

Eighteenth Sunday after TRINITY 4th October 2026



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

Amen.

The Greeting

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

HYMN

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his Name!

Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for thee,
and comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy
prayerfulness,
guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth thou wouldst reckon as thine;
for truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings to lay on his shrine.

These, though we bring them in trembling and
fearfulness,
he will accept for the Name that is dear;
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his Name!

Invitation to Confession

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and of great kindness.

Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God,
increase in us your gift of faith
that, forsaking what lies behind
and reaching out to that which is before,
we may run the way of your commandments
and win the crown of everlasting joy;
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.

A reading from the Old Testament
Isaiah 5 1-7

5 I will sing for the one I love
a song about his vineyard:
My loved one had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
2 He dug it up and cleared it of stones
and planted it with the choicest vines.
He built a watchtower in it
and cut out a winepress as well.
Then he looked for a crop of good grapes,
but it yielded only bad fruit.
3 "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
4 What more could have been done for my vineyard
than I have done for it?
When I looked for good grapes,
why did it yield only bad?
5 Now I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard:
I will take away its hedge,
and it will be destroyed;
I will break down its wall,
and it will be trampled.
6 I will make it a wasteland,
neither pruned nor cultivated,
and briers and thorns will grow there.
I will command the clouds
not to rain on it."
7 The vineyard of the Lord Almighty
is the nation of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are the vines he delighted in.
And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed;
for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.
This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

8 You transplanted a vine from Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.

9 You cleared the ground for it,
and it took root and filled the land.

10 The mountains were covered with its shade,
the mighty cedars with its branches.

11 Its branches reached as far as the Sea,
its shoots as far as the River.



12 Why have you broken down its walls
so that all who pass by pick its grapes?

13 Boars from the forest ravage it,
and insects from the fields feed on it.

14 Return to us, God Almighty!
Look down from heaven and see!

Watch over this vine,
15 the root your right hand has planted,
the son[you have raised up for yourself.

16 Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire;

at your rebuke your people perish.

17 Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand,
the son of man you have raised up for yourself.

Epistle
Phil 3 4b-14

(I) put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

HYMN

How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
and drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
and calms the troubled breast;
'tis manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary, rest.

Dear Name, the rock on which I build,
my shield and hiding-place,
my never-failing treasury, filled
with boundless stores of grace

!-Jesus! my Shepherd, Brother, Friend,
my Prophet, Priest and King,
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
and cold my warmest thought;
but when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.

Till then I would thy love proclaim
with every fleeting breath;
and may the music of thy Name
refresh my soul in death!

The Gospel

Matthew 21 33-end

Alleluia, alleluia.

We do not live by bread alone

But by every word that comes from the mouth of God. Alleluia

The Holy Gospel is from the 21st chapter of the Gospel of Matthew beginning at the 33rd verse.
Glory to you O God

33 "Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. 34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

35 "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. 37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

38 "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' 39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

41 "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

"The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvellous in our eyes'?"

43 "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. 44 Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed."

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. 46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

This gospel parable, with its many levels of meaning, is found in all three synoptic gospels so we have to conclude it is important. Its surface meaning is obvious, the salvation history of God. God entrusted the kingdom to the Israelites, when they went astray, he sent prophets, but most did not listen and finally God sends his son to bring clearly God's message, but the leaders did not receive him and had him killed, so the kingdom is given to a new people, the church. This is a rather simplistic and scant interpretation. It suggests God has bypassed his original people, which is not the case. They remain the vine into which those of us who are not Jews are grafted.

How can we apply this parable to ourselves? Firstly, it teaches us of God's care and patience. The landowner (God) has lovingly prepared the land, emphasis is made of this, and it is entrusted to tenants to cultivate and harvest. This is his commission to us now, a beautiful world for us to care for.

Secondly this parable, speaks to us about stewardship. This world and our life in it are God's gift to us and along with that goes the freedom to use it however we want. We are not good stewards; human history is evidence of that. We treat the world as if it were our property to plunder and misuse. We can fail to acknowledge the landowner and we take rather than giving back to God. We do not own anything; everything is a gift.

This is a pertinent thought as we celebrate Harvest Thanksgiving. It is very easy to give a nod in the direction of thanksgiving for creation and the needs of the poor, and then get on with life. However, increasingly it is dawning upon us the damage we are doing and have done. Who knows whether we can reverse or 'steady the ship'. Only time will tell and that will be beyond the lifetime of most of us. It is the rising generations who will bear that burden.

Those to whom this parable was directed were quick to pass judgement on the wretched tenants and say that the lease should be given to those who will care and produce the harvest. Perhaps they did not yet see that they were speaking about themselves. Do we not see it is also directed to us?

All this is a sobering thought.

Jesus concludes his parable with what can seem a strange allusion. Jesus is referring to himself; he is the cornerstone, foundation stone that they will reject. With him comes the Message and commandments of God. These are unchangeable and stand in opposition to our misuse of the world. Jesus taught the love of God and of our neighbour – these two commandments sum up all the Law of God. We cannot break God's laws; we can only break ourselves upon them. That is just like saying you cannot break the law of gravity, only break yourself by ignoring it.

Primarily, this parable sets Jesus as the cornerstone on which our whole lives are built. To not have that in place means we have no foundation. Make Jesus Christ your foundation and your life is secure. He is the alpha and omega the beginning and the end.

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.

Intercessions

Let us pray to God the Father,
who has reconciled all things to himself in Christ:

For Christian people everywhere,
that we may joyfully proclaim and live our faith in Jesus Christ.

For peace among the nations,
the cessation of violence and destruction
for those who suffer so terribly this day
that peace will come and people can grow in justice and harmony

For those who serve in public office,
that they realise their responsibility and work for the common good
For those who suffer from hunger, sickness, or loneliness,
that they may know your love for them in pity, healing and mercy
health and wholeness. We pray for prisoners, their families
prison staff and remember Lewes prison and those in the Chaplaincy team.

For the homeless, those imprisoned in slavery
the refugee – those who have nowhere to call home.
God in mercy, strengthen and prosper all who work to bring comfort,
aid and relief and rescue.

For those whom we love but see no longer.
Those who will die this day, and all who mourn.
For the families of those who die in unexpected and tragic circumstances
for those affected by the suicide of those they loved.

For all those people and situations which overwhelm us with their pain.
Dear God, help us to live in the sure and certain hope of
your eternal victory.

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

Blessing

God, our judge and saviour,
teach us to be open to your truth
and to trust in your love,
that we may live each day
with confidence in the salvation which is given
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Great God, you are one God,
and you bring together what is scattered
and mend what is broken.
Unite us with the scattered peoples of the earth
that we may be one family of your children.
Bind up all our wounds
and heal us in spirit,
that we may be renewed as disciples of Jesus Christ,
our Master and Saviour.
And the blessing of God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen

HYMN

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, 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.

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.

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!