



# Sixteenth Sunday after TRINITY 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022

In the name of the + Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

## The Greeting

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

## HYMN

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
and in the depth be praise;  
in all his words most wonderful,  
most sure in all his ways!

O loving wisdom of our God!  
When all was sin and shame,  
a second Adam to the fight  
and to the rescue came.

O wisest love! that flesh and blood,  
which did in Adam fail,  
should strive afresh against the foe,  
should strive, and should prevail

and that the highest gift of grace  
should flesh and blood refine:  
God's presence and his very self,  
and essence all-divine.

O generous love! that he who smote  
in man for man the foe,  
the double agony in Man  
for man should undergo.

And in the garden secretly,  
and on the cross on high,  
should teach his brethren, and inspire  
to suffer and to die.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
and in the depth be praise;  
in all his words most wonderful,  
most sure in all his ways!

## Invitation to Confession

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:  
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.

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

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

**A reading from the Old Testament**

Habakkuk 1.1-4, 2. 1-4

1 The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.

2 O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,  
and you will not listen?

Or cry to you 'Violence!'  
and you will not save?

3 Why do you make me see wrongdoing  
and look at trouble?

Destruction and violence are before me;  
strife and contention arise.

4 So the law becomes slack  
and justice never prevails.

The wicked surround the righteous—  
therefore judgement comes forth perverted.

2 I will stand at my watch-post,  
and station myself on the rampart;  
I will keep watch to see what he will say to me,  
and what he will answer concerning my complaint.

2 Then the Lord answered me and said:

Write the vision;  
make it plain on tablets,  
so that a runner may read it.

3 For there is still a vision for the appointed time;  
it speaks of the end, and does not lie.

If it seems to tarry, wait for it;  
it will surely come, it will not delay.

4 Look at the proud!  
Their spirit is not right in them,  
but the righteous live by their faith.

This is the word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

1 Do not fret because of the wicked;  
do not be envious of wrongdoers,  
2 for they will soon fade like the grass,  
and wither like the green herb.



3 Trust in the Lord, and do good;  
so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.  
4 Take delight in the Lord,  
and he will give you the desires of your heart.  
5 Commit your way to the Lord;  
trust in him, and he will act.  
6 He will make your vindication shine like the light,  
and the justice of your cause like the noonday.

7 Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for him;  
do not fret over those who prosper in their way,  
over those who carry out evil devices.

8 Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath.  
Do not fret—it leads only to evil.

9 For the wicked shall be cut off,  
but those who wait for the Lord shall inherit the land.

**Epistle**

**2 Timothy 1.1-14**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

3 I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. 6 For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; 7 for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

8 Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, 12 and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. 13 Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

## HYMN

1 God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform.  
He plants his footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.

2 You fearful saints, fresh  
courage take;  
The clouds you so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall  
break  
In blessings on your head.

3 His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour.  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flower.

4 Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan his work in vain.  
God is his own interpreter,  
And he will make it plain.

## The Gospel Luke 17. 5-10

Alleluia, alleluia. Welcome with meekness the implanted word  
That has the power to save your souls  
Alleluia

The Holy Gospel is from the 17th chapter of the Gospel of Luke beginning at the 5th verse.

### Glory to you O Lord

5 The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' 6 The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

7 'Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? 8 Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink"? 9 Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? 10 So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!"'

This is the Gospel of the Lord

### Praise to you O Christ

### Reflection

We are used to seeing fields of glorious yellow in the early summer when rape, which is part of the mustard family, is grown for its oil and seeds. Seeing this plant in the fields makes Jesus' parable seem odd – unless he is talking about a different plant or miss-named it. Mustard is not a good choice for a birds' nest! It is tall and spindly and short lived.

But this is us taking too literally what Jesus is saying. Just with the parable of the sower where the farmer seems rather careless in throwing seed around – seed was precious – Jesus is making a point to catch people's attention. They may have laughed at the idea of birds nesting in mustard, but some would know from the scripture that Jesus was alluding to Ezekiel's prophecy to the exiles in Babylon, about birds of the air who would nest in the branches of trees, now low but will be raised. These trees symbolise a Messianic age when God would restore the nation and make them a blessing to all the earth.

Jesus, as he so often does, turns this idea around. He wants to shake up the ideas people then held about an earthly kingdom; a Messiah who would restore the nation of Israel only. Earthly power and

earthly thinking. The way he did this was to use a parable – to take an idea and present it in a different and unexpected way.

When we read the gospels we read them as a set text, something prepared and carefully crafted. We lose sight of the fact that Jesus' method of teaching was immediate. Most of us are far removed from working the land. This loss of connection deprives us of the immediacy of Jesus' parables. He spoke directly to the crowds around him.

To make his point he probably looked around and something would catch his eye and he would use that image to make his teaching come alive. A passing shepherd leading a large flock of sheep sparked the idea of a shepherd looking for just one that was lost. Or, as in this case, perhaps he looked around and saw the yellow mustard growing by the shore of the lake. "Look, imagine that birds could come and nest in mustard branches! God's kingdom is like that! Mustard is a common plant growing everywhere. Imagine it growing so big that birds can nest in it. Stop thinking of the Kingdom of God in spectacular earthly terms, great trees, great power."

The key point is to be open to the unexpected. The Kingdom of God 'sneaks' in through the common things of life. It is a wild idea. Mustard is an astringent, it has a bite, it can be disturbing even unpleasant should you have too much on your roast beef. The message of the gospel can be like that – indeed Paul elsewhere says as much. It is disturbing because it challenges us – always. The challenge for the church is to imagine different ways of being.

Pushing the parable further; trees, though beautiful are slow growing, and deeply rooted to the spot. Mustard is easily and quickly grown – here today and gone tomorrow – but always seeding. It produces an abundant harvest; each seed though small, will produce a plant rich with seeds.

Each has its benefits, but it seems that the challenge to us at present is to be more 'mustard-like'! Are we open to unexpected harvest when God gives the growth? As a church are we flexible enough to expand our imagination, engage with our secular society and find new ways to offer a 'nest', a shelter of blessing?

The message of Jesus has not changed. As Paul writes: We are ambassadors for Christ. Our message is that we are offered reconciliation with God. Take that apart and it means peace and wholeness – we become 'healed, restored and forgiven'. However sophisticated and secular our society becomes – this message is as relevant now as it ever was.

Like mustard, this message is sharp. It cuts across the quick, cheap, and transient 'fixes' that the world offers that are inward looking and self-serving. It is a message that brings relationship to loneliness and abandonment. It assures us that we are more than 'good enough' and valued beyond measure. That there is no trauma or abuse that cannot be redeemed, no loss that cannot be held in God's love.

The message of Jesus Christ is rather like the bright fields of yellow in the spring. It stands out to awaken us to a deeper reality. It is a message of bright, good news. It is not the 'quantity of faith' that is the point – it is in what, or in whom, is that faith placed. Faith in ourselves or in the world system will always fail. Only faith in the source of all being will ground us secure.

We are each deeply loved by God who desires our company in a relationship where change and wholeness are possible, and we understand ourselves to be held in the eternal arms of God our beginning and our end.

We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is,  
seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come.

### Intercessions

Gracious God. We pray for the Church throughout the world. Especially we remember those who endure persecution for their belief in Christ. By your spirit give us boldness to proclaim Jesus as the source of truth and abundant life and to proclaim God's kingdom of righteousness and justice.

Make you Church into the people you want us to be and forgive us where we fall short. Teach us to be generous in judgement, bold in commitment, and sensitive in listening.

We pray for those who have authority and power in our world, for our King and Government and for leaders of nations. As the world seems to be in ever greater turmoil in these days, we bring in our prayers places torn by strife and warfare, places recovering from natural disaster, the seemingly ever-present places where there is poverty, disease and so little hope.

God of Compassion, forgive our human selfishness, come into the world's conflict, show us our part in working for justice and peace. By your spirit, strengthen what is good in this world and restrain what is evil.

Gracious God you have compassion over all you have made. We pray for those in trouble, sorrow, need, or sickness or any other adversity. We name before you those we know and for whom we have love and care, and we bring you our own needs and concerns.

We pray for those who have died and are in your presence. For those who have died recently and for those who mourn. We remember with gratitude those who are dear to us and enriched our lives, we hold them in our thoughts and in your love.

God of love your care is for each one of us and your healing love is for all. Strengthen us and unite our work with your great work and perfect it. We commit ourselves each other and all whom we love to your mercy and protection.

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,  
to the mercy and protection of God.

Amen.

Being made one by the power of the Spirit,  
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

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

Blessings and Ending

Almighty God,  
you have taught us through your Son  
that love is the fulfilling of the law:  
grant that we may love you with our whole heart  
and our neighbours as ourselves;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The peace of God be in our heart  
The grace of God be in our words  
The love of God be in our hands  
The joy of God be in our soul  
and in the song that our life sings.

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
Be with us now and always. Amen.

## HYMN

1 Come, ye faithful, raise the anthem,  
cleave the skies with shouts of praise;  
sing to him who found the ransom,  
Ancient of eternal Days,  
God of God, the Word incarnate,  
whom the heaven of heaven obeys.

2 Ere he raised the lofty mountains,  
formed the seas, or built the sky,  
love eternal, free, and boundless,  
moved the Lord of life to die,  
fore-ordained the Prince of princes  
for the throne of Calvary.

4 High on yon celestial mountains  
stands his sapphire throne, all bright,  
midst unending alleluias  
bursting from the sons of light;  
Zion's people tell his praises,  
victor after hard-won fight.

5 Bring your harps, and bring your incense,  
sweep the string and pour the lay;  
let the earth proclaim his wonders,  
King of that celestial day;  
he the Lamb once slain is worthy,  
who was dead, and lives for ay.

6 Laud and honour to the Father,  
laud and honour to the Son,  
laud and honour to the Spirit,  
ever Three and ever One,  
consubstantial, co-eternal,  
while unending ages run.

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