

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

23rd August 2026



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

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

HYMN

All ye who seek a comfort sure
in trouble and distress,
whatever sorrow vex the mind,
or guilt the soul oppress:

Jesus, who gave himself for you
upon the cross to die,
opens to you his sacred heart;
oh, to that heart draw nigh.

Ye hear how kindly he invites;
ye hear his words so blest:
'all ye that labour come to me,
and I will give you rest.'

Jesus, thou joy of saints on high,
thou hope of sinners here,
attracted by those loving words
to thee I lift my prayer.

Wash thou my wounds in that dear blood,
which forth from thee doth flow;
new grace, new hope inspire, a new
and better heart bestow.

Confession

God of mercy Long-suffering, full of grace and truth,
You create us from nothing and give us life.
You give your faithful people new life in the water of baptism.
You do not turn your face from us,
Nor cast us aside.
We confess that we have sinned
Against you and our neighbour.
We have wounded your love and marred your image in us.
Restore us for the sake of your Son,
And bring us to heavenly joy,
In Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive us our sins, +
open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will
and give us the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid
and giving us those good things
which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation
of 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
Isaiah 51 1-6

.1“Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness
and who seek the Lord:
Look to the rock from which you were cut
and to the quarry from which you were hewn;
2 look to Abraham, your father,
and to Sarah, who gave you birth.
When I called him he was only one man,
and I blessed him and made him many.
3 The Lord will surely comfort Zion
and will look with compassion on all her ruins;
he will make her deserts like Eden,
her wastelands like the garden of the Lord.
Joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

4 “Listen to me, my people;
hear me, my nation:
Instruction will go out from me;
my justice will become a light to the nations.

5 My righteousness draws near speedily,
my salvation is on the way,
and my arm will bring justice to the nations.

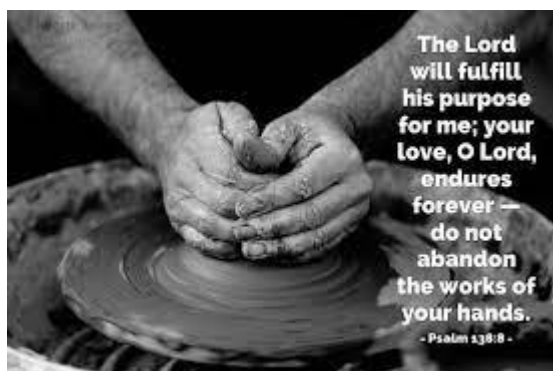
The islands will look to me
and wait in hope for my arm.

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
look at the earth beneath;
the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment
and its inhabitants die like flies.

But my salvation will last forever,
my righteousness will never fail.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

- 1 I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;
before the “gods” I will sing your praise.
- 2 I will bow down toward your holy temple
and will praise your name
for your unfailing love and your faithfulness,
for you have so exalted your solemn decree
that it surpasses your fame.
- 3 When I called, you answered me;
you greatly emboldened me.
- 4 May all the kings of the earth praise you, Lord,
when they hear what you have decreed.
- 5 May they sing of the ways of the Lord,
for the glory of the Lord is great.



- 6 Though the Lord is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly;
though lofty, he sees them from afar.
- 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life.
You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes;
with your right hand you save me.
- 8 The Lord will vindicate me;
your love, Lord, endures forever—
do not abandon the works of your hands.

A Reading from The New Testament
Romans 12. 1-8

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

HYMN

1 In the cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

3 When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming
adds more lustre to the day.

2 When the woes of life overtake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me.
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

5 In the cross of Christ I glory,
towering o'er the wrecks of time;
all the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.
Welcome with meekness the implanted word
That is able to save your souls.
Alleluia.

The Gospel

The holy Gospel is written in the 16th Chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew beginning at the 13th verse.

Glory be to thee, O Lord

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise be to thee, O Christ

Reflection

The disciples have been with Jesus for some considerable time. They have seen him do great acts of power, healings and exorcisms. Last week we read of his coming to them on the lake in their trouble and fear, quietening the waters. Their response is both awe and worship; they declare him Son of God.

We are now at a pivotal point in Jesus' life. Alone with his closest friends he asks them directly who they think he is. This is a straight question, not a response to any sign or miracle, there is no emotional excitement or attachment, it is a calm and measured question and demands of them a similar response.

Already they have this thought between them but what Jesus needs to draw from them is an intellectual connection between his actions and his person. We sense this as at first they give easy answers and we almost sense them dodging the question.

What it would imply if they spoke out their wonderment, hope and no doubt some fear. Can they say it? Do they have the courage to say it? It is bold, brash Peter who finally probably can bear the 'skirting around' no longer who finally says the words. "You are the Messiah!"

There, it is done. This confession was as much for Jesus as for them. It was a foundation upon which he can now move forward. He can now begin to speak of his death and resurrection. He had to establish – or rather he had to have his followers establish - a 'line in the sand'. A moment of commitment to what they barely understood, or what it might mean for them, but there was no going back.

"Who do you say I am?" is the most significant question that can be asked. Upon our answer all else falls into place. To respond with the disciples "You are the Christ" put us into a completely new place of understanding and life – in a moment.

Saying other or to give no response leaves us in another place. A place without the 'light of the world', 'the way, truth and life, the bread for our hunger, the water for our thirst, without a 'shepherd, brother, friend' without hope and without the 'resurrection' to eternal life.

Why was Jesus able to take ordinary everyday bread and make it feed a multitude? How was he able to walk into the middle of chaos and fear and bring calm and peace to his friends in the storm on the lake? How is it that men and women the world over find Jesus indeed to be the bread of life – that which satisfies and nourishes in a way that nothing else can?

It is because Jesus brings the presence of God. His word to the frightened disciples takes the name of God "I AM", do not be afraid. Extraordinary – imagine what they thought.

Can we hear those words as we face overwhelming fear, misfortune, tragedy? We do not know until it happens to us. If we have come to Christ, then amid the storm and fear that voice is there "I AM, and I will hold you through this." Dr Ann Nyland* who has made extensive study of biblical language translates Jesus' use of the divine name, I AM as "I am existence".

Who is this Jesus? Your response will be your own and different to mine, it is experienced uniquely, but fundamentally the same. It is out of that response that you and I will live our Christian life Your life as a disciple, which simply means learner and follower.

Following Christ does not exempt us from the pain and suffering of the world around us. We go through it with everyone else, but never alone. Though we may be bereft of family and friends, we are held by One greater.

'Who do you say I am?'

What does your answer say about you? How does it define you? What sort of person does that mean you become? It is serious stuff. Jesus is not leading us on a pleasant afternoon hike but on a walk into believing the impossible, risk, and no doubt ridicule. Or did we suppose that the kingdom of God would mean merely a few minor adjustments in our ordinary lives? It is so radical we back off. It will affect our comfortable lives, what we do with our money, our time, our relationships, our prayers.

In Paul's epistle we see his response and the one to which he calls the believers:

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your (rational and logical response) true and proper worship. ... be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

'Rational and logical' is Paul's down-to-earth consequence of our acknowledging Jesus as the Christ. Such is the mercy and goodness given to us and our desire to be a disciple (follower) we will offer to God our lives (a living sacrifice) which become set apart and pleasing to God.

It is quite something to say that we can 'please' God who is complete in the plenitude of his being and needs nothing ... and yet this is how he regards you.

The Creed

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.
Amen.

Intercessions

We pray that Christ may be seen in the life of the Church.
You have called us into the family
of those who are the children of God.
May our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ
be strengthened by your grace.
Jesus, Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

You have called us to be a temple
where the Holy Spirit can dwell.
Give us clean hands and pure hearts
so that our lives will reflect your holiness.
Jesus, Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

You have called us to be a light to the world,
so that those in darkness come to you.
May our lives shine as a witness
to the saving grace you have given for all.
Jesus, Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

You have called us to be members of your body,
so that when one suffers, all suffer together.
We ask for your comfort and healing power
to bring hope to those in distress.
Jesus, Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

You have called us to be the Bride,
where you, Lord, are the Bridegroom.
Prepare us for the wedding feast,
where we will be united with you for ever.

We pray for those who have died recently
committing them into your loving care
Jesus, Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,
you have called us into fellowship with all your saints.
We unite our prayers with theirs
and ask for grace to serve you with joy
where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for all eternity.
in your mercy hear us.

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.

God of glory,
the end of our searching,
help us to lay aside
all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom,
and to give all that we have
to gain the pearl beyond all price,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen

And the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds
In the knowledge and love of God,
And of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
And the + blessing of God almighty,
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
Be with you, and remain with you always Amen

HYMN

O praise ye the Lord!
Praise him in the height;
rejoice in his word,
ye angels of light;
ye heavens, adore him
by whom ye were made,
and worship before him,
in brightness arrayed.

O praise ye the Lord!
Praise him upon earth,
in tuneful accord,
ye sons of new birth;
praise him who hath brought you
his grace from above,
praise him who hath taught you
to sing of his love.

O praise ye the Lord!
All things that give sound;
each jubilant chord
re-echo around;
loud organs, his glory
forth tell in deep tone,
and sweet harp, the story
of what he hath done.

O praise ye the Lord!
Thanksgiving and song
to him be outpoured
all ages along!
For love in creation,
for heaven restored,
for grace of salvation,
O praise ye the Lord!

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*The Source New Testament'