



## The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

7<sup>th</sup> September 2025

In the name of the + Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

### HYMN

1 O praise ye the Lord! Praise him in the height;  
rejoice in his word, ye angels of light;  
ye heavens adore him by whom ye were made,  
and worship before him, in brightness arrayed.

O praise ye the Lord! Praise him upon earth,  
in tuneful accord, ye sons of new birth;  
praise him who hath brought you his grace from  
above,  
praise him who hath taught you to sing of his love

3 O praise ye the Lord, all things that give sound;  
each jubilant chord re-echo around;  
loud organs, his glory forth tell in deep tone,  
and, sweet harp, the story of what he hath done.

4 O praise ye the Lord! Thanksgiving and song  
to him be outpoured all ages along:  
for love in creation, for heaven restored,  
for grace of salvation, O praise ye the Lord!  
(Amen, amen.)

### Confession

God of mercy  
Long-suffering, full of grace and truth,  
You create us from nothing and give us life.  
You give your faithful people new life in the water of baptism.  
You do not turn your face from us,  
Nor cast us aside.  
We confess that we have sinned  
Against you and our neighbour.  
We have wounded your love and marred your image in us.  
Restore us for the sake of your Son,  
And bring us to heavenly joy,  
In Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

### Absolution

Almighty God,  
who in Jesus Christ has given us  
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,  
forgive us our sins, +  
open our eyes to God's truth,  
strengthen us to do God's will  
and give us the joy of his kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray  
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:  
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,  
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid  
and giving us those good things  
which we are not worthy to ask  
but through the merits and mediation  
of 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

**Old Testament reading  
Deuteronomy 30. 15-end**

15 See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. 16 If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, 18 I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, 20 loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

This is the word of the Lord  
Thanks be to God

**Psalm 1**

**The Way of the Righteous and the End of the Ungodly**

1 Blessed is the man  
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,  
Nor stands in the path of sinners,  
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;  
2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.  
3 He shall be like a tree  
Planted by the rivers of water,  
That brings forth its fruit in its season,  
Whose leaf also shall not wither;  
And whatever he does shall prosper.  
4 The ungodly are not so,  
But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.  
5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,  
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.  
6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,  
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.



1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, 2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in your house: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God 5 because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith towards the Lord Jesus. 6 I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. 7 I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

8 For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, 9 yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. 10 I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. 12 I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. 13 I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. 15 Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for ever, 16 no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

17 So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. 20 Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

This is the word of the Lord  
Thanks be to God

#### HYMN

1 Thy kingdom come, O God,  
thy rule, O Christ, begin;  
break with thine iron rod  
the tyrannies of sin.

2 Where is thy reign of peace  
and purity and love?  
When shall all hatred cease,  
as in the realms above?

3 When comes the promised time  
that war shall be no more,  
and lust, oppression, crime  
shall flee thy face before

4 We pray thee, Lord, arise,  
and come in thy great might;  
revive our longing eyes,  
which languish for thy sight.

5 Men scorn thy sacred name,  
and wolves devour thy fold;  
by many deeds of shame  
we learn that love grows cold.

6 O'er lands both near and far  
thick darkness broodeth yet:  
arise, O Morning Star,  
arise, and never set!

## Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the way the truth and the life says the Lord  
Whoever follows me shall not walk in darkness  
but will have the light of life.  
Alleluia.

## The Gospel

The holy Gospel is written in the 14<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the Gospel according to Luke beginning at the 25<sup>th</sup> verse.

Glory be to thee, O Lord

### The Cost of Discipleship

25 Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them, 26 'Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." 31 Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33 So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

This is the Gospel of the Lord  
Praise be to thee, O Christ

## Reflection

All the readings for this Sunday have the need for us to make serious choices. In Deuteronomy God, through the prophet, gives the people a choice. It could not have been spelled it out more clearly; choose life or death. This is not a multiple-choice question and God even gives the answer – choose life! However, that choice brings with it consequences. A responsibility is laid on those who choose life 'loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him.' There is to be an action to our choice. To choose the life God offers us, we are to 'love and obey'. The choice we make to choose life – is not a 'one off' we must guard, nurture and follow.

Psalm 1 describes two ways with a warning as to which we choose. Note how the progression away from God's life is gradual. As we leave the way, first we walk, then we stand, then we sit. We settle back down into 'the world'. We are now inactive in the things of God.

The Psalmist want to shake us awake. How do we wake up? Primarily by paying attention to God's word.

2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord,  
And in His law he meditates day and night.

Doing this has its effect – we 'water our spiritual lives' so that we are

... like a tree  
Planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth its fruit in its season,  
Whose leaf also shall not wither;  
And whatever he does shall prosper.

Paul sends back a runaway and hitherto 'useless' (the meaning of his name) slave. What does Paul want of Philemon? Onesimus, Philemon's slave had run away, perhaps he had stolen something, and somehow, he ends up with Paul who converted him. Slavery at that time was closer to medieval serfdom – duties and hard work but not without the possibility of making progress, and even owning property. The man is repentant and has changed. Paul sends him back to face his master, not just as a runaway slave but as Paul's messenger. Paul writes his appeal for generosity and mercy. Making a pun on his name he hopes that Onesimus will now be 'useful' not only to Philemon, but as he has been for Paul. Philemon and his master will both have to work at this new relationship.

Much of what is around as 'spirituality' even labelled 'Christianity' is a soft comfort blanket, not reflecting the reality of our condition before God or the necessity to choose and change.

In 'The Cost of Discipleship' the German Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote to challenge the way he thought discipleship had become secularized and criticised a form of Christianity which he felt 'cheapened' the grace of God. If you have read it, you will know that is an uncomfortable read. For example:

"Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession...Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."

In contrast Bonhoeffer describes the liberty and joy of grace understood as the loving gift of God which demands our all.

"costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. It is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus says: 'My yoke is easy and my burden is light.'"

In this week's gospel Jesus calls us to a type of discipleship with words which perhaps sound extreme. We are to 'hate' all others, even our own life in comparison to our commitment to him.

We must bear in mind cultural changes in the use of language. The idea of hating someone meant 'love less than' rather than 'positively loathe' and we find this language of 'overstatement' used in the Old Testament; 'loving' contrasted with 'hating', which sounds strange to us. Nonetheless, Jesus' words should cause us to examine our understanding of, and our commitment to, our own discipleship.

Thus, we are faced with a choice with eternal consequences, where will we place our allegiance? For this world only? It is a tough call. There is no 'fence' to sit on. The root of our living, the foundation on which we base all that happens to us, has to be firmly set. To take the way of Christ means we must abandon the world's values. Live as people fully engaged in life but with our eyes set beyond. This makes so much that we experience, bearable. In the world we will indeed have tribulation – Jesus told us that – but he went on "But be of good cheer for I have overcome the world."

## **The Creed**

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is,

seen and unseen.  
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.  
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.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.  
Amen.

## Intercessions

We pray that Christ may be seen in the life of the Church.  
You have called us into the family  
of those who are the children of God.  
May our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ  
be strengthened by your grace.  
Jesus, Lord of the Church,  
in your mercy hear us.

You have called us to be a temple  
where the Holy Spirit can dwell.  
Give us clean hands and pure hearts  
so that our lives will reflect your holiness.  
Jesus, Lord of the Church,  
in your mercy hear us.

You have called us to be a light to the world,  
so that those in darkness come to you.  
May our lives shine as a witness  
to the saving grace you have given for all.  
Jesus, Lord of the Church,  
in your mercy hear us.

You have called us to be members of your body,  
so that when one suffers, all suffer together.  
We ask for your comfort and healing power  
to bring hope to those in distress.  
Jesus, Lord of the Church,  
in your mercy hear us.  
You have called us to be the Bride,  
where you, Lord, are the Bridegroom.  
Prepare us for the wedding feast,  
where we will be united with you for ever.  
We pray for those who have died recently  
committing them into your loving care  
Jesus, Lord of the Church,  
in your mercy hear us.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,  
you have called us into fellowship with all your saints.  
We unite our prayers with theirs  
and ask for grace to serve you with joy  
where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for all eternity.  
in your mercy hear us.

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,  
to the mercy and protection of God.  
Amen.

Being made one by the power of the Spirit,  
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.

God of glory,  
the end of our searching,  
help us to lay aside  
all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom,  
and to give all that we have  
to gain the pearl beyond all price,  
through our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen

And the peace of God,  
Which passes all understanding,  
Keep your 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 with you, and remain with you always  
Amen

#### HYMN

1 Lord of our life and God of our salvation,  
Star of our night and Hope of every nation:  
Hear and receive Your Church's supplication,  
Lord God Almighty.

2 See round Your ark the hungry billows curling;  
See how Your foes their banners are unfurling  
And with great spite their fiery darts are hurling,  
O Lord, preserve us.

3 Lord, be our light when worldly darkness veils us;  
Lord, be our shield when earthly armour fails us;  
And in the day when hell itself assails us,  
Grant us Your peace, Lord:

4 Peace in our hearts, where sinful thoughts are raging,  
Peace in Your Church, our troubled souls assuaging,  
Peace when the world its endless war is waging,  
Peace in Your heaven.

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