

2nd July, 2023

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe,

light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: 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.**

Song:

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Saviour,
And life more abundant and free!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.

Thro' death into life everlasting,
He passed, and we follow Him there;
O'er us sin no more hath dominion
For more than conquerors we are!



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.

His Word shall not fail you — He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace..

The Sermon by Andrew Walters

The King's justice. Read Isaiah 9:2-7, Matthew 7:1-6

If you can imagine the Sea of Galilee, the site where Jesus gave his famous sermon is at about 11 o'clock if the sea was a clock face. He gave his sermon near the town of Capernaum and it only took Jesus 10 to 15 minutes to give it. 15 minutes that changed our world.

In Moses' law we read of all the things we shouldn't do: the ten commandments that he's given us are full of things that we are not to do. Some of the laws are particularly fitting for their time but here in the beatitudes we are given a code – a manifest – on how to be a follower of Christ, a disciple. A code on how we are to behave and our attitude to others.

Up until this point, Jesus has concentrated on how we are to behave in an inward sense; care with our money and possessions (which Brian covered beautifully last week) and also how to be humble and merciful and meek and poor in spirit.

But here, Jesus made a key change in his sermon. He wants to teach us about looking outwardly towards others and in particular how we judge them. This is a very popular quote, a way of ending an argument. "Do not judge or you will be judged."

This is not, however, exactly how I believe Jesus is teaching us here. I think he isn't telling us not to judge at all. We are always asking for discernment and wisdom, particularly at warden-vicar meetings. We are beautifully put together in our mother's womb with a conscience and a sense of what is right and wrong which God has created in us. There seems to me to be a number of ways in which we judge: judging that destroys or judging to build up.

Judging that destroys is when we gossip, slander and bad-mouth. Often quick to decide without the full facts or without giving people a chance to be heard or even to repent. You see this very often on social media. People make others feel put down and leave the impression that we have our act together. When we behave like this it is particularly painful to God. I'm sure it's like a plank in his eye.

Judging to build up is to repent of what we've done and make ourselves right with Christ and coming along with those we feel compelled to make a judgement with. Coming from beneath or on a par with, we can teach God's words and ways with a recognition of the faults we have and the mistakes we've made. Christ died and shed his blood for all mankind- everyone in this world.

To make ourselves look like we've got our act together and to judge others from a position of authority is exactly what Jesus doesn't want. The measure that we give to others is going to be given against us.

There are a number of ways that help me try to stay with Christ, as we know in John 3:16 ("There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus"). I find that being in Christ and trying to mirror his image is important to me, although very difficult. I found this quote that helps me, and it's by John Stott, a theologian, cleric and author. "The essence of sin is we human beings substitute ourselves for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for us."

Jesus wants us to deal with the plank in our eyes when helping others. Jesus warns us in the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:32 and shows us the measure that can be used against us. Here is another often quoted verse which comes later in 7:12: "so in everything do to others that you would have them do to you."

Now we come to the dogs, pigs and pearls. Until relatively recently I was that pig, but the pearl transformed me. First I believed, and then the spirit built a relationship to trust in him through answered prayer, written word and fellowship. Many of my friends and loved ones won't accept these pearls – the gospel, the word and the truth. They mock and sometimes get angry. I give up casting out pearls and watching them being trampled on and just try living by example. Even with how I deal with my faults. Often, the only bible some people can read is the way we live.

I have an image I use almost as a frame for prayer. Please imagine in your mind's eye the empty cross and look up to the top of the cross, to God cupping the known universe in his hands, knowing every hair on our head and thought in it. Come down to the foot of the cross, to us at Bethlehem and think of ourselves; ask him to forgive us where we fail and help us to mirror the image of Jesus. Now, look to the middle where there is Calvary, where Jesus was crucified. Through this, The Holy Spirit is poured to us at the foot of the cross through the post of Pentecost.

Now, we ask Jesus along the beam of his word to take us to our brothers and sisters and to help them with their choices with the spirit of God right with us, following us.

Now, Lord Heavenly Father, we go the other way to the other end where we find people who refuse, who don't want to know and who reject your word. Help us to stick with them and help us to be the image of you before them. Guide us carefully with where we should use our pearls and give us discernment to keep us from being overzealous. Amen.

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.

Collect: Fourth Sunday after Trinity: O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal; grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, 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: *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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed.19th July at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 26th July at 11am in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise TBA.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays.
- COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.