think of the Afghan refugees that have been placed in our area. Help us to be good friends and neighbours and ensure they have a warm welcome.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, you called us to love our neighbour as ourselves, to speak up against injustice and oppression, and to serve others as we seek to serve you. Give us the confidence to do what you ask of us and help us to live out your love in our daily lives. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear where you call us to be your light.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, on homelessness Sunday we bring before you all those who are homeless this day. Whether sleeping rough on the streets of our communities or hidden away sofa-surfing: we ask that you be present with them. May they know your comfort and your friendship, your gentleness and patience, and may they each know the depth of your unending love for them.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Merciful God we remember this morning those who are sick, sad, or lonely and those who are brave and patient when things are going wrong. We pray that they may be aware of your comforting presence and know that in your hands they are safe and loved.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Gracious Father, keep in your care all who have died; and console all whose grief runs deep. Sustain, encourage, and refresh us through the toils and trials of life. Keep us strong in faith toward you and bring us to the joy of your Kingdom.

Creator God, we thank you for this time together in prayer and as we look forward to the week to come, we pray for an awareness of your love and support in all we do.

Merciful Father

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

**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.**

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.

Hymn

All I once held dear, built my life upon,
all this world reveres, and wars to own,
all I once thought gain I have counted loss;
spent and worthless now, compared to this.

*Knowing you, Jesus,
knowing you, there is no greater thing.
You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy, my righteousness,
and I love you, Lord.*

2. Now my heart's desire is to know you more,
to be found in you and known as yours.
To possess by faith what I could not earn,
all-surpassing gift of righteousness.

Knowing you, Jesus ...

3. Oh, to know the power of your risen life,
and to know you in your sufferings.
To become like you in your death, my Lord,
so with you to live and never die.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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Final Prayer

**O God who brought us
from the rest of last night
to the new light of this day,
bring us in the new light of this day
to the guiding light of the eternal.
Lead us, O God, on the journey of justice.
Guide us, O God, on the pathways of peace.
Renew us, O God, by the wellsprings of grace
today and for ever.
Amen.**

Blessing

May 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...

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