

**Sunday 20th September –
Morning Worship for
Trinity 16**

Led by Sue Nelms, LLM

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



Gathering Prayer

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

cf 1 Timothy 1.2

We meet in the presence of God
**who knows our needs,
hears our cries,
feels our pain,
and heals our wounds.**

Opening Words

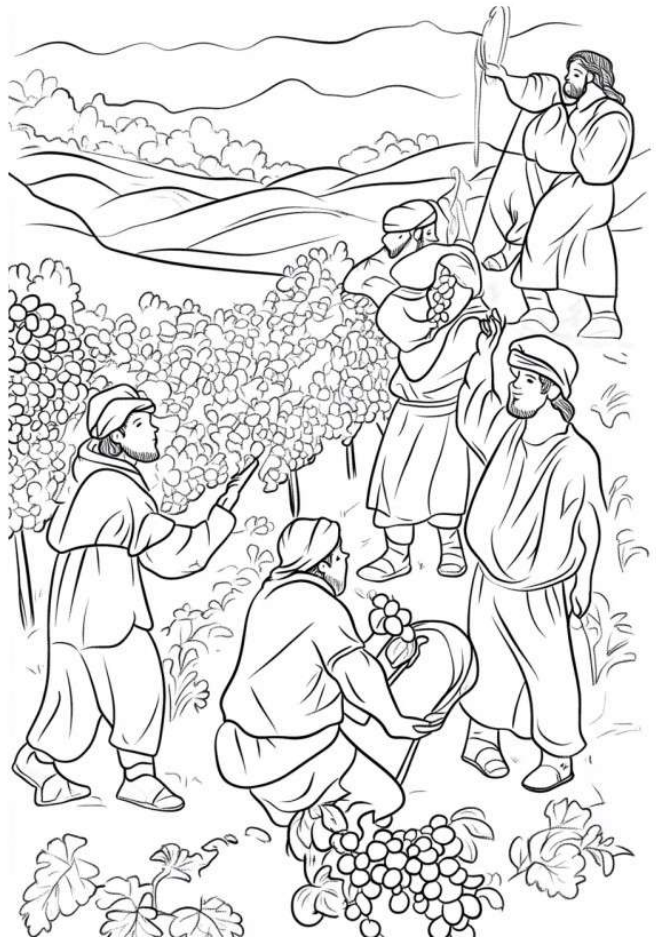
Lord, speak to us
that we may hear your word.

Move among us
that we may behold your glory.

Receive our prayers
that we may learn to trust you.
Amen.

Hymn: New every morning is the love

- 1 New every morning is the love
our wakening and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life and power and thought.
- 2 New mercies, each returning day,
hover around us while we pray;



new perils past, new sins forgiven,
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

3 If on our daily course our mind
be set to hallow all we find,
new treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

4 The trivial round, the common task,
will furnish all we need to ask,
room to deny ourselves, a road
to bring us daily nearer God.

5 Only, O Lord, in thy dear love
fit us for perfect rest above;
and help us, this and every day,
to live more nearly as we pray.

John Keble (1792-1866) (Public Domain)

Saying Sorry

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love
with all the saints in earth and heaven.

Knowing our unworthiness and sin,
let us ask from him both mercy and forgiveness.

We are often slow to follow the example of Christ.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

We often fail to be known as Christ's disciples.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

We often fail to walk the way of the cross.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May the God of love
bring us back to himself,

forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Readings read by Rick Nelms

Exodus 16:2-15

² The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'

⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.' ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.' ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you shall know that it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt,

⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your complaining against the Lord. For what are we, that you complain against us?' ⁸ And Moses said, 'When the Lord gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the Lord has heard the complaining that you utter against him - what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the Lord.'

⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining."' ¹⁰ And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ The Lord spoke to Moses and said, ¹² 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God."

¹³ In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another,

‘What is it?’ For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

For the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Matthew 20:1-16

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord.

20 ‘For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the labourers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.

³ When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; ⁴ and he said to them, “You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.” So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, “Why are you standing here idle all day?” ⁷ They said to him, “Because no one has hired us.” He said to them, “You also go into the vineyard.” ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, “Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.” ⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, “These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.” ¹³ But he replied to one of them, “Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?” ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection by Sue Nelms, LLM

Let us pray

Now, O Lord, take my lips and speak through them; take our minds and think through them; take our hearts and set them on fire with love for you. Amen.

Last week on Zoom Church our prayers of intercession were based on the Lord's Prayer and for some reason my brain has continued to reflect on the Lord's Prayer this week too. Looking at this morning's readings I was also intrigued as to why the story of the Israelites complaining about the food God provided had been paired with the story of the workers in the vineyard. Was the connection really just that you had a lot of people complaining?

I could also not get away from the phrase 'Give us today our daily bread'. In the passage from Exodus daily bread has not been enough for the Israelites – they wanted meat! God, the provider of daily bread, also became the provider of meat for them on that one day. I think that we all probably need something different occasionally and for the Israelites it was the quail that God provided for them.

Turning to our gospel reading, we hear about the men standing in the market early in the morning hoping that someone would employ them for the day. Most people in Biblical times did not rely on a fixed job with an annual salary like we do. They lived day to day, hand to mouth. The money they earned would feed them, and possibly their family, for a day – their daily bread so to speak. The people who were possibly the strongest and most motivated would be out very early, looking to earn a full day's wage – these are the people that most employers would be looking to hire.

In our story we have a landowner looking for workers to work in his vineyard and he has gone out really early and hired the men he found standing in the market place. He didn't need to ask them why they were there; he simply agreed to pay them a fair wage for a good day's work.

It may not have been unusual for him to go out again at 9 o'clock, particularly if he didn't find enough workers first thing and had a lot of

work to do. Again he agrees to pay what a fair wage for the work they will do.

What is perhaps more unusual is that he goes out again at noon to find that there are still men standing out in the hottest part of the day, probably with little expectation of finding work and therefore eating that day. He goes again at 3 in the afternoon and finally he goes out again at 5pm when there is only one hour's work left to do and virtually no hope of earning enough to feed themselves. This is a very unusual landowner – he must have an awful lot of work to do. The people who arrive at the end of the day will only just get started when they have to stop again but he offers them work anyway.

Have you ever wondered why some people were trying to find work right through the day even when they knew that there probably wouldn't be any because they had not been there at the beginning of the day when most work was on offer? Perhaps something unexpected had delayed them? Perhaps they had family responsibilities that the early workers did not have? Perhaps they lived with some form of impairment or disability which prevented them from doing a full day's work but did not prevent them from trying their best to find something? We don't know and the landowner didn't seem to care what had stopped them from working a full day but he did care enough to offer them the opportunity to do something, hopefully doing their best for him.

We live in a world where people are not always encouraged to work. Barriers are put in their way. 'Reasonable adjustments' are not always made which means that they too are trapped by misconceptions of their capability to work. A physical or intellectual disability does not always mean that someone is incapable of using their brain or relating to customers, or even acting as a minister in the Church.

At the end of the day the workers came forward to be paid and the landowner paid the people who had come last first, and he paid what he considered to be a fair wage. He paid them a full day's wage, so they would be able to receive their daily bread. Can you imagine how those people

would have felt to be paid so generously – it would have been life transforming for them.

Then he paid the people who had come at 3pm and he paid them a full day's wage too. Again think of how it would have felt to be paid so generously – they too would have been able to buy their daily bread and feed themselves and any family as well, something that might not have happened to them for a very long time.

The workers who had worked the whole day started to think that they were on to a good thing and looked forward to getting more than the latecomers so when they received the fair day's wage as agreed, they were not happy. As far as they were concerned they had worked harder than the latecomers and should therefore be rewarded accordingly. This is a challenge isn't it? They agreed a fair rate of pay but didn't expect people they considered not to have worked as hard as them to get the same reward. It is a natural emotion for us but that is not the way that God works.

Going back to my reflecting on the Lord's Prayer, we see various elements of it in today's parable. Let's just think about it for a moment.

'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven'. We are told in today's gospel that 'the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early to hire labourers for his vineyard' and 'he agreed with them the usual daily wage.' The kingdom of heaven, something that we can't see, is like the landowner, who could be seen by everyone. He did his will here on earth as he would have done in heaven. God was bringing his kingdom, his heaven, his way of doing things to us here on earth and it was very different from the way that we do things on earth.

'Give us today our daily bread'. Modern wages do not necessarily enable families to eat properly as we see from the number of people using foodbanks. The landowner ensured that every one of his workers received a fair wage in order to receive their daily bread, regardless of their abilities. Sadly we know that in our world there are people who can and do work hard and do not receive a living wage. We know that there are people

who want to work but live with an impairment that means that the work they can offer might not conform to modern norms and they too do not receive a living wage. We know that in our world life is unfair; some people receive more than their daily bread and some receive less. Yet, we ask in the Lord's Prayer prayer to receive our daily bread. Does the fact that some people do not receive it challenge us? It certainly challenged the landowner.

'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us'. The landowner forgave the workers who grumbled that he had shortchanged them, pointing out that he had done them no wrong by paying what they had agreed but had simply been generous to the others.

'Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil'. The landowner explained how to be generous rather than envious to the workers – he offered them a different way to live.

'For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen'. Jesus closes this parable with the same words that he spoke at the end of the conversation with the rich young man in the previous chapter 'So the last will be first, and the first will be last.' This way of life is totally different from the way of life that we know today but it is the way of God.

Are we ready to be one of God's workers? It is not just about what we offer him. He sees us for who we are, what we can manage and what we can offer him. It may not be what our world looks for today, but it is what God looks for and he rewards us on that basis. Thankfully that offers so much hope to those of us who aren't the high flyers in this world. It means that God sees who we really are, what we offer him, how we love both each other and him and then offers us an eternal fair wage. So I close with these words, 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven' Amen

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession prepared by John Crang

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever.

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new, transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory.

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

We pray for the renewal of the Church throughout the world, in faith, love and service. May we be ever reminded of your love that unites us despite our differences and foibles. We pray for Sarah our bishop, Sarah and Stephen our archbishops and for all who are looking to understand how our communities flourish as we move into the future. By your Spirit, day-by-day, enliven and enrich our understanding of the treasure contained in our ordinary mortal vessels.

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

We hold before you all who live close to war and conflict; all who live close to the threat of war and violence, and those in the midst of unforeseen natural disasters.

We remember especially at this time, people in Ukraine and Russia. We pray for nonviolence and peaceful resolutions of the many conflicts

throughout the world. Bring all people to a fuller awareness of the humanity you give us, and to the reconciliation and healing for which you gave your life.

Strengthen us all to work with you to build justice and peace, reconciliation and healing, in our hearts and homes, in our streets, in all communities, neighbourhoods and nations.

Bless all who live lives for the peace and wellbeing of others, and make their service fruitful.

Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth, from despair to hope, from fear to trust.

Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our lives, our world, our universe.

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

Bless and guide Charles our King; give wisdom to all in authority; and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace; that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.

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

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort, knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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

We remember all 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. Grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

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

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

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

Collect

Lord of creation,
whose glory is around and within us:
open our eyes to your wonders,
that we may serve you with reverence
and know your peace at our lives' end,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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 – Lord, for the years

- 1 Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.
- 2 Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us,
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

- 3 Lord, for our land, in this our generation,
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care;
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.
- 4 Lord, for our world; when we disown and doubt him,
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain;
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without him,
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.
- 5 Lord, for ourselves; in living power remake us,
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne;
past put behind us, for the future take us,
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926 - 2024)

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Notices

Conclusion

Eternal God,
our beginning and our end,
accompany us in this day's journey.
Dawn on our darkness,
open our eyes to praise you for your creation
and to see the work you set before us today.
Take us and use us
to bring to others the new life you give in Jesus Christ our Lord.
And may the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen