

United Parish
@Home Sunday Services



September 2026

**The United Parish of Chinnor, Sydenham,
Aston Rowant and Crowell**

The ministry team offer you these services, particularly if you find you are unable to attend church.

Our prayer is that these services will help you still feel connected to, and loved by, your church family.

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Sunday 6th September 2026

14th Sunday of Trinity

Opening prayer

As we come before the Lord to discern his word, let us not be afraid. Let us seek God's grace to be faithful and firm, in search of truth and unity in all that he is calling us to do. Amen

Psalm149 (*We have the assurance that God truly enjoys his people*)

Praise the Lord.

Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the saints.

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the people of Zion be glad in their King.

Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp.

For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.

Let the saints rejoice in this honour and sing for joy on their beds.

May the praise of God be in their mouths and a double-edged sword in their hands, to inflict vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, to bind their kings with fetters, their nobles with shackles of iron, to carry out the sentence written against them.

This is the glory of all his saints.

Praise the Lord

Prayer of confession

Father God, we have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and humbly repent for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ. Have mercy on us; that we might delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your name.

Amen

Collect - The 14th Sunday of Trinity

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
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 forever.

Bible Reading: Matthew 18 vs 15-20 (*Jesus teaches how to treat a believer who sins*)

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him your fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of the two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen to even the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.”

Reflection *by Margaret*

(Jesus- our model for reconciliation)

In our Gospel reading set for this Sunday, Jesus is speaking about the community of the church: where two or three are gathered in his name he is there among them. This is our starting point: as we are reconciled to God, through the love of Christ, we are reconciled to each other.

Each of us knows from experience how easy it is to be hurt or hurt others. As a minister in the Church of England and working with bereaved families I have often been saddened when I hear that members of families have stopped speaking to each other and are unable to forgive and move on. We too may have been hurt by others, and this can escalate in our minds, it can become all-consuming.

William Blakes poem 'A Poison Tree' addresses anger and hurt that is suppressed within, that grows and escalates in our inner being. Questions arise: how do you respond to the person that has hurt you? The poem continues with the image of a tree whose anger grows, and blossoms uncontrollably but eventually bears fruit, which is deadly poisonous. The enemy will eat of this fruit and die. The moral of the poem is that the unvoiced anger can lead to a desire for revenge and lead to deep, lasting permanent damage.

The essence of the Gospel today is that we are a community, that we belong to one another, and that we are called to be reconciled. Jesus acknowledges that this is not always easy. As a community, we support one another and do not judge each other. Equally the refusal to face up to anger and hurt ends up as a refusal to love, and to seek hate and destruction instead.

With grace and truth, we seek the freedom that Jesus is encouraging us to seek, to work things out. We pray patiently, we pause, we step back from the incident. We are the body of Christ and in our church services we can share the 'Peace'. As part of God's community, we are not alone, we belong to one another and to Christ.

A Poison Tree by William Blake

*I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.*

*I was angry with my foe;
I told it not, my wrath did grow.*

*And I water'd it in fears,
Night and morning with my tears;
And I sunned it with smiles
And with soft deceitful wiles.*

*And it grew both day and night,
Till it bore an apple bright;
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.*

*And into my garden stole
When the night had veiled the pole:
In the morning glad I see
My foe outstretch'd beneath the tree*

Prayer

Lord of faith and truth

We bless your holy name.

Lord, you are among us even when few are gathered or we worship you
at home alone in your name.

Strengthen and bless all who meet to celebrate your sacraments and feed
on your word...

In your love, fulfil all that the law upholds.

Lord, you are among us in disputes and agreements.

Open our hearts to your reconciling grace...

Heal the hurts of injuries borne and evil intent.

Lord, you are among us when we share food and tell our stories of your guiding presence.

Encourage and sustain us in your fellowship...

Come alongside us as we accompany one another on our journey of faith.

Lord, you are among us in sickness and health.

Teach us to see through our frailty to your loving mercy that always holds us...

For all who help us in our times of trouble, we give you thanks.

Lord, you are among us when tears flow and day turns to night. Gather to yourself all who have died...

Bring us to the joy of the dawning new day of your resurrection. Amen

A time for personal 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 today 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

Hymn

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

*O master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where's there's sadness, ever joy.

O master, grant ...

Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving to all men that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Final Prayer and Blessing

God of peace,
Show us the way of peace in our lives, in our homes and with all whom
we meet on a day-to-day basis.

In Jesus' name. Amen

Rejoicing that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are with us wherever we
are. Amen

Sunday 13th September 2026
15th Service of Trinity

“Forgive us our trespasses – as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

Psalm 103 v 8-13

The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
He will not always accuse
nor will he keep his anger for ever.
He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west
so far he removes our transgressions from us.
As a father has compassion for his children,
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

A prayer of assurance of forgiveness

God of power and presence,
your grace goes ahead of us,
drawing us away from the sins that drag us down.
Your forgiveness heals us from all that has drawn us away from you and others.
Your love is in our midst, giving us courage,
leading us on and guiding us to your eternal kingdom. Amen.

The Gospel – St. Matthew 18 vs 21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive him? As many as seven times?”
“For this reason, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying.” Have patience with me and I will pay you everything.”
And out of pity for him, the Lord of that slave released him and forgave him that debt.

But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe". Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me and I will pay you." But he refused, then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his Lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave!

I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So, my heavenly Father will also do to you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.

A Reflection *(by Joan)*

Someone must have hurt or angered Peter more than once to cause him to ask Jesus how often he should forgive if someone went on deliberately wronging him. Some people are relatively easy to forgive – someone with whom I have a one off misunderstanding which leads them later to apologise. But there are times when we have been hurt many times by someone who cannot admit that they are doing anything wrong.

True forgiveness is a process. It can be difficult and costly, when we have been really hurt and we want to hit back. Twenty one years after her sister disappeared, Lucy Partington's remains were discovered in the basement of 25, Cromwell Street, Gloucester. Her sister Marian describes her long and determined effort to make sense of humanity at its darkest and to achieve forgiveness, serenity and peace, in her book "If you sit very still".

Jesus tells us, it is not a matter of numbers but is fundamentally one's attitude to people and one's self. We find it hard to put aside our hard reaction and the cutting words we would love to say. Forgiveness is not separated from the release of debt and accountability. In the parable the master wrote off the slave's debt which released him from a bond he could probably never pay but the slave is held accountable for his refusal to be equally merciful to his fellow slave.

Any refusal to forgive damages me more than the offender. God's mercy transforms all our relationships.

When we make mistakes, it seems natural to ask God to forgive. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Lord Sacks wrote, "Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, nor does it mean abandoning the claims of justice. It does mean, having an acknowledgement that the past is past and must not be allowed to cast its shadow over the future. Forgiveness heals the moral wounds the way the body heals physical wounds." When we refuse to forgive and let go, then we are filled with bitterness, anger and revenge. It's a bit like a river which goes stagnant if we try to dam it up or stop it flowing; whereas forgiveness releases and liberates us.

Take time to pray

You have called us O God, to be your people. You have loved us and chosen us for your own. Clothe us with your compassion, your kindness, your humility, your gentleness and your patience. Help us to forgive one another as you have forgiven us. Bind us all together in the perfect unity of your love.

We confess how quickly we see other people's faults and how slow we are to recognise our own. Forgive what we have been, sanctify what we are and order what we shall be. Amen.

Take time to pray for your family, friends; anyone you know who is ill, troubled or oppressed.

Bless them Lord, comfort and guide them and show me any way in which I might be able to help, with your strength leading me. Amen.

A Hymn to sing or say

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name.

I've been born again in Jesus' name.

And in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his love as he told me to.

He said: Freely, freely you have
received,
freely, freely give.

Go in my name, and because you
believe,
others will know that I live.

All power is given in Jesus' name,
in earth and heaven in Jesus' name.
And in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his power as he told me to.

God gives us life in Jesus' name,
he lives in us in Jesus' name.
And in Jesus' name I come to you
to share his peace as he told me to.

A Blessing

May God give us light to guide us, courage to support us and love to unite us,
now and evermore. Amen.

Sunday 20th September 2026
16th Sunday after Trinity

Opening Prayers

O Lord, open thou our lips and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.
Praise ye the Lord. The Lord's name be praised. Amen

Venite (*a prayer that calls us to worship, based on Psalm 95*)

O come, let us sing unto the Lord :
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving :
and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God : and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth : and the strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his, and he made it : and his hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship, and fall down : and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God : and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be : world without end. Amen.

Psalm 105 vs 1-6, 37- 45

O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.
² Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.
³ Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.
⁴ Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore.
⁵ Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;
³⁷ He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.
³⁸ Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.
³⁹ He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.
⁴⁰ The people asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
⁴¹ He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river.

⁴² For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.

⁴³ And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness:

⁴⁴ And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people;

⁴⁵ That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :

world without end. Amen.

Gospel Reading Matthew 20 vs 1-16

[Jesus saith] For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

² And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

³ And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

⁴ And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

⁵ Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

⁶ And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

⁷ They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

⁸ So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

⁹ And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

¹⁰ But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

¹¹ And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

¹² Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

¹³ But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

¹⁴ Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

¹⁵ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

¹⁶ So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Reflection *(by Jacky)*

There is something about this parable that instinctively feels unfair. Some of the workers have been out in the vineyard all day, working through the heat. Others have worked for half a day, some for only a few hours, and then there are those who have worked for just one hour. And at the end of the day, they all get paid exactly the same.

I think most of us can understand why the workers who started first grumbled. And we might well have grumbled too. Surely if you work twelve hours you should get more than someone who works one?

But this is a parable told by Jesus, so we need to find another way of looking at it.

How about looking at it from the other end of the queue? When the landowner goes out at five o'clock, he finds people still standing in the marketplace and asks them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" And they reply, "Because no one has hired us." They haven't just turned up at five o'clock hoping to get an easy hour's work. They have been there all day. They were there when the landowner came at nine o'clock, and nobody chose them. They were there at noon, and nobody chose them. They were still there at three. And now it is five o'clock and they are still waiting.

We don't know why nobody hired them. Perhaps they were older. Perhaps they weren't as strong as the others. Perhaps they had some disability. Perhaps they simply didn't look like particularly promising workers. Whatever the reason, by five o'clock, they are the people nobody wanted.

And I wonder what that must have felt like. There must surely have been disappointment, embarrassment and perhaps shame as they watched other people being chosen while they were repeatedly passed over.

But they still do need to eat. Their families still need feeding. The rent still needs paying. Their children don't need less supper simply because their father only managed to find one hour's work that day.

The landowner's decision to give them a full day's pay isn't based on their on their productivity. He is giving them what they need.

And maybe this is where we begin to see the heart of God in this parable. Because the kingdom of heaven isn't a performance-related-pay scheme.

So much of our world, and Westernised thinking, is organised around what we deserve. Work hard and earn more. Do well and get rewarded. And inevitably we carry some of that thinking into our relationship with God.

But grace doesn't work like that. God doesn't give us what we have earned. God gives generously because God loves us, not because of what we have achieved but because we are loved, cherished and every hair on our heads counted.

Representing God, the landowner goes out first thing in the morning. Then again at nine. Again at noon. Again at three. And finally, when the working day is almost finished, he goes out once more. God keeps coming looking for people. Even at five o'clock, when everybody else has apparently decided that these people aren't worth employing, God is still coming down the road looking for them.

There is something of the Eucharist here too. When we come to the altar, the person who has faithfully followed Christ for seventy years doesn't receive more Jesus than someone who has only just begun to discover faith. There isn't a bigger piece of bread for the more deserving Christian. We simply hold out our hands. And each of us receives Christ, the same amount of grace, the same love amount of God's love.

It is not the landowner who should adjust the wages he is giving: it is our thinking and expectation about God's grace that needs to be transformed. If we insist on thinking that Grace is only received on merit, then it will probably always look unfair. But God is the generous landowner who sees our need. And it's possible that sooner or later, every one of us will find ourselves standing in that marketplace, at 5 minutes to 5 in the afternoon, needing something we haven't earned.

And when that happens, the good news is that God is still coming to find us. The last may simply be the ones nobody else chose. But our God of infinite wisdom and mercy will always choose us, and in our hearts will hear "I choose you. Come with me." AME

Prayers *(in the tradition of the Book of Common Prayer)*

The Lord be with you. And with thy spirit.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, which 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 them that 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

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us. And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the King And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness. And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people. And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.

Because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.

O God, make clean our hearts within us. And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

Amen

The Collect of the Day

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know

what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; 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

The Collect for Peace

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect for Grace

O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

A prayer for the King and Parliament

Almighty God, fountain of all Goodness, we humbly beseech thee to bless our sovereign lord thy servant Charles III, this parliament and all who set authority under her; that they may order all things in wisdom, righteousness and peace to the honour of thy holy name and the good of thy Church and people.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

A prayer for the Royal Family

Almighty God, fountain of all Goodness, we humbly beseech thee to bless our sovereign King Charles, and all the Royal Family; Endue them with the Holy Spirit; enrich them with thy heavenly grace; prosper them with all happiness; and bring them to thine everlasting kingdom; Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

A Prayer for the clergy and people

Almighty and everlasting God, who alone workest great marvels: send down upon our Bishops, Priests and Deacons, and all Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing.

Grant this, O Lord, for the honour of our advocate and mediator, Jesus Christ

Amen

A prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications into thee; and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come to life everlasting. **Amen**

Final prayer

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

Hymn

Father, hear the prayer we offer:
Not for ease that prayer shall be,
But for strength that we may ever
Live our lives courageously.

Not forever in green pastures
Do we ask our way to be;
But the steep and rugged pathway
May we tread rejoicingly.

Not forever by still waters
Would we idly rest and stay;
But would smite the living fountains
From the rocks along our way.

Be our strength in hours of weakness,
In our wanderings be our guide;
Through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be thou at our side.

SUNDAY 27th September 2026

TRINITY 17

The Greeting

O Lord, open our lips

and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

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.

Praise the Lord.

The Lord's name be praised.

Collect

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;
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**

A Psalm set for this Sunday Psalm 123

- 1 To you I lift up my eyes, to you that are enthroned in the heavens.
- 2 As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, or the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
- 3 So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us.
- 4 Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt.
- 5 Our soul has had more than enough of the scorn of the arrogant, and of the contempt of the proud.

**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.**

Confession

Human sin disfigures the whole creation, which groans with eager longing for God's redemption. We confess our sin in penitence and faith.

God of mercy, we acknowledge that we are all sinners.

We turn from the wrong that we have thought and said and done, and are mindful of all that we have failed to do.

For the sake of Jesus, who died for us, forgive us for all that is past, and help us to live each day in the light of Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Absolution

May almighty God, who sent his Son into the world to save sinners, bring *us* his pardon and peace, now and for ever. **Amen**

Gospel Reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Matthew 21 vs 23-32 The Authority of Jesus Questioned

23 When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?' ²⁴Jesus said to them, 'I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?' And they argued with one another, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?"

²⁶But if we say, "Of human origin", we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.' ²⁷So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.' And he said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

28 'What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." ²⁹He answered, "I will not"; but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, "I go, sir"; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the

prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

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

Reflection *(By Tony)*

“Just who do you think you are, telling me to do that?”

Have you ever had your ‘authority’ challenged?

Maybe as a parent, or in a work role, or as a volunteer, or as a member of the public.

Over my life as a teacher, police officer, parent, and church minister, I have had plenty of time to consider the question: *‘By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?’*

There is positional authority granted to you by society, where for example you can give a pupil a detention, or place a suspect in a cell, or knowledge based authority, where for example you authoritatively unpack from your learning, a Bible passage for a congregation.

It is a huge responsibility to exercise authority justly and correctly. Our media is full of examples where this has not been the case.

Jesus is the ultimate authority in both senses. Through him we can have life, and life in all its fullness, and in following him and receiving his Spirit, know and live in wisdom. God’s wisdom is good place to exercise authority from, whether as a parent, or in the workplace, or in a voluntary role, or whenever someone is looking to us for an authoritative answer to a difficult question,

The positional authority that Jesus exercised came directly from God Almighty, his Father and the Creator of all. It doesn’t come higher than that. His knowledge authority came from his intimate relationship with God; from being Immanuel, fully human yet fully divine, experiencing birth to maturity; and from ‘walking the talk’, even unto crucifixion and then resurrection.

When God says to us today, metaphorically :

“Son, daughter, go and work in the vineyard today.”

How will we respond?

Intercessions

Loving Lord, we are called to serve others. Help us to recognise God's spirit working in the people around us. Hear our prayers we bring before you.

Let us pray to have a "closeness with God" and remember the importance of prayer. Not the formal prayer that does not touch the heart – but one that struggles with God and draws us closer to Him. Help us to never be too busy to pray.

As the cost of living affects many in our community and in many nations, let us pray that Governments and producers can work together to manage the World's resources fairly and equally.

We pray for those that are homeless, with no shelter or place to lay their head. May the Holy Spirit provide them shelter, security and hope to rebuild their lives.

We pray for those feeling afraid and worried about their safety. May they seek protection and solace through their friendships and professional support.

Let us pray for those suffering racism or any kind of social injustice. May those in authority act to defend integrity, peace, and equality for all.

We pray for all those working in healthcare settings. May the Holy Spirit bless and protect our NHS workforce, renew their energy, and restore their wellbeing.

Be close to those who are dying, and those who grieve. Come alongside those who have long term illnesses and disabilities, bringing healing and comfort, and above all hope.

Heavenly King, guide us to witness seeing you in all we do as we help to bring your spirit to the world, and help us in responding to, and exercising authority. Amen.

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

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.**

Hymn:

1 All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall.
Bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him Lord of all.
Bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him Lord of all!

2 O seed of Israel's chosen race
now ransomed from the fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all.
Hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all!

3 Let every tongue and every tribe
responsive to his call,
to him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all.
To him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all!

4 Oh, that with all the sacred throng
we at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song
and crown him Lord of all.
We'll join the everlasting song
and crown him Lord of all.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Gracious God, thank you for the gift of this new Sunday morning. As the crisp autumn air reminds us of your changing seasons, we praise you for your unchanging faithfulness. We lay down our weekly worries at your feet today. Quiet our minds, refresh our spirits, and fill us with your joy as we worship, rest, and spend time with loved ones. Prepare our hearts today for the week ahead.

Amen

May the peace of God guard your heart and mind today.
May His joy be your strength as you step into this Sunday.
May His wisdom guide your thoughts, words, and actions.
And the Blessing of God Almighty,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
Be upon you and those you love, this day and evermore. **Amen**