

A morning service for Sunday
The 7th Sunday after Trinity

Hymn

The perfect wisdom of our God

<https://youtu.be/hSnzYnOe6kl>

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

This is the day that the Lord has made
Let us rejoice and be glad in it

An encircling prayer

Lord be with us this day,
Within us to purify us;
Above us to draw us up;
Beneath us to sustain us;
Before us to lead us;
Behind us to restrain us;
Around us to protect us

Introduction

Have you ever wondered about the bits that are not written about in the Gospels? The other conversations that must have taken place between Jesus and his disciples and casual followers? The conversations that arose when the crowd listening to the Sermon on the Mount went home, or the thoughts of the boy who gave his bread and fish to feed the 5000? There's so much more to know. So much more to learn about what people thought of Jesus and how they linked him with the prophets and the promises of God. Life was so much different then. Oh yes, people had work and keeping a roof over their head to worry about – just like us, (but without any help from society at large) and they had worries about politics and the outcome of national and international quarrels that might impinge on them (without the ability to effect change through the ballot box) and they were undoubtedly worried about their children and future marriages and grandchildren.

But there was one major difference. The people around Jesus all passionately believed that God was their God and would personally intervene in the affairs of their nation to bring about a more just, merciful and equal society in the fulness of time. They had a vision of the future, of the Kingdom of God, of a new reality when justice and mercy would flow like a river and peace would cover a world of which they were the centre. And that God would act as he had done in the past to throw off the yoke of the oppressor and lead his people to freedom. They were hoping with increasing longing for that time to be now!

It was a heady and passionate time to be alive in that the tiny country of Judea, especially as Jesus spoke so earnestly about the Kingdom of God, describing it in an array of parables, making it seem so near that they could grasp it in their hand, and yet making it so different as to be almost unrecognisable as we shall hear in our Gospel story later.

Thanksgiving

Blessed are you, creator of all
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As your dawn renews the face of the earth,
bringing light and life to all creation,
So may we rejoice in this day you have made
As we awake refreshed from the depths of sleep
open our eyes to behold your presence
and strengthen our hands to do your will,
that the world may rejoice and give you praise
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Blessed be God for ever.

Loving God we have come to worship you
help us to pray to you in faith,
and to hear your word with eagerness
Through Christ our Lord
Amen

Confession

Jesus says;
'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'
so let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ
confessing our sins in penitence and faith

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

Absolution

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

Collect for Trinity 7

Lord of all power and might,
the author and giver of all good things;
graft in our hearts the love of your name,
increase in us true religion,
nourish us with all goodness,
and of your mercy keep us in the same;
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

Shine Jesus, Shine

<https://youtu.be/J3iB30gCqAc>

First Reading

The first book of Kings, Chapter 3, verses 5-12

Solomon asks for the gift of wisdom

⁵At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.

Psalm 119,

Verses 129-136

¹²⁹ Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore my soul keeps them.

¹³⁰ The unfolding of your words gives light;
it imparts understanding to the simple.

¹³¹ With open mouth I pant,
because I long for your commandments.

¹³² Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as is your custom toward those who love your name.

¹³³ Keep my steps steady according to your promise,
and never let iniquity have dominion over me.

¹³⁴ Redeem me from human oppression,
that I may keep your precepts.

¹³⁵ Make your face shine upon your servant,
and teach me your statutes.

¹³⁶ My eyes shed streams of tears
because your law is not kept.

Second Reading

Paul's Letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 26 to the end

Paul writes of God's amazing love for us

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

God's Love in Christ Jesus

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hymn

As the deer

<https://youtu.be/FBppKZ0eJlQ>

The Gospel Reading

Matthew 13; 31-33 & 44-52

Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹ He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

The Parable of the Yeast

³³ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

Three Parables

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Treasures New and Old

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

Reflection

Peter shifted uneasily on the hard rock and tried once more to concentrate on what the Master was saying. Out of the corner of his eye he could see John leaning forward, his forehead furrowed, and straight across from him, sitting at a respectable distance, Mary Magdalene, sitting with Joanna, Chuza's wife, was all eyes and ears.

It had been a long and tiring day, beginning with a walk through a cornfield.

That's where all this began, thought Peter. With that walk and them plucking some of the grains of wheat and eating them. A Pharisee had seen them. He come over, self-righteous and grand, to point out it was the sabbath and they were breaking the law and what was Jesus going to do about it.

Then what happened? There were so many things to remember about to-day. Yes, that was it – the Master walked into the synagogue and healed the man with the withered hand. The congregation all sucked their gums as a Pharisee pointed out that Jesus was working as a healer and on the sabbath too.

After that, it seemed to Peter, that the Master was determined to stand toe to toe with the Pharisees and trade blow for blow. He'd called them a brood of vipers! Then he'd taught the people there about the new kingdom and judgement.

But, thought Peter, how are we going to set up the New Kingdom if we are at loggerheads with our own people. As he sat there the visions of Micah and Isaiah danced round his head, the words they had learnt at their mother's knee – a kingdom where everyone received the rewards of their labour, ate the bread made from the grain they had grown, drank the wine from their own vines, saw their children grow and flourish, and reached a dignified and worthy old age. A kingdom where justice and mercy rolled down like a river and all was peace and security. And, more importantly, where the kings and peoples of the world came to God's Holy City of Jerusalem to worship him.

Then the words of Jesus cut across his thoughts like a blade of steel.

Jesus was speaking in parables about that self-same kingdom – the one he said he had come to establish. But it didn't make sense.

Kingdoms are created by armies. Take King David, the Master's ancestor, – he kept the kingdom safe by being a great soldier and by walking humbly with God. His son Solomon, when asked what he most desired, answered God with a request for wisdom and used that gift to bring the new Kingdom of Judea to great prominence and power. The Maccabees just a century or so ago had wrenched the kingdom back from the Greeks and their attempt to wipe out worship of the One True God. Isaiah had told them about the world beating its path to the gates of Jerusalem, bringing untold wealth and devotion. This vision had fed them for centuries and was in the forefront of all their minds now.

Peter knew his history – knew what was needed. But the Master had other ideas. He listened, though his whole body wanted to droop and drift into sleep. In his slightly befuddled state, he thought of mustard seeds and yeast, pearls and treasure and wondered what the Master meant.

It seemed that the people must want the kingdom with all their hearts, to give themselves wholeheartedly to it, and then it would happen.

Then the Master caught his eye and held it. Peter was more awake than he'd ever been, almost fearful of being asked a question, fearful of looking foolish again.

He held on to his thought and expanded it – the Kingdom would be grown not by warriors who destroyed, but by people who lived as if it was already here. The kingdom was a precious ideal that people would give their livelihood and their lives for, it would grow, like the dough grows when the yeast is added, like a tree grows, but person by person, through word and by word. No one would be able to destroy it – because it is an idea and can spread like wildfire. And not everyone who seemed to be part of it would actually help to increase it. But that was none of his business – his task was to help the Kingdom grow. He didn't know why he, a fisherman, had been chosen for this. He didn't know what the Master saw in him – what skill or talent he had – but he knew that he had already given up everything to follow and that he would never stop.

Jesus spoke again, asking if they understood. Peter joined the collective yes and listened, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

This nearly threw Peter off-balance until he looked across at Mary and Joanna and suddenly, he realised. His 'kingdom' the one he thought he had seen in Isaiah and Micah, had been the old world of David. A kingdom of hierarchy and authority, of division and power.

This new Kingdom of God took all that was good and true and honest and kind from the past and opened it up to everyone. It was the reality of Micah and Isaiah, not mankind's interpretation. It was not to be a kingdom for a particular people, but a kingdom for the world. It was not to be a Kingdom of princes and kings, rulers and ruled, but of God himself. His word, his laws of love for all humankind, love for Him and for neighbour as oneself, laws which they had always known, would be its basis. And these laws would be interpreted to include respect for every living being, regardless of colour, creed and gender. And they would not have to be policed by self-appointed, self-righteous custodians but would be written in our hearts.

Peter still had no idea why the Master had chosen him or what on earth he could do to help the Kingdom come – he just knew that this was now his purpose in life, and he would work to see the kingdom grow – like the mustard tree. And hope that as he muddled through, he would listen to the word of Jesus in his heart and at the end would be one of the catch that was kept.

Lord, you have called us to be part of the great purpose of your Kingdom. We bring our gifts and our talents for your use and for the benefit of our community. Strengthen and inspire us by your Holy Spirit to reveal your Kingdom values in our lives and so draw others into the circle of your love. May we too, see that the beauty of your Kingdom is worth all we have and that our reward is the joy felt in knowing we do your will.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

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 on 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

Hymn

O Lord listen to my prayer
<https://youtu.be/6Qyi-z6PNLE>

Intercessions

Heavenly Father, we bring to you our troubled world with all its problems we see how far we are from the ideals of your kingdom. We Christians have failed to spread the true vision of your loving care and people are suffering from repression and oppression in countries everywhere. Give us the courage to speak out for what is right, to live your kingdom values, and to be loving and generous in our treatment of others; by our example may others come to know and love you. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Jesus, Son of God and the world's redeemer, you gave your life for the Kingdom in which we have an honoured place. As we marvel at the depth of your love may we be inspired to follow your example and live for the needs of others. May our leaders throughout the world be touched by the vision of peace and love which you have given us and work for the removal of slavery and oppression everywhere. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Holy Spirit, through you pours the healing balm of God's love. We pray that you will fill the hearts of all who are suffering with the peace and power of that love. We remember especially at this time those who are ill and those who have lost loved ones at this time.

Alex, Anne & Geoff, Catherine, Derek & Val, Don & Ro, Eileen, Frances, Harriet, Jacky, Matthew and Lucy, Michelle, Peter,
Val Adams, Jake Agnew, Elizabeth Bailey & family; Ken Baker, Robert Bloomfield, Nonnie Bridge, Doreen Clarke, David Kloose [Close], Guy Coxeter, Jimmy Cromar, Beryl Dabson, Peter Dickinson, Barry Dowsett, Jean Foster, Tom & Kylie Freeman & Family, Doreen Gilbert, Gillian Grafham, Eddie Gordon, Richard Green, Colin Hart, Kaye Head, Kath House, Stephen Johnson, Hayden Keeling, Colin Lister, Rene M, Claire and Andrew MacLeod, Rhys Maples, David McNeill, Carole Noble, Harriet Pearson, Cecilia Phelps, Dave Phillips, Robert Price, Ruth Thurston (*Ruth Wells' Mum*), Doug Watson, Ruth Wells, and the family and friends of the late Karon Dallard, the late Ken Cole and the late Joan Holmes (*Sue Hooper's mum*)

We bring our prayers to an end with the words that Jesus taught us

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,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Loving God, lead us out into the world
renewed in vigour, in hope,
in faith and in purpose.
Send us out to live and work for you
and to live your life
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

<https://youtu.be/OJvCmvlm-Qg>

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 you love and pray for
This day and always
Amen

Closing music

Wherever there is love

<https://youtu.be/3Yb9l75pXQE>