

The Bride Valley Service for Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Trinity 10

This service can be accessed via the telephone on 01308 293062

*At the beginning of our services in church today we will light a candle,  
you may wish to light a candle at home too.*

**Welcome and Opening Scriptures**

How wonderful it is, how pleasant for God's people to live together in harmony!

It is like the precious anointing oil running down from Aaron's head and beard,  
down to the collar of his robes.

It is like the dew on Mount Hermon, falling on the hills of Zion.

That is where the Lord has promised his blessing — life that never ends. *Psalm 133*

**Confession**

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

**Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.**

**We are not worthy to be called your children.**

**We turn to you again.**

**Have mercy on us, bring us back to yourself**

**As those who once were dead**

**But now have life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Absolution**

May the God of love bring us back to himself,

Forgive us our sins

And assure us of his eternal love

In Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**The Collect (special prayer for today)**

Let us pray:

**Lord of heaven and earth, as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,**

**Give us patience and courage never to lose hope,**

**But always to bring our prayers before you;**

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Old Testament Reading: Genesis 45 verses 1-15**

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, 'Send everyone away from me.' So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come closer to me.' And they came closer. He said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, "Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of

famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.” And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father how greatly I am honoured in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here.’ Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

### **Gospel Reading: Matthew 15 verses 10-28**

Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

### **Reflection**

Here in the book of Genesis we have Joseph, at the height of his career in Egypt, sending everyone away so that he can be alone with his brothers and have a private word. He can stand it no longer, the tension of them not knowing who he actually is. In view of what they once put him through, the way they disposed of him because of their jealousy, you would totally understand it if he was incandescent with rage. While his experience in Egypt brings good to him in the power and prestige it gives him, it is at least debatable whether that makes it worthwhile to have been thrown into the cistern, sold into servitude in a foreign country and put into jail.

But no, Joseph is in a position to see the bigger picture, as if he is surveying the scene from above, like an eagle or an albatross, and he recognises God’s hand in how his life has turned out. The good that God brings out of these experiences is not only the good it brings to Joseph personally (let’s say, the maturing of his character), but the good it brings to his family. The point is that this is the family through which God is going to bring blessing to the world. It’s important to keep this family alive rather than let the famine starve them to death, because they are called to God’s purpose in a special sense.

Looking back, as twenty first century readers we owe our salvation to the fact that God kept this family alive, so that Jesus could be born from it. For Joseph this means God doing such an extraordinary thing through his suffering that it compensates for what he went through, it’s a pattern repeated in Jesus’ story.

God knows all about our human weakness, and wrongdoings, and Joseph's dream about lording it over his brothers which in turn makes the brothers give in to the temptation to 'get him' for it. But God's intentions prevail which makes it possible for Joseph to live with the way his brothers treated him in the same way that make it possible for Christians to accept the role that Judas, Pilate, the Jewish leaders and the Roman soldiers played in Jesus' death.

Likewise, whatever is going on in your life today, maybe as a result of suffering in the past or even right now, we can be certain that God knows all about it. Not only that, God will be using our experiences to bring about his purpose for our life today, here and now.

That's the good news of the gospel. Today, as the story of the Canaanite mother shows us, because of the difficulties with her disabled daughter she has the confidence to approach Jesus. Her perseverance, trust and hope are fuelled by what her family are going through. The disciples may be looking down on her and even Jesus seems to be turning her away ... but she is nothing but persistent and ultimately Jesus is stunned by her faith and the end result, her daughter is instantly healed.

We may be looking back on our lives with a realisation that God's plan has prevailed, or we may be wondering how on earth God will use what we're going through now for his purpose, to bring about his kingdom here on earth, our hopes and dreams fulfilled. We must be confident in God, have faith in his plans: **"For we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose"** Romans 8 v 28

From the Electric Bible: "Joseph, Egypt's master and dispenser of her wealth, was raised to this high office, to save the nation's health. His brothers stood around him, and begged for precious grain; then Joseph knew his private dreams were part of a greater aim. *Joseph, the dreamer, God was calling you. He had plans you did not know until your dreams came true.*"

Let us affirm our faith in God in the words of the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
And born of the Virgin Mary.  
He 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,  
And is seated at the right hand of God the Father.  
He will come again to judge both 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.**

## **Prayers of Intercession** (adapted from prayers by John Pritchard)

Lord of the Church, thank you for our church – the place, the people, the history and what it's meant to generations of people living near. Thank you for the people that have flowed in and out through the doors, faithful or searching, joyful or sad, hopeful or anxious. Thank you for the role the church has played in the lives of so many and the way the love of God has been made known in worship and service of others.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, we pray for the churches near us, all with their own treasured story; St Michael and All Angels in Littlebredy, St Peter's in Long Bredy, St Mary's in Litton Cheney, Chilcombe Church, St Mary's in Puncknowle, Holy Trinity in Swyre, St Mary's in Burton Bradstock and St Martin's in Shipton Gorge. We pray for their well-being and for creative relationships across this network of local churches, each centred on Christ and longing to make him known. In particular we pray for the Bride Valley News and all the volunteers getting ready to resume their roles in preparation for the September delivery.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, we give thanks that across the country churches stand as great beacons, reminding people of your presence in their midst. There are church towers punching the sky and church spires piercing the horizon. Churches give soul to every community, and without them there's a vacuum in the centre of community life. Enable us to keep our churches open and available, flexible and forward-looking; sacraments of your love as outward and visible signs of your inward, invisible grace.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, here in Britain with the Queen as our governor and across Europe there are enormous numbers of churches speaking of the Christian heritage that gave birth to the institutions of government, the legal system, hospitals, schools, the arts, philanthropy and so much more. Help our continent not to renege on its past, but to value its heritage as a springboard to an ever more just, peaceful and compassionate future. Especially we pray for the recovery from the effects of Covid19, for the swift and safe development of a vaccine and a cure, not forgetting all those who have lost their lives to this deadly disease.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, across the world the centre of gravity for Christianity has moved south. Thank you for the huge growth in the worldwide Church – 70,000 more Christians every day. Thank you for the variety of expression in worship and church life, in mission, ministry and social engagement. We pray especially for the links we have in South Sudan, Wonduruba. Bless our brothers and sisters and continue to strengthen our fellowship with them.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, from *this church* to Salisbury Cathedral and beyond, we all belong to you; we have all heard your call, left our nets and followed you. We are not yet what we should be, but we are not stuck. Shape us into the Church you want us to become, to the glory of the Father, in the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Let us now pray the Lord's Prayer together

**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.  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power  
and the glory, forever and ever.  
Amen.**

A special prayer for those of us who are unable to receive the sacrament at this time

**Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'.  
Be with me today, as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself,  
and keep me in your care.  
help me to trust you now more than ever,  
help me to know that you are with me,  
help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

The service ends with the Peace

**Peace to you from God our Father who hears our cry.  
Peace from his Son Jesus Christ whose death brings healing.  
Peace from the Holy Spirit who gives us life and strength.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you. Amen**

Sources: Patterns for Worship, John Goldingay, John Pritchard, The Electric Bible and Common Worship.