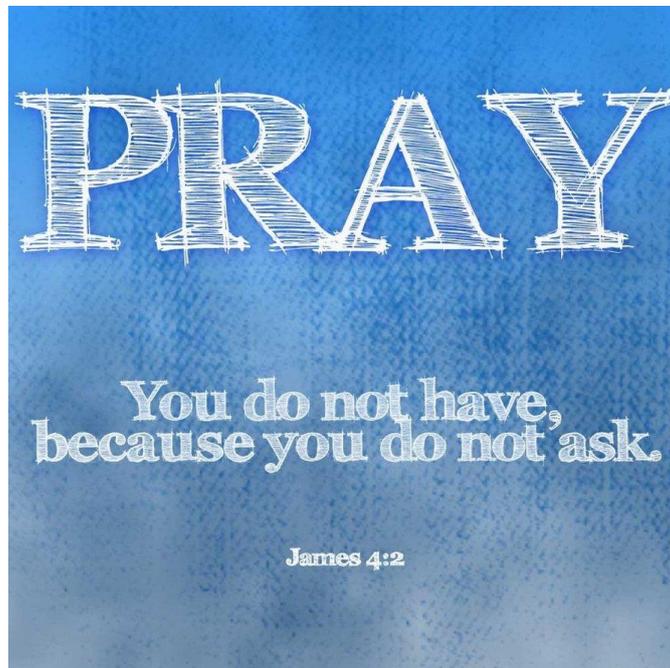




**Sunday Worship for 23 August
Eleventh Sunday after Trinity**



Contrite Submission: What a Christian Feels

Introduction

Though we cannot come together physically, we gather spiritually as the family of God in our Father's presence to offer him praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive his holy word, to bring before him the needs of the world, to ask forgiveness for our sins and to seek his grace, that, through his son Jesus Christ we may give ourselves for his service.

Service leader's intro from Jane Firth

Good morning to all those who are meeting together in St Mary's and those following the service at home. What a lot has happened since I was first asked to lead services back in December; and here I am, finally standing before you today. I have been in church couple of weeks and it was great to see our numbers increasing week on week. I am sure that we are all very much looking forward to being able to sing in, hopefully, the not too distant future. This morning's talk is from Mark Nile on the subject of "Contrite submission: What a Christian feels" and it's great to see him here today and also Terry Reed who will lead our prayers today.

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

And also with you

**Lord, direct our thoughts
teach us to pray.**

**Lift up our hearts to worship you
in spirit and in truth
through Jesus Christ.**

Amen

The night has passed and the day lies open before us. Let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
So may the light of your presence, O God,
Set our hearts on fire with love for you;
Now and forever.

Amen

Song: Be still

**Be still for the presence of the Lord
The holy one is here
Come bow before him now
With reverence and fear
In him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The holy one is here**

**Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire
With splendour he is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant king of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around**

**Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister his grace
No work too hard for him
In faith receive from him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place.**

Confession

Let us now spend a moment reflecting before God on the things we have said and done which put a distance between us and his love...

As members of God's family, let us come back to him to seek his forgiveness.'

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you,
through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.
We are heartily sorry,
and repent of all our sins
For your Son our Lord
Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen**

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw us to himself,
and cleanse us from all our sins
that we may behold the glory of his Son, the Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen

Readings

James 4: 1-12

4 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? **2** You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. **3** When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. **5** Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us? **6** But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble."

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-

minded. ⁹ Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

¹¹ Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. ¹² There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbour?

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

John 12: 20-28

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." ²² Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³ Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵ Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶ Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honour the one who serves me.

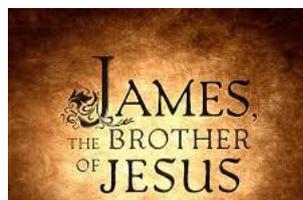
²⁷ "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!"

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

[Talk \(by Mark Nile\)](#)

Contrite Submission: What a Christian Feels



James is writing to the Christian church in the Mediterranean Roman empire on practical matters of faith. James is believed to have written this epistle around 40AD, within a decade of resurrection and ascension of his brother Jesus, so we can safely assume it is written to Jewish Christian converts as well as gentile believers. As Gill told us a few weeks ago he is in no way attempting to undermine the foundational Christian belief of a salvation through faith but is stating clearly that a real Christian faith should be seen to produce deeds and behaviour that backs up the claim of a belief in God who has redeemed you. Speaking with David Emerton about this (who was originally going to speak today on this section) he had noticed how often the James uses the word YOU or Yourselves, so it is written to be read and taken personally by every reader or hearer.

James continues his theme of behaviour and looking at the causes of quarrels within the Christian family, arguments and quarrels are never a good advert for a family or any kind of community but for the church they look even worse to a world that already has the judgement radar set to maximum looking for flaws that can show we are no better than the rest.

James asks us to look at our desires and covetousness which can lead us into distraction and quarrels particularly when we seek to serve ourselves before Gods plans and purposes. *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?* ² *You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.*

This concerns matters in all areas of our life within and outside church but especially when that quarrelling and fighting is amongst the body of the church about what someone or group would like things to be like rather than what God or the rest of the church family might want.

The word used in the Greek for *fights* is *polemos* it refers to actual armed conflict and so carries a violent image this is I think trying to convey the seriousness of the matter. We may have fortunately not experienced this first hand but will no doubt have read about it when a church splits itself into factions over issues that should be uniting it not dividing it, but all sides will claim they have God on their side whether he knows it or not! From the outside it looks very awful and messy and is not in the least attractive to anyone. James goes on to say;

You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ *When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*

Jesus told us *ask and you will receive* but that is about asking in line within

Gods plan and doesn't usually extend to our own plans- as in the lines of the Janis Joplin song;

***Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz?
My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends
Worked hard all my lifetime, no help from my friends
So Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz?...***



I once heard a lovely Christian woman share with everyone in the church I was attending at the time how God had told her to walk around a field she had seen and claim it for herself (and family) I think she kept and rode horses?

I must admit I have never had that feeling or kind of message but Julie and I use the example as a bit of an in-joke about when we see something we really want and can't afford or justify owning.... **Gods telling me to buy it!**

I am not judging or mocking this lady but in line with James I agree that while Jesus asks us to knock, seek and ask we have to examine our motives before and when doing so.

In verse 4 James says *"You adulterous people don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the **World** becomes an enemy of God"*. One thing I think we should say here is that James as a first century Jew who would have looked forward to the resurrection of the dead is not in any way referring to the physical world or alluding to some kind of Platonist and (sadly sometimes modern western Christian) ideology that the present world and all things physical are temporary and bad and one day we will be in a better spirit only place free from this awful world.

He is actually talking about the **values and systems** of the present world where those who shout loudest or have the biggest muscles or weapons will force their way on anyone weaker than them.

Force and power are what count to many whether its County Lines Drug Lords or the state invasion of a country they have had their eyes on for some time. These will always be diametrically opposed to Gods way

and if we go the way of the world deciding to go with its status quo we end up making friends with it and its ways insidiously become our ways.

James makes the valid accusation that as in marriage if we claim and have made promises to be true to another we commit a form of adultery by conforming to the world while still claiming God as our first love. Former Bishop of Durham Tom Wright describes it as, *Married to God but having a long running affair with the world.*

James tells us clearly that if we persist on this route being moulded and directed by the world, we will surely become the enemies of the God we claim to serve.

It brings to mind the chilling verse from Matthew 7:23 – when Jesus talking on one of the few times he actually does so about judgement (sheep/goats) says *“away from me I never knew you”*.

Paul tells us in 2 Timothy the story of Demas who he describes as once being a fellow worker and friend but later sadly reports later *“Demas – who loved this present world and deserted me”* Scarily and sadly God does not wish to condemn or lose any of us but always allows us to continue down the route that our own free will takes us.

In verse 6 James talks about Gods spirit dwelling in us wanting to mould us but then introduces the real key subject that is at the heart of our rebellion to this **-our pride** that leads us into selfishness and self-seeking.

James says in verse 6 *“God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble”*

Satan’s pride resulted in his expulsion from heaven and he is opposed to Gods plan for contented and happy living. Our adoption great and small of Satan’s pride results in the carnage we see around us in all areas of our life.

I don’t know if you have recently watched the BBC2 programme called “Once upon a time in Iraq” looking back to the invasion of Iraq and the destabilisation of that country and the subsequent growth of Islamic extremism in Iraq and Syria?

I could not help but cringe looking back at the recordings showing the hubris and self-righteousness of the leading Western politicians, ministers and advisers prior to and after the invasion. I would be surprised if on reflection they don’t feel that way too? I use this as an example not to make any judgements. We can find many similar examples to such as the Heads of the Banks at the heart of the 2008 crisis who when questioned and held to account really believed they hadn’t done anything wrong.

Accepting of course that when looking back in our own lives we will see times we didn’t stop to look and think about what we said or did and carried on in our own strength and not Gods, we will all at times feel remorseful.

James then so wonderfully in verses 7-10 gives us a solution to this problem and the feelings it gives us.



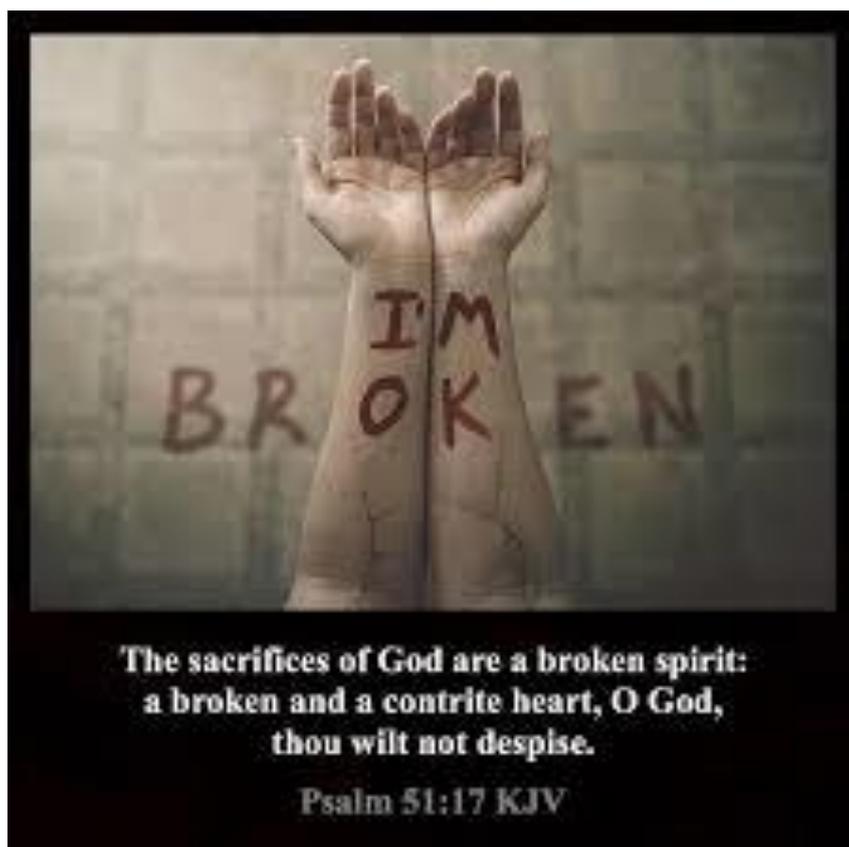
Submit yourselves to God- this is a very hard instruction to many today. Submitting to anyone is seen as a weakness in our post-modern world of instant gratification and self-fulfilment where self and the individual trump everything else.

If only we can get over that hurdle God is waiting to establish a deep meaningful friendship with us. Like the parent that deeply loves a grown up child and wants dearly to help and guide them in life's troubled waters but knows he/she can't force that love on them. The Psalms tell us **a contrite heart God will not despise.**

An online dictionary states that Contrite means; *feeling or expressing remorse at the recognition that one has done wrong.* We know we mess up. God also knows we mess up but he is saying come to me tell me about it lets go forward together.

As we talked about some time ago at St Marys, God looks for a humble heart such as the one in Gideon who doesn't think he is up to the job instead of someone who thinks there the ideal candidate for it.

Unfortunately, the world will try and counter with don't admit your failings just cover your tracks, which eventually will only lead to more heartache and pain.



Resist the Devil and he will flee from you. We know and believe that Jesus defeated death and the Devil at Calvary so we should prayerfully claim that victory over him, he will leave us and go off and bother someone else!

We could go for the soft option of saying what's the point it's much easier just to give in to temptation but isn't it wonderfully edifying when we draw that line in the sand and come close to God and resist the devil as Jesus did in the wilderness knowing that one victory often leads to many others ?

Finally, in verses 11-12 we are warned about speaking in an evil or slandering way about other Christians (of course that applies to non- Christians as well). We are not to judge others lest we bring Gods judgement on ourselves for trying to usurp his role. As we said at the start disharmony is very poor advert for people who sing *"you will know that we're Christians by our love"*....but that is not to say we won't disagree or fall out with other believers (and certainly not to pretend others have not really hurt us in some way) but to approach and deal with things swiftly in a Christ-like attitude of love, forgiveness and total honesty and humility. Amen

It's all about You, Jesus
And all this is for You
For Your glory and Your fame
It's not about me
As if You should do things my way
You alone are God and I surrender
To Your ways

Jesus, lover of my soul
All consuming fire is in Your gaze
Jesus, I want You to know
I will follow You all my days
For no one else in history is like You
And history itself belongs to You
Alpha and Omega, You have loved me
And I will share eternity with You

It's all about You, Jesus
And all this is for You
For Your glory and Your fame
It's not about me
As if You should do things my way
You alone are God and I surrender
To Your ways

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named...**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts
through faith,
and fills us with his love...**

**We believe in God
the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high....**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Song: Jesus stand among us

**Jesus, stand among us
At the meeting of our lives
Be our sweet agreement
At the meeting of our eyes
O Jesus, we love You, so we gather here
Join our hearts in unity and take away our fear**

**So to You we're gathering
Out of each and every land
Christ the love between us
At the joining of our hands
O Jesus, we love You, so we gather here
Join our hearts in unity and take away our fear**

**Jesus, stand among us
At the breaking of the bread
Join us as one body
As we worship You, our Head
O Jesus, we love You, so we gather here
Join our hearts in unity and take away our fear**

Prayers (written by Terry Reed)

In John 16: 33, Jesus tells his disciples :

"I have told you these things that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the World."

Father, we come to you with open hearts, knowing that you accept our human frailties. We ask that you will grant us peace and understanding in our troubled world. We give thanks that through our Lord Jesus Christ we can come to know you and through him we are saved.

It was lovely this Friday to see the return of Drop In and enjoy the company and chat with friends and neighbours who've been isolated for many months. We pray for all those who are still unable to join us socially and here at St Mary's because of health reasons. We pray for healing and support for all who need it thinking especially of Jim and Jill Askew and John and Angela Shepherd.

We remember Carol Blakebrough who died last week, she didn't have faith but she was a long time resident of Long Newton and took part in many of our social activities, and we pray for her family and friends. Lord, we hold up to you, all those who are grieving and ask that each person who mourns a loved one will all be comforted and strengthened by your love.

Loving Father, **hear our prayer.**

We think of your young people this week who are struggling to sort out their exam results. For many it has been an upsetting and worrying time with future aspirations at risk. We pray that the choices they make will allow them to achieve their full potential. It is an exciting time as they embark on this new time in their lives and our prayers are with them. We think of our children in all year groups as they prepare to return to school. It is an anxious and uncertain time for them and many are worried about going back to school after such a long absence. We pray that they will quickly feel confident and encouraged. We pray too for our teachers as they too are anxious about the pressures and difficulties they face as they prepare for children returning. Our teachers carry so much responsibility for educating, nurturing and inspiring our beloved children and young people, so we ask Father God, that they will be guided and strengthened by you.

Loving Father, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the older generation in our communities, they should be cherished for their experience and their wisdom. An elderly friend was told last week that she had no right to complain as she'd had 'a lovely life'. She was upset and felt judged. This lady has survived a war, the deaths of her Father, mother, brother and many friends. She has survived illness, heartache and hard times. Some of her life has been 'lovely' and some of it hasn't but what it has been, is a life well lived. She has kept her faith with God and loves and celebrates life. Across the world, the old impact on the lives of the young and teach them that life is a gift made rich by all your experiences. We pray for the older generation and thank you, Lord, for the love and wisdom that they impart to all of us who come after them. Bless them with your grace.

Loving Father, **hear our prayer**

Our final prayers are for all God's family. We pray for our brothers and sisters whose lives are blighted by war, hunger, prejudice and oppression. We pray particularly for the migrants who risk everything to escape such lives and our hearts and prayers are with those who've lost their lives only this week. Let us stand with the Bishop of Dover who has called for migrants to be treated with more compassion and for wrongs to be put right so that families don't risk losing their loved ones at sea. We pray for ourselves Lord, that we will be compassionate and not judge another person's life but value all lives lived and support the young and the old who often bear the brunt of the world's problems .

In a world where confusion and fear are prevalent, where governments give mixed messages and leaders are corrupt and self serving, we put our faith in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart! I have overcome the world"

We finish with those words in our hearts and thank God for the gift of his son who gave his life that we might live. Each life is a gift from God and we must live it well and to his glory.

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

[**Collect for the day**](#)

**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.**

The Lord's Prayer

**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**

The Peace

At this point, we would normally share God's peace with each other.

We cannot do that physically but please spend a few minutes now praying for specific people at St. Mary's...

Song: Make me a channel of your peace

**Make me a channel of Your peace.
Where there is hatred let me bring Your love;
where there is injury, Your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in You.**

***O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.***

**Make me a channel of Your peace.
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy.**

***O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;***

to be loved, as to love with all my soul.

**Make me a channel of Your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive;
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.**

The Blessing

**The Lord bless us and watch over us,
the Lord make his face shine upon us
and be gracious to us,
the Lord look kindly on us
and give us peace**

Go in peace to love
and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ,
Amen.