

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity

### Readings and Prayers

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,  
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:  
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;  
that with you as our ruler and guide,  
we may so pass through things temporal  
that we finally lose not our hold on things eternal;  
grant this heavenly Father,  
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

#### First Reading - Rom 7:15-25a

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>18</sup> I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. <sup>19</sup> For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>20</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

<sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. <sup>22</sup> For in my inner being I delight in God's law; <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. <sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

#### : Matt 11:16-19, 25 –end

"To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

<sup>17</sup> " 'We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'

<sup>18</sup> For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' <sup>19</sup> The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her actions."

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. <sup>26</sup> Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

<sup>27</sup> All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

<sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

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### Sermon Text

Many years ago I was once admonished for describing reading a particular Pauline passage as the equivalent of wading through treacle. This wasn't meant in a derogatory way, just a recognition of Paul's habit of approaching the same point from a number of different angles. He was, after all, a lawyer.

Today's reading is, to carry on the analogy, worthy of Tate and Lyle's finest Black Treacle. Paul comes at the same point from numerous – each time ending in the same place.

In the words of the general confession from the Book of Common Prayer:

“We have erred and strayed like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have left undone those things we ought to have done and we have done those things which we ought not to have done and there is no health in us.”

So why is that? For Paul, it is the power of sin. Sin, a power so great that it caused Man to fall from grace in the garden of Eden. A power so great that it controls all of our actions, even when we know that we shouldn't be doing those things. Sin, brought into the world by Adam who couldn't keep just one commandment. Sin, magnified and set forth in the TORAH, the Jewish Law in the first five books of the Old Testament, and showed how far man had strayed from the ideal. Sin, failure to do even the simplest of tasks as set out in the ten commandments. Love God and love our neighbour.

There is a battle raging, a battle between the forces of good and evil and the battleground is you and me – humanity. But there is hope, because just as one man, Adam, was the conduit through which sin entered the world – there is a second Adam – one who though subjected to the same temptations, resists and remains true to his calling even though that means his own death.

Of course, it is through that sacrifice on the Cross that the stranglehold is broken and the shattered once and for all.

Paul tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the wages of Christ's death is life, life to all who through their faith enter into the mystery of Christ's passion.

For us Christians that is the promise that sits right at the heart of our faith and we know that if we try to live in our own strength then we will fail, we will sin and we will fall short. But if we ask for God's help, if we allow ourselves to be caught up in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus we will come through.

In the gospel Jesus says:

“Come to me all of you that are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”

If we have things that cause us to stumble, to fall short, all we have to do is lay them at the foot of the cross. Cast your burdens on to Jesus – he cares for you.

Yes, the battle between sin and our human nature still rages, but the war is over, victory has been won and in Jesus – nothing can separate from the love of God. Not sin, not life, not death. Nothing, absolutely nothing.

In his name.



## All creatures of our God and King

*recorded remotely by the Choral Scholars of St Martin-in-the-Fields in their homes, and edited together.*

- 1 All creatures of our God and King  
lift up your voice and with us sing,  
Alleluia, alleluia.  
Thou burning sun with golden beam,  
thou silver moon with softer gleam,  
*O praise him, O praise him,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*
  
- 2 Thou rushing wind that art so strong,  
ye clouds that sail in heaven along,  
O praise him, alleluia.  
Thou rising morn, in praise rejoice,  
ye lights of evening, find a voice;  
*Chorus*
  
- 3 Thou flowing water, pure and clear,  
make music for thy Lord to hear,  
Alleluia, alleluia.  
Thou fire so masterful and bright,  
that givest us both warmth and light:  
*Chorus*
  
- 4 Let all things their creator bless,  
and worship him in humbleness;  
O praise him, alleluia.  
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,  
and praise the Spirit, Three in One;  
*Chorus*

*William Henry Draper (1855-1933)*

*based on Laudato sii, O me signore St Francis of Assisi's Canticle of the Sun*



## The Spirit lives to set us free

*recorded remotely by a soloist from St Martin's Voices in their own home, and edited together.*

- 1 The Spirit lives to set us free,  
walk, walk in the light.  
He binds us all in unity,  
walk, walk in the light.  
*Walk in the light, walk in the light,  
walk in the light, walk in the light of the Lord*
  
- 2 Jesus promised life to all,  
walk, walk in the light.  
The dead were wakened by his call,  
walk, walk in the light.  
*Chorus*
  
- 3 By Jesus' love our wounds are healed,  
walk, walk in the light.  
The Father's kindness is revealed,  
walk, walk in the light.  
*Chorus*
  
- 4 The Spirit lives in you and me,  
walk, walk in the light.  
His light will shine for all to see,  
walk, walk in the light.  
*Chorus*

*Damian Lundy (1940-1997)*

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## Meekness and majesty

*recorded remotely by St Martin's Voices in their homes, and edited together.*

- 1 Meekness and majesty,  
manhood and deity,  
in perfect harmony,  
the Man who is God.  
Lord of eternity  
dwells in humanity,  
kneels in humility  
and washes our feet.  
*Oh, what a mystery,  
meekness and majesty.  
Bow down and worship  
for this is your God,  
this is your God.*
  
- 2 Father's pure radiance,  
perfect in innocence,  
yet learns obedience  
to death on a cross.  
Suffering to give us life,  
conquering through sacrifice,  
and as they crucify  
prays: 'Father forgive.'  
*Refrain*
  
- 3 Wisdom unsearchable,  
God the invisible,  
love indestructible  
in frailty appears.  
Lord of infinity,  
stooping so tenderly,  
lifts our humanity  
to the heights of his throne.  
*Refrain*

Graham Kendrick (b.1950)

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