



Sunday Worship for 9th August Ninth Sunday after Trinity



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 Brian Settle

Good morning everyone, whether you are reading this in St Mary's, or in your home, or out on the moors (as we did several weeks ago), a warm welcome to one and all.

We have Gill Clayton to bring the word of God to us and Jenny Braddy to lead us in our prayers. Our thanks to them and to Steven who produces these services and notice sheets every week.

We can all rejoice in the knowledge that all of us have first been given so much by God. I am sure you agree that it is always a pleasure, when we as Christians can give to others, our time, our money (it belongs to God anyway) and our gifts or talents.

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

So let's begin by seeking first the kingdom of God as we sing/read our first hymn"

Song: Seek ye first the kingdom of God

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you.
Allelu, alleluia.
*Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness,
and all these things shall be added
unto you.
Allelu, alleluia.***

**Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of God.
Allelu, alleluia.
*Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of God.
Allelu, alleluia.***

**Ask and it shall be given unto you,
seek and ye shall find;
knock and the door shall be opened up to you.**

**Allelu, alleluia.
Ask and it shall be given unto you,
seek and ye shall find;
knock and the door shall be opened up to you.
Allelu, alleluia.**

Confession

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 2: 14-25

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. ¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰ You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? ²¹ Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. ²³ And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and

it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. ²⁴ You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Matthew 6: 25-34

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

[Talk \(by Gill Clayton\)](#) _____ Compassionate Service: What a Christian Gives.

Good morning everyone and welcome to our service. It's always a joy and a pleasure to join together, either in church or in our own homes, to share the word of God. A timely reminder that the Holy Spirit has no boundaries and no fear of pandemics!

The title of our talk this morning is: Compassionate Service: What a Christian Gives, a somewhat daunting title that could possibly lead us into an exploration of our recent actions, (which we have put under the heading of Compassionate) in the hope of finding good works. Not a recommended path to go down, for I believe we have to keep in mind Paul's words in his letter written to the Ephesians:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift from God - not by works, so that no-one can boast. (Eph 2: 8.9.)

Paul in this letter stresses that we are not saved by good works, we are justified by faith and not by works alone; whereas James insists that a person must prove their Christianity by their deeds and stresses we are not saved by deeds; we are saved for deeds and further says, "My brothers, what use is it if a person claims to have faith and has no deeds to show?"

James' argument is that if there are no works, the faith is not real and cannot save; the kind of faith that can and does save always results in Christian action and he cites Abraham and Rahab as examples.

From these seeming opposite viewpoints one might conclude that Paul and James are in conflict. If this was present day reporting, social media would have a frenzied time honing in on every minutiae of the comments, probably including a statement from Martin Luther, the great reformer, who referred to James' epistle as, "an epistle full of straw," because it contains nothing evangelical. Not a flattering recommendation.

However, like many things in life we need to investigate the facts and put things into context. In his introduction James (1:1) addresses his letter to, "The twelve tribes scattered among the nations:" which could refer to Jewish Christians, who through exile, enslavement and trade were spread throughout the entire Mediterranean. His message was focused on helping Jewish Christians live consistent Christian lives and not lives of hypocrisy, hide bound by an illegitimate use of the Old Testament law. However, his

message is just as relevant to us today, as James seeks to speak to those whose faith is all in their head and not in their actions.

One of the difficulties Paul encountered was the heresy that it was necessary to observe Jewish law in order to be saved. In Galatians 2:16 he says, "Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ." Laws such as, separation from Gentiles, circumcision, dietary laws and many other Jewish rituals were stumbling blocks that clouded the simple message of the gospel, exemplified in Paul and Silas's reply to the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:30.31) when asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."

In today's society we too put stumbling blocks in the way when we intellectualising our faith. Jesus didn't create a labyrinth for us to navigate in the quest to become a Christian, he very simply says,

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14: 6.)

The first step in becoming a Christian is to give ourselves.

As leader of the Jerusalem Church, James wrote as a pastor to instruct and encourage; many were still entrenched in Jewish law and not fully aware of the freedom in being a Christian. However, the theologian William Barclay reminds us that when the leaders of the Jerusalem Church agreed that Paul should go to the Gentiles he was not to forget the poor and that, "practical help is one of the great and lovely marks of Jewish piety."

James challenges those who have a passive, ineffectual faith, something that is a real challenge for us all today. A genuine faith must be revealed in action not words alone, the two can't be separated. James stresses that you can't say, "You have faith; I have deeds." (James 2:18.) in the way some did, as the two can't exist independently; faith and deeds are not opposites, they are inseparables. In fact, I'd say faith and deeds are the two sides of a person's experience of God.

Certainly, there is a message for us today as Christians. Each one of us has a ministry in serving the Lord in whatever capacity He directs us, through the influence of the Holy Spirit. In the Christians' life there must be faith and deeds. It is only through deeds that faith can prove and demonstrate itself; and it is only through faith that deeds will be attempted and done. James points out that, "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shudder." (James 3:19.) Their belief certainly does not make them Christians!

When I first became a Christian one of the hardest things was to reflect an outward sign of an inward change, especially when being challenged by those who wanted to find fault. Every Sunday evening our church held an

open air meeting at the market cross in the centre of Stockton. As a teenager I stepped out in faith to be heckled by youths looking for a bit of fun on a Sunday evening. In the twenty first century our young Christians today suffer far more abuse on social media than ever we did on a Sunday night and we all need to prayer earnestly for their brave stance.

In reading James I'm struck by how much he reiterates Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1-12.) and the concern he shows for those in need. The commentary in the NIV says:

"The Sermon on the Mount's call to moral and ethical living is so high that some have dismissed it as being completely unrealistic... Jesus (and Matthew) gave the sermon as a standard for all Christians, realising that its demand cannot be met in our own power."

I'm sure some of the saints would disagree, but it does allow us, who don't attain such high standards, to feel a bit comforted. As Christians we try to give our best, but need to remind ourselves that:

"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus." (Rom 3: 23.)

All of us fall short and can probably remember times when we could have handled things better or being more thoughtful and caring. The cliché, "It is easier said than done." certainly applies to the Christian life. Praise God for his love, patience and guiding hand, with us in all situations.

During our recent time of lockdown, the loving actions of our dear family in shopping for us made me reflect on the old saying, "Actions speak louder than words!" We'd have been a bit stuck (and probably thinner) if they had only declared they were praying for us!

Paul tells us in his letter to the Corinthians that we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and we are therefore, "Christ's ambassadors." (Cor 5: 20.) We serve a loving Saviour and it is only by listening to the Holy Spirit that we can, as individual, fulfil the role he has for us in our actions and our faith.

Amen

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: The King of love is my delight

**The King of love is my delight,
His eyes are fire, His face is light,
The First and Last, the Living One,
His name is Jesus.**

**And from His mouth there comes a sound
That shakes the earth and splits the ground,
And yet this voice is life to me,
The voice of Jesus.**

**And I will sing my songs of love,
Calling out across the earth;
The King has come,
The King of love has come.
And troubled minds can know His peace,
Captive hearts can be released;
The King has come,
The King of love has come.**

**My Lover's breath is sweetest wine,
I am His prize, and He is mine;
How can a sinner know such joy?
Because of Jesus.**

The wounds of love are in His hands,
The price is paid for sinful man;
Accepted child, forgiven son,
Because of Jesus.

And I will sing my songs of love,
Calling out across the earth;
The King has come,
The King of love has come.
And troubled minds can know His peace,
Captive hearts can be released;
The King has come,
The King of love has come.

And my desire is to have You near,
Lord, You know that You are welcome here.
Before such love, before such grace
I will let the walls come down.

Prayers (written by Jenny Braddy)

Lord we thank you that we are precious to you, that our names are written on your hands. Write your name Blessed Lord on our hearts so that no adversity shall ever move us from your love.

Almighty God – you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you.

Pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see you face to face.

We ask this through Jesus our Saviour and Lord.

Amen

We pray for your church throughout the world and here in Longnewton.

Keep us all faithful to you and close to each other. Help all of us to be non-judgemental, accepting each other as they are. Help us to be a forgiving people knowing that we have each of us been forgiven by you.

You Lord are in the place where we live and rest - Your presence fills our home, your presence is peace.

You Lord are in each of our lives - Your presence fills us, your presence is peace

You Lord are in our world - Your presence fills all creation, your presence is peace.

God grant us the grace to accept with serenity the things we cannot change,

Courage to change the things we can, and wisdom to know the difference,

Help us to live one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time,

May we take this sinful world as it is, leaving judgement to you

Help us to know that all is well so long as we remain in your love

and are obedient to your will.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our Prayer**

We thank you for the acts of kindness and neighbourliness the pandemic has inspired and for the way it has slowed us down and taught us patience.

We ask for your blessing on those who have kept us safe during this time of trouble. We pray for those who work in the hospitals, those who look after the elderly and the very young and those who deliver our post and food and keep the country clean and tidy.

Give your protection to all those who work for the emergency services

For all those who act selflessly and allow your light to shine through them we thank you Lord. May we see your kingdom based on love and compassion grow in this community.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our Prayer**

We pray for the poor of the world, those escaping war and living in refugee camps and those living in war zones, May we be generous with our money and time and do what we can to relieve their distress. Especially we pray for the people in the Yemen.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our Prayer**

Lord make all of us a sure place of your love

A sure place of your light

A sure place of your presence

Through us let your light shine

Let your love enfold

Let your peace fill and let your presence be known by all we meet and by all we love.

Lord it is so hard for us to wait in patience. May all whose lives seem to be on hold be strengthened by your presence and may your friendship and love transform and give purpose to these in between times.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our Prayer**

And now we pray for any we know in need of your healing touch. We name before you those in despair and those who are sick. We pray for those who are alone, who are anxious and depressed, Be with any who are grieving the loss of loved ones and those who are close to death.

Our Dearest Lord

Be a bright flame before them -

Be a guiding star above them -

Be a smooth path beneath them -

Be a kindly shepherd behind them -

Today and for evermore.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our Prayer**

We thank you for those who have finished their life here; those who have died in recent days and our own dear loved ones. We give them into your loving hands

Heavenly Father we lift up our hearts to you.

We thank you that we can bring all our troubles and problems to you and lay them at your feet.

Deepen our faith and draw us nearer to yourself that we may find your grace, your guidance, and your peace.

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

Collect for the day

**Gracious Father,
revive your Church in our day,
and make her holy, strong and faithful,
for your glory's sake
in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

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: I want to serve the purpose of God in my generation

**I want to serve the purpose of God
In my generation
I want to serve the purpose of God
While I am alive
I want to give my life
For something that will last forever
Oh, I delight, I delight to do Your will**

**I want to build with silver and gold
In my generation**

**I want to build with silver and gold
While I am alive
I want to give my life
For something that will last forever
Oh, I delight, I delight to do Your will**

**What is on Your heart?
Tell me what to do
Let me know Your will
And I will follow You**

**I want to see the kingdom of God
In my generation
I want to see the kingdom of God
While I am alive
I want to live my life
For something that will last forever
Oh, I delight, I delight to do Your will**

**I want to see the Lord come again
In my generation
I want to see the Lord come again
While I am alive
I want to give my life
For something that will last forever
Oh I delight, I delight to do Your will**

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.