

Sunday 7th June – Morning Worship for Trinity I

Led by Sue Nelms, LLM

<https://zoom.us/j/82311473640>

LORDSBRIDGE TEAM
OF CHURCHES



Opening Words

The grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

Gathering Prayer

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.

cf Colossians 3.16,17

Hymn – Lord, thy church on earth is seeking

- 1 Lord, thy church on earth is seeking
thy renewal from above;
teach us all the art of speaking
with the accent of thy love.
We would heed thy great commission:
'Go now into every place-
preach, baptise, fulfil my mission,
serve with love and share my grace.

- 2 Freedom give to those in bondage,
lift the burdens caused by sin.
Give new hope, new strength and courage,
grant release from fears within:

light for darkness; joy for sorrow;
love for hatred; peace for strife.
These and countless blessings follow
as the Spirit gives new life.

3 In the streets of every city
where the bruised and lonely dwell,
let us show the Saviour's pity,
let us of his mercy tell.
To all lands and peoples bringing
all the richness of thy word,
till the world, thy praises singing,
hails thee Christ, Redeemer, Lord.

Hugh Sherlock (1905-1998)

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Saying Sorry

St Paul says

'Be imitators of God;
love as Christ loved;
do not grieve the Holy Spirit;
put away all anger and bitterness,
all slander and malice.'

So let us confess our sins to God,
who forgives us in Christ.

cf Ephesians 4.30 – 5.1

**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;**

**that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen

Readings by Ann Griffiths

Hosea 5:15-6:6

¹⁵ I will return again to my place
until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face.
In their distress they will beg my favour:
6 ‘Come, let us return to the Lord;
for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us;
he has struck down, and he will bind us up.
² After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that we may live before him.
³ Let us know, let us press on to know the Lord;
his appearing is as sure as the dawn;
he will come to us like the showers,
like the spring rains that water the earth.’
⁴ What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?
What shall I do with you, O Judah?
Your love is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
⁵ Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets,
I have killed them by the words of my mouth,
and my judgement goes forth as the light.
⁶ For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.

For the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
Glory to you, O Lord.

⁹ As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.

¹⁰ And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?' ¹² But when he heard this, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.'

¹⁸ While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, 'My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.' ¹⁹ And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. ²⁰ Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, ²¹ for she said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.' ²² Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman was made well. ²³ When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute-players and the crowd making a commotion, ²⁴ he said, 'Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.' And they laughed at him. ²⁵ But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. ²⁶ And the report of this spread throughout that district.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection by Lynne Saylor

"Lord, open our hearts and minds to hear your Word and to receive what you would teach us today. Amen."

There are moments in life when people discover that what once defined them - their needs, their self-image, even their character - no longer fits who they have become. Sometimes this change is brought about by events that happen to them; sometimes it arises from movements deep within them; often, it is both that begin their transformation.

Our readings this morning from Matthew's Gospel give us three such examples:

- A tax collector who sits at his table, surrounded by money but despised by society, who feels spiritually empty;
- A synagogue ruler who stands within the structures and laws of religion, but finds himself powerless and desperate before death; and
- A woman who has done nothing wrong, but who nevertheless has suffered silently from feelings of shame and exclusion for years;

While Matthew is reporting on events that happened thousands of years ago, these stories still speak so powerfully to us today. Beneath our demeanors, many of us at one point in our lives or another, have had similar feelings of discontentment, desperation or unwilful acquiescence.

In the next few minutes, I want to examine the stories from Matthew's characters in our Gospel reading this morning and highlight what Jesus teaches us.

First, a few words about Matthew and his Gospel. We know little about him. We read of his calling in Matthew 9:9. We know that he was a tax-gatherer and that he must therefore have been a bitterly hated man at the time. Tax gatherers were known to be corrupt and many fellow Jews viewed them as traitors serving the hated Roman empire.

One chief characteristic of Matthew's Gospel was that it was written for the Jews. Matthew's primary and deliberate purpose was to show how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. Our Old Testament reading of Hosea this morning is one example. But more about that later.

Keeping this background in mind, we return to the three characters in this morning's Gospel reading: a despised tax collector, a grieving father and a bleeding woman. We'll start with the last and work backwards.

“Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.” (Mt. 9:20, NIV)

This woman is almost certainly Jewish. She has spent the last 12 years being invisible, unseen by society. Under religious purity expectations of the time, her bleeding made her unclean and an outcast. Touching anything in public would have been considered taboo. But in the Gospel story, the direction of power reverses, by touching Jesus she is made clean and her health is restored.

There's more. “Take heart, daughter: your faith has healed you.” The term ‘daughter’ is tender and restorative. Jesus heals not only her body but her social and spiritual identity. He brings her back into community. He restores her dignity and her faith.

In Chapter 9:18-19 and 23-26 we learn about a father's despair over his presumed dead daughter. Verse 18 reads, “While he was saying this, a ruler came and knelt before him and said, ‘My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her and she will live.’”

Matthew tells this story more briefly than the other gospel writers do. For more details, we must read Mark or Luke. There we discover the ruler's name was Jairus and that he was a ruler of the synagogue, a VIP

in other words. He would have been one of those strictly orthodox Jews who had heard about Jesus but regarded him as a dangerous heretic. It was only when everything else failed that he turned in desperation to Jesus.

What does Matthew want us to learn from these two stories? Perhaps that suffering strips away pride, that need drives people to Jesus and that faith often begins in helplessness. The bigger message to me is it doesn't matter how we come to Jesus – in desperation or in stealth – what matters is that we come. No matter how inadequate and imperfect we are, he is willing to accept us as we are and able to make us what we ought to be.

So back to our first character: Matthew and the Sinners (sounds like the name of a pop group). Jesus did not only call Matthew to follow him and become his disciple: he actually sat at the dinner table with men and women like Matthew, with tax collectors and sinners. By keeping company with people like this, Jesus was doing something which the pious people of his day would never have done.

So it isn't surprising to read that the Pharisees asked Jesus' disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

This question sets up a zinger of a response for Jesus. "On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners'". (9:12-13)

You may remember my mentioning earlier that Matthew's purpose was to reveal every detail of Jesus' life that was foreshadowed by the prophets. Here we have Matthew connecting the Book of Hosea (6:6, our Old Testament reading this morning) with his Gospel (9:13)

Compare Hosea " For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings" with Matthew,

“Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

What Matthew is telling us in this passage is Jesus embodies the mercy Hosea proclaimed.

What Jesus is saying to those around the dinner table back then – and to us today- to glorify God is to show others His mercy, love and compassion.

So we are invited to the dinner party at the communion table, surrounded by other imperfect and fallible human beings. We are asked to learn – with the Holy Spirit’s help – to see human dignity and the face of God in all. We are encouraged to be good disciples, to engage in contemplative prayer, and to share God’s love with all. If our hands are never stretched out to help those in need, we do not show God’s mercy.

By doing God’s work, we will find moments when we discover that what once defined us has changed. Through love and fellowship with others, we have been transformed. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:**

**that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

cf Philippians 2.6-11

Prayers of Intercession prepared by John Crang

As God's beloved children let us pray...

Govern and direct your Church, fill it with love and truth and grant it that unity that is your will. Enlighten Sarah and Stephen our Archbishops, Sarah our Bishop designate and all who minister with knowledge and understanding, that by their teaching and their lives they may proclaim your word. As the world looks for direction in these uncertain times may their words be timely and understood as we all navigate these uncharted territories.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Guide the leaders of the nations into the ways of peace and justice. We remember especially those who are caught up in conflict and who are scared, hungry and homeless. We pray for those agencies working selflessly in dangerous places to bring help and support. In a moment of quiet can we bring to mind those parts of the world that are beneath the horizon of media awareness but that we are particularly aware of and concerned for...

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Guard and strengthen your servant Charles our King, that your Holy Spirit would council him and those around him with wisdom as he seeks your honour and glory in the role that you have given...

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Endue the High Court of Parliament and all the Ministers of the Crown with wisdom and understanding, that you would enable those who have chosen this service to honour one another and to seek the common good. We pray this too for the media in their pursuit truth

and justice. Bless those who administer the law, that they may uphold justice, honesty and truth. We pray for our police and emergency services as they endeavour to keep us all safe.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

As we enjoy the beauty of lengthening days and sunlight, give us the will to continue to consider our use the resources of the earth in thankfulness for your provisions and for the good of all creation...

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We pray for our local communities and for all those who care and support us. Bring your joy into our conversations, and help us to listen to each other. We pray too for our schools and teachers as they prepare their pupils for upcoming examinations, watch over all children and guide them to find their way for the life ahead of them.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Let us take a moment in silence to pray for those known to us who are unwell, lonely, bereaved or downcast at this time.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the peace of Christ, both those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone, and grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

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

Collect

O God,
the strength of all those who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without you,

grant us the help of your grace,
that in the keeping of your commandments
we may please you both in will and deed;
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. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

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 forever.

Amen.

Hymn – I cannot tell

I I cannot tell why he, whom angels worship,
should set his love upon the sons of men,
or why, as Shepherd, he should seek the wanderers,
to bring them back, they know not how or when.
But this I know, that he was born of Mary,
when Bethlehem's manger was his only home,
and that he lived at Nazareth and laboured,
and so the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is come.

2 I cannot tell how silently he suffered,
as with his peace he graced this place of tears,
or how his heart upon the cross was broken,
the crown of pain to three and thirty years.
But this I know, he heals the broken-hearted,
and stays our sin, and calms our lurking fear,
and lifts the burden from the heavy-laden,
for still the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is here.

3 I cannot tell how all the lands shall worship,
when, at his bidding, every storm is stilled,
or who can say how great the jubilation
when every heart with love and joy is filled.
But this I know, the skies will thrill with rapture,
and myriad, myriad human voices sing,
and earth to heaven, and heaven to earth, will answer,
at last the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is King.

William Young Fullerton (1857-1932) (Public Domain)

Notices

Blessing

The Lord bless us and keep us:

Amen.

The Lord make his face to shine upon us
and be gracious to us:

Amen.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon us
and give us peace:

Amen.

Numbers 6.24-26

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ.