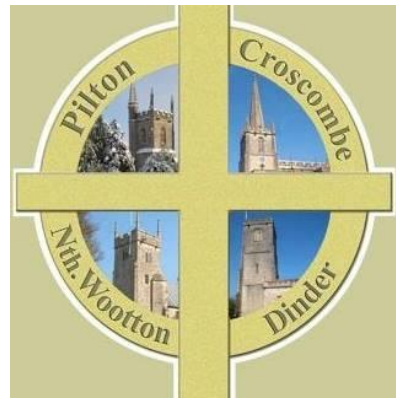


***Pilton with Croscombe,
North Wootton and Dinder.***

***Morning Worship for 22nd
August***



Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with us all. Amen

We come from scattered lives to meet with God.
Let us recognize his presence with us.

Silence is kept.

As God's people we are together even if physically
apart so let us worship him together.

Hymn: Blessed Assurance Jesus is mine

<https://youtu.be/n4pzveNsANw>

Prayers of Penitence

Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our
sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore to us the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the Father of all mercies
cleans us from *our* sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All 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. Amen.

The Collect

God of constant mercy, who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness, increase your grace
within us, that our thankfulness may grow, through
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Word

We continue with Psalm 34, this week sung by the
Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir (there may be a short bit of
the compassion blessing at the beginning)

<https://youtu.be/XnrhfeuB3Kw>

Psalm 34:15 -end

- 15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their cry.
- 16 The face of the LORD is against evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
- 17 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears,
and rescues them from all their troubles.
- 18 The LORD is near to the broken-hearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.
- 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD rescues them from them all.
- 20 He keeps all their bones;
not one of them will be broken.
- 21 Evil brings death to the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.
- 22 The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be
condemned.

Ephesians 6: 10-20

The Whole Armour of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the

breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

The Gospel Reading John 6: 56-69

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who were the

ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.'

Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

Sermon by Chris

So we are on our last week on the bread of life discourse. The disciples have listened to all his teaching and then utter, what seems to me, to be a huge understatement - 'this teaching is difficult'. Now I suspect it is a comment about his cumulative teaching rather than just this recent passage, I also suspect at some time or another we have all felt the same, this teaching is difficult.

It is interesting to notice the different reactions and to add to them we need to look at the next two verses as well

⁷⁰ Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil." ⁷¹ He was speaking of Judas son of Simon Iscariot, for he, though one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

We see a range of responses to his teaching: complaining, disbelief, rejection, betrayal, and the others who hang on in there believing even though they also struggle with elements of his teaching.

I wonder how many of you have had times in your faith journey when all you could do is hang on in there. I suspect many of us have had those moments, I know I have.

But the disciples say 'to whom can we go'. Think about that for a moment, they are not saying they are homeless, they could always go back to their previous life, what they are saying is that there is nothing and no one greater that they can follow – As Peter says – 'You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

They understand Jesus is offering eternal life and so cannot walk away from that however tricky it gets.

I want you to remember who John is writing to for a moment; a community that made the choice to follow Jesus and because of that would have been cast out of the synagogue. That life had ended but Jesus was offering that life back and more.

Jesus says 'The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.' I wonder what that means to you. The translators have carefully translated spirit with a small s, so they are not suggesting the Holy Spirit. So what might Jesus mean – firstly he is the Word that created life out of darkness. Secondly spirit, when we die our existing body ceases to function but we believe our

spirit lives on. It is also our spirit that recognises God and connects us to God, when we are alive here today and when we journey on.

So the faith we follow offers life.

The core disciples remain with Jesus because there is nothing greater out there. They know there is no guarantee that things will get any easier (and we know the opposite is true) but where else can they go once they have seen the light.

In our other reading we have reached the end of Ephesians, containing the concluding message from the author.

Firstly he admits that the days are evil as they are living in a world that is corrupt and a struggle. Life is awful for a lot of people. We only have to watch the news to agree that for many people life really is a struggle and I am sure like me your heart goes out to the people of Afghanistan as they either try and flee or remain and try to become invisible. The precious freedom that many of them had worked towards and experienced appears to have disappeared overnight. I can't imagine what that is like and it is a reminder that however frustrating things can become in this country our freedom is amazing and we should never take it for granted.

Although they had some autonomy the Jews were also not free and the Ephesians author uses a picture from the oppressing force to illustrate his point, as you read it I wonder if you picture a Roman soldier standing there, maybe one of the soldiers that nailed Jesus to

the cross. He deliberately chooses a symbol of their oppression and flips it around.

He takes the different elements of the uniform but changes the symbols into symbols of peace and defence not aggression

Belt – of truth

Breastplate - of righteousness

Shoes – to proclaim the gospel of peace

Shield of faith – for protection

Helmet – of salvation

Sword of the Spirit – word of God

The only weapon- word of God, That is where the power is... and of course to underpin all of this is prayer, with an entreaty to 'pray at all times'.

This morning let's put his words into action and end by praying silently for the people of Afghanistan still in that country or in exile.

Amen.

Hymn I will offer up my life

<https://youtu.be/ihUko9M6dpA>

We continue with the Apostles' 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 from Sue

**Let us pray to the Father through the Son and in
the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Father God, we pray for all who build up our faith and
deepen our understanding of you and your gifts to us.
Strengthen us when we face challenges or when our
faith is undermined by inner doubts or outside
influences. Help us to see ways forward for the
churches of our villages.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Loving Lord, we pray for the nations of our world especially in areas of danger and unrest. We hold in our minds images that we have seen and heard about in the news about Afghanistan: the ordinary citizens whose freedom is endangered, those whose former jobs threaten their safety and the safety of their families, and all seeking to escape the present anxieties. We remember all who have lost loved ones or whose lives have been changed or traumatised over recent years because of the situation in Afghanistan.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

In our world there is considerable suffering from physical effects in the natural world. We pray for those experiencing extreme weather conditions, and for the people of Haiti following the devastation and loss of life caused by earthquakes. We thank you for workers in the emergency services who put themselves in considerable danger to bring practical relief and support.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Compassionate Lord, we pray for all leaders and all who can wield power in the positions they hold. Guide their discussions, their decisions and their actions into ways of peace and justice. May those who challenge decisions act with thought and wisdom; and give strength to all who feel marginalised or isolated. Inspire us all to stand up for what is right and good and true.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Loving Lord, we continue to pray for issues of concern in this country: for the people of Plymouth, for people in areas where Covid cases are very high, especially the people in the Sedgemoor district of Somerset, for people in our own communities with particular problems: all waiting for appointments and operations, receiving treatment, living with long term health issues, with anxiety, with loneliness, depression and grief; all for whom we pray in a moment of quiet.

May all in need know the healing peace and love of God.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord of eternal life, we thank you for those who have gone before us who have found their strength in you. May that same gift of faith and trust be with us as we pray that we may come to share with them, with St John the Baptist, Mary, St Peter and St Michael and all your saints in the glory of your eternal kingdom.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

In the days to come, help us in our desire to know you to be more faithful to you and to place our trust in your unceasing love for us.

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

We continue in prayer as we say the prayer Jesus taught us all:

**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: Love Divine All Loves Excelling

<https://youtu.be/dPbD2G3i-7Y>

Conclusion

The service ends with a Grace.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore.
Amen.