

Morning Prayer on Sunday 15th November – The Second Sunday before Advent

Preparation

O Lord, open our lips and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord: sing and praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you heavens: sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord: sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Thanksgiving Prayer

Blessed are you, creator of all, to you be praise and glory for ever.

As your dawn renews the face of the earth bringing life and life to all creation, may we rejoice in this day you have made.

As we wake refreshed from the depths of sleep, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Blessed be God for ever.

Bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

This opening prayer may be said

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 for ever. **Amen.**

The Word of God

Psalm 90.1-8

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Canticle

A Song of David

Splendour and majesty are yours, O God; you are exalted as head over all.

Blessed are you, God of Israel, for ever and ever, for yours is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty. Everything in heaven and on earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head over all. Riches and honour come from you and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; yours it is to give power and strength to all. And now we give you thanks, our God, and praise your glorious name. For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Splendour and majesty are yours, O God; you are exalted as head over all.

Scripture Reading

Zephaniah 1.7, 12-end - The Great Day of the Lord.

The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah. I will utterly consume everything from the face of the land, says the Lord. I will consume the birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea, and the stumbling blocks along with the wicked. I will cut off man from the face of the land, says the Lord. I will stretch out My hand against Judah, and against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place, the names of the idolatrous priests with the pagan priests. Those who worship the host of heaven on the housetops; those who worship and swear oaths by the Lord, but who also swear by Milcom; those who have turned back from following the Lord, and have not sought the Lord, nor inquired of Him. Be silent in the presence of the Lord God; for the day of the Lord is at hand, for the Lord has prepared a sacrifice; He has invited His guests. And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and punish the men who are settled in complacency, who say in their heart, 'The Lord will not do good, nor will He do evil.' Therefore their goods shall become booty, and their houses a desolation; they shall build houses, but no inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards, but not drink their wine. The great day of the Lord is near; it is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the Lord is bitter; there the mighty men shall cry out. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastation and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high towers. I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like refuse. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of His jealousy, for He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land.

1 Thessalonians 5.1-11 - The Day of the Lord

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labour pains upon a pregnant woman and they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

Gospel Canticle

You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of your servant David.

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us, to show mercy to our ancestors, and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, Free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sights all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of all their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of your servant David.

Gospel Reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to **Matthew [25.14-30]**

Glory to you, O Lord.

The Return of Christ in Judgement

For the kingdom of heaven is like a man travelling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things, Enter into the joy of your Lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said 'Lord you delivered to me two talents, look, I have gained two more talents beside them. His Lord said to him, well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord. Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look there you have what is yours. But his Lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

Gospel Teaching

Despite the reference to weeping and gnashing of teeth at the end, today's reading from Matthew's Gospel has a positive message for us all, particularly those of us prone to existential crises. The "master" in Jesus' parable gives to each of his slaves a different responsibility during his absence. Each is given a challenge that the master deems suitable for them. It is a responsibility to which, in the master's estimation, they are equal, and once he has departed it is up to each of them to figure out what they must do. "What might the master expect of me?" they are supposed to think; "What

opportunities are open to me, to do some good with the gifts that I have been given?”. As we know, some of the servants are more successful than others at fulfilling their obligations.

Ought we to feel sorry for the servant who gets it wrong and hides his one talent in the ground to keep it safe? Perhaps, but it rather misses the point. It is not the master’s wrath that ought to preoccupy us, but the attitude of the servant in the first place. Does he follow the good example of the others around him? Is he inspired by their actions to greater ambitions for himself? Does he use the time he has been given to discern what might be required of him and put himself to productive work?

Application

God gives each of us unique talents. We are, as the theologian Michael Lloyd argues, each one of us, “self-portraits” of God. Each of us reflects a unique aspect of our creator, one which has never been seen before and will never be repeated. Each of us is therefore infinitely precious, and once we depart this earth it will for ever be deprived of that singular image of God, and bereft of the unique gifts and talents that God has given to us and us alone. Let’s hope we have put them to good use when our time comes.

Amen

Prayers

Blessed are you, Lord our God. You never leave us or forsake us. You have promised us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, help us to know you and to trust in you always. Let us know that in you is the gift of life eternal and that through you we have the power To survive whatever happens to us or to the world.

Blessed are you, God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We give thanks for those who have taught us the faith and brought us to know you, O God. We ask your blessing on preachers and teachers of the Word, upon theological colleges and their students. We remember any who are struggling with their faith at this time, all who are tempted to despair and to give up. We pray especially for all who are sorely troubled by circumstances or relationships.

Silence

Lord, in our darkness, let your light shine.

As we give thanks for the world and its beauty, we remember before you all areas of conflict and disaster. We ask blessing upon all who are suffering from natural disasters such as flood or famine, all who are driven off their land by war or tyranny. We pray for all who are denied minimum rights and wages and those who live as slaves. We ask your blessing on all who work for the good of the world and humankind.

Silence

Lord, in our darkness, let your light shine.

We give thanks for our homes and our loved ones. We pray for all families who are suffering from a breakdown in relationships, where there is tension and discord, where there is violence or neglect. We ask your blessing upon all who are seeking to improve the neighbourhood in which they live. We pray for counsellors and carers.

Silence

Lord, in our darkness, let your light shine.

We rejoice in your love and care for us at all times. We remember before you all who have faced trouble or disaster this week. We ask your blessing upon those who are ill and whose illness finds no cure; on all who have been injured in accidents or who have suffered at the hands of others. We pray especially for those whose future looks bleak and who live in fear.

Silence

Lord, in our darkness, let your light shine.

We give thanks for your everlasting love. We rejoice in the saints who have witnessed to you and to their faith in life eternal. We remember friends and loved ones who have departed from us and pray that they may rejoice in the fullness of your love and their presence in your kingdom.

Silence

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

The Collect for the Day

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

The Lord's Prayer

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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. Amen.
Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.