

Service of the Word 13 September 2020

Pentecost 15

Welcome

Good Morning and welcome to our service. It seems like every week these days brings new challenges and today is no different. The news has been filled with Pandemic restrictions being reimposed for many, the Brexit word has reared its' ugly head again, and freak weather conditions have brought further disruption to many people's lives. Trying to find or maintain stability and balance in our own individual lives has been particularly difficult throughout the week. I imagine hiding from the news has become a survival strategy for many once again. On the other hand we do need to know what is going on for us especially with new, ever changing Covid-19 restrictions. So this morning please take a deep cleansing breath, repeat as necessary, as we join our voices present and virtual in praise of God, our creator and redeemer.

Gathering

We are gathered together as the family of God
to offer praise and thanksgivings
to ask forgiveness of our sins
to hear and receive God's holy Word
to pray for the needs of the world
and to seek God's grace
that through Jesus Christ our Lord
and in the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to God's service.

Penitence

You raise the dead to life in the Spirit.
Lord, have mercy.

You bring pardon and peace to the broken in heart.
Christ, have mercy.

You make one by your Spirit the torn and divided.
Lord, have mercy.

O Lord, all we long for is before you;

and our deep sighing is not hidden from you.
But we acknowledge our wickedness;
we are filled with sorrow at our sin.
Be pleased O Lord, to deliver us;
O Lord, make haste to help us.
May the Lord forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are
and direct what we shall be,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Praise

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
with God the Son, Jesus Christ,
and God the Holy Spirit,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect of the Day

Almighty God, you call your Church to witness that in Christ we are reconciled to you. Help us so to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may turn to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen

First Reading Jeremiah 1.4-9 NIV UK

The call of Jeremiah

The word of the Lord came to me, saying,
'Before I formed you in the womb I knew[a] you,

before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.’
‘Alas, Sovereign Lord,’ I said, ‘I do not know how to speak; I am too young.’
But the Lord said to me, ‘Do not say, “I am too young.” You must go to
everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of
them, for I am with you and will rescue you,’ declares the Lord.
Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, ‘I
have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and
kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to
plant.’

Second Reading Matthew 6.19-21,34 MSG

19-21 “Don’t hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and
corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by thieves. Stockpile treasure in
heaven, where it’s safe from moth and rust and thieves. It’s obvious, isn’t it?
The place where your treasure is, is the place where your heart is also.

34 “Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get
worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you
deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.

Reflection

The place where your treasure is, is the place where your heart is also.

Jesus is trying hard in this part of Matthew’s gospel to help his disciples
focus on what is really important in their lives. Chapter 6 includes the Lord’s
prayer, wildflowers and the instruction not to be anxious about things you
cannot change. In this short passage Jesus is asking his disciples and
asking each of us to consider carefully where are *treasure lies*. He is asking
us to look carefully at what are the things in our lives which really matter?

Throughout this week I have been in regular contact with my family caught
up in the horrific wildfires destroying lives and property in Oregon. I have
been watching, through the wonderful gift of the internet, updates, news
bulletins and interviews with people in the path of the fires who have had to
evacuate or at the very least prepare themselves to evacuate quickly. These
people like so many others fleeing natural disaster or war have to make

quick decisions about what is important to them. They make this decision knowing that whatever is left behind is very likely gone forever.

So I asked my self, more than once this week, what is important in my life, important enough to grab and take with me into a new and uncertain future

Where does my heart's treasure lie?

For almost everyone fleeing the fires family and pets came top of the list. I have a lovely image in my mind of an evacuated family who made sure to pack two tents so that their pets would have shelter if they had to camp.

Officials and survivors of other evacuations advised those preparing in good time to leave - advised them to film, 360 degrees, to film every room in their house. Good advice for insurance purposes I am sure but it also made me wonder as I did the same exercise in my mind's eye which of my many possessions would I want to save?

We are being asked this question about what is important in our lives, personally, as a church, as a community, as a country and as a world - we are being asked this question, just as Jesus asks it of his disciples. *Where does our heart's treasure lie?* What is important to us? Knowing that many familiar and seemingly important things will have to be left behind, forever. Important as we come through this pandemic, which far, far from over. Important as we leave the European Union. Important as we tackle the climate change that fuels natural disasters. *Where does our heart's treasure lie?*

If I had to grab quickly the things important to me, the decision actually came fairly easily. My cat, the other heart beat in my home that brings me companionship. My quilts, which as well as hold memories bring warmth and comfort. Identification documents, I know who I am but others might need proof. Clothes, a Bible and Iphone kind of round off the list.

Jesus is clear in his message to his disciples and to us. At the end of the day our lives, our identity, the very source of our being and well being lies in God. Loving God is our heart's treasure, loving God and being loved by God is at the end of the day is the only thing which is really, truly important. Hopefully, I will not be faced with the kind of evacuation orders which my family and friends are still facing. But we are all facing difficult decisions about what is important to our lives in the days, weeks and months ahead. We will need

our strength to remember that loving God and being loved by God is at the end of the day is the only thing which is really, truly important. God is where our heart's treasure lies.

“Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.

Apostle's Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and 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.

Let us pray, for the church and the world, thanking God for the blessings in our lives

Intercessions

Blessing

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen

Act of Dedication

Almighty God,
we thank you for the gift of your holy word:
may it be a lantern to our feet,
a light upon our paths,
and a strength to our lives.
Take us and use us to love and serve all people
in the power of the Holy Spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Praise

You send forth your Spirit, O Lord; *
you renew the face of the earth.
You send forth your Spirit, O Lord; *
you renew the face of the earth.
May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; may the Lord rejoice in all his works.
You renew the face of the earth.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
You send forth your Spirit, O Lord; * you renew the face of the earth.

Blessing

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 all those for whom you have a care this day and evermore. Amen