

Traditional Home service Sunday 25th October Trinity 20

OPENING PRAYER

God, the giver of life, whose Holy Spirit wells up within your Church: by the Spirit's gifts equip us to live the gospel of Christ and make us eager to do your will, that we may share with the whole creation the joys of eternal life; 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.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

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.

All: Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call. Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early. Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement; bind up our wounds and revive us; in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (see page 2)

READINGS - Deuteronomy 34.1-12

1 Thessalonians 2.1-8
Matthew 22.34-46

TALK

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 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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

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.

HYMN 2 (see page 2)

CONCLUSION

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 among you and remain with you always. Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

466 Henry Francis Lyte.

PRAISE, MY SOUL, THE KING OF HEAVEN;

To His feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like thee His praise should sing?
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise Him for His grace and favour
To our fathers in distress;
Praise Him, still the same forever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Glorious in His faithfulness.

Father-like, He tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame He knows;
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Widely as His mercy flows.

Angels in the height, adore Him;
Ye behold Him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,
Dwellers all in time and space.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise with us the God of grace!

415 Isaac Watts.

O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

Sunday 25th Oct - Revd Adrian Morton
Matthew 22:34-46

Someone recently sent me a link to an interview that Jackie Pullenger gave while at a conference in Scotland.

Jackie Pullenger is a famous missionary in Hong Kong... and actually she has spoken at St. Mary's, Wollaston many years ago.

The interviewer asked her this question:

Is there a particular message that's on your heart for Christians at the Christian event she was attending?

She replied:

My message is always the same; it's how to get us sure enough of God's love, so we can go out and share it with the lost.

And the interviewer said,
It's as simple as that?

And Jackie Pullenger replied:

Well, I don't know about you, but to me it looks quite simple. Having tasted of his love all I wanted to do was share it until I died.

I just thought it was a great answer.
It really is that simple.

And I sometimes wonder whether we make it more complicated than it should be.

Jesus in our reading says this:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind.”

This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Gordon Fee, a respected scholar refers to ‘heart, soul and mind’ as

“every possible expression of your humanity”

We are to love God with all we are. All our desires, our will, our emotions, our thinking... everything.

I'm to love God with all my heart. An emotional response needs to find some expression in my love for God.

Using my mind is an expression of love for God.

Scripture says, “God is love.” We also know that we are made in His image.

So I am at my best when I'm in love.

The very best Adrian Morton you will see is when you see me in love, acting with love.

You and I are designed to be a lover of God with all our being.

1 John says: “We love because he first loved us.”

I can only love Him in the measure I receive love from Him.

What costs me is valuable to me.

What we are willing to sacrifice for shows what is important to us.

It shows our children what is important to us.

We have Black Friday in about a months time.

It always intrigues me when I see on our news screens how people have queued from the early hours.

Sometimes actually people queue all night to get the latest iPhone or games machine whatever it is.....

And then you see the scramble when the shop doors open.

And one or two leaving the shop with that big screen tv box triumphantly held aloft!

If you are one of those people then bless you.

All I'm saying is that what we are willing to sacrifice for shows what is important to us.

Psalm 84 says *“How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”*

I think we encounter the love of God in stillness.

The Psalmist says, “Be still and know that I am God.”

Busyness works against that.

I heard someone say this week, ‘busyness is artificial significance.’

In other words while we can feel significant in proportion to our level of busyness, it is artificial, or counterfeit significance.

And we know that really.

Jesus said unless you abide in me, you can't be fruitful.

Fruitfulness in the kingdom flows from intimacy, from knowing His love.

In that well known Ephesians 3 passage, Paul writes

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

And whilst this tells us that knowing the love of God goes beyond knowing it in our thinking, important as that is.

So it is about experiencing His love. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

So His love is to be experienced.

This passage also tells us that it is when we are rooted in this love that we have access to the power of God.

Fruitfulness flows from intimacy, from knowing His love.

In my quiet times, I can get overly concerned with whether I'm seeing or discerning things from the Lord.

I can overly bothered about whether I'm getting new insights from Him.

Rather than sometimes just coming before Him and saying, Lord, I'm just here to be loved by You."

I have no other agenda.
I don't need anything else from you.

He then just needs my stillness.

We are designed to have a heart that burns for Him. Not to perform for Him.

To know the wonder of Him, the mystery of Him.

I can know Him but not understand Him.

I think one of the biggest battles we have is in our minds.

A person who can't control their thought life has little ability to love God with the mind.

The battle over the mind is to be clear enough to love God with your intellect.

All distractions that come our way are to keep us from tapping into His heart beat.

So fear, worry, anxiety, what people think of us, am I performing well...

All these things cause me to disengage from my capacity to love Him.

Discovering the Love of God for You starts with surrender.

"Lord, I give myself to you completely."

I need to be aware that it's God in me that makes all things possible.

That makes this tricky business decision possible.

That makes that task or job possible even though I don't feel qualified, skilled or confident enough to do.

I know whenever I encounter God's love, I'm less concerned about whether I'm being a good vicar.

Whether the church is going well or not.
Whether I'm achieving enough etc...

Because it's in Him that all things are possible.

It's in Him that I feel significant and worthy.
It's in Him I know my future is secure.

We are designed for love, to be loved.
We are designed to give away what we receive.

The more impacted by the love of God, then the more our eyes burn with His eyes.

So that when we look into the eyes of another person we have a deep compassion and interest in their well being.

I think Jackie Pullenger had it right.
What a great life purpose,

Having tasted of his love all I wanted to do was share it until I died.
Amen.