

First Sunday after Trinity 2020



Words of welcome

TODAY we recall the sending out of the first disciples to seek and save the lost. We pray today that we, like them, would be open to the call of God in our lives; a God who uses us, weak as we are, as instruments of his love, his compassion and his healing. May all of us, in gratitude for the love we have received, reach out with care and compassion to others.

Opening Acclamation

Jesus says, 'I am the Way for you'

And so we come to follow Christ

Jesus says, 'I am the Truth for you.'

And so we come to dwell in the light.

Jesus says, 'I am the Life for you'

And so we come, leaving behind all else to which we cling.

Some words from Joe Seremane from South Africa

You asked for my hands that you might use them for your purpose.
I gave them for a moment then withdrew them for the work was hard.

You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice.
I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.

You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty.
I closed them for I did not want to see.

You asked for my life that you might work through me.
I gave a small part that I might not get too involved.

Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you,
Only when it is convenient for me to do so.
Only in those places where it is safe to do so,
And only with those who make it easy to do so.

Father, forgive me, renew me
send me out as a usable instrument
that I might take seriously the meaning of your cross.

Today's Collect

God of truth, help us to keep your law of love
and to walk in ways of wisdom,
that we may find true life
in Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.

A reading from Matthew's gospel

³⁵Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; ³⁸therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

¹Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." ⁸Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

For the word of God in scripture
For the word of God among us
For the word of God within us
Thanks be to God

Reflection

I doubt I'll ever forget the first time I taught in a school. It was probably one of the most terrifying moments of my life. I was on placement in Manchester as a trainee-teacher for a Year 3 class. They were a great bunch, but it was scary, nonetheless. I was several weeks into my PGCE, and whilst I'd done all the theoretical groundwork

that was required of me and observed plenty of lessons delivered by experienced teachers, actually stepping in front of a class myself was still well out of my comfort zone. That was a fairly normal feeling; I remember that very few of the people on the course felt "ready" when they stepped up to the plate for the first time, but that first lesson we taught was a necessary experience which enabled us to grow as teachers. I can't help but wonder as we read today's passage from Matthew, whether the Disciples felt ready for the commission Jesus gave them. At this point in the narrative, they have been with Jesus as He has said and done incredible things: they have heard Him proclaim the Gospel, they have seen Him perform miracles. They have been given a firm theological foundation for mission by Christ himself, and have observed Him proclaiming the Kingdom. Now, they are told, it is their turn. It's hard to imagine that this was not intimidating. The Disciples, however, obeyed Jesus faithfully: they stepped out of their comfort zones and proclaimed the Good News to the world. Now, as we read this today, we are told it is our duty to proclaim the Good News, it is our turn to step out in faith. Again, this is perhaps a little scary. It's no small responsibility, and it's not something we're ever told will be easy.

Going back to that first lesson I delivered, needless to say, it was far from perfect and it really put into perspective the masterful way in which the fully-fledged and significantly more experienced class teacher did her job. I got plenty wrong and was given lots of feedback, but despite the fact the experience was tough and in some ways disheartening, I went away knowing that I had the support of my tutor, who continued to encourage me and help me to grow in my role. As we read today's passage, we have the assurance that God is with us, and that despite whatever mistakes we make as we strive to be faithful to our commission as Christians, He will not only continue to love us, but He will continue to work through us and grow us when we get things wrong as well as when we get things right. So, as you reflect on today's passage and the task we are given, remember that it is not demanded of us that we do everything perfectly, and that this task is steeped in God's eternal love and faithfulness.

Prayers

Help us. Guide us. Teach us. Be with us. Bring us closer to you in what we think, and what we say, and what we do. Let us pray.

We pray for the health and well-being of our nation, and that all who are fearful and anxious may be at peace and free from worry.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the isolated and housebound, that we may be alert to their needs, and care for them in their vulnerability. For those who are shielding, for whom rules have not been relaxed, and for those who cannot see a change in their circumstances.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our homes and families, our schools and young people. For children and teachers returning to school, for workers in shops, in zoos, and for all who are returning to a semblance of normal.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We remember the family and friends of Brenda Platt, who died this week. Also of Edna Gee, James Forrest and Maureen Daly, whose anniversaries of death fall at this time.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Lord, send us out into our troubled world to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven has come near. To respond to the needs of those around us, quietly, and with love and compassion; and to recognise where our own privilege enables us to lift others up, and where we might not see injustice.

Merciful Father

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

Let us pray to the Father, using the words that Jesus taught us:

**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.

Closing words and Blessing

Look at your hands, see the touch and the tenderness

God's own for the world.

Look at your feet, see the path and the direction

God's own for the world.

Look at your heart, see the fire and the love

God's own for the world.

Look at the cross, see God's Son and our Saviour

God's own for the world.

This is God's world

And we will serve God in it.

O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in the keeping of thy commandments we may please both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Jesus said, 'I am with you always.'

May God the Creator bless us.

May God the Son walk with us.

May God the Spirit lead our lives with love.

And the blessing.....

Let us go in the peace of Christ

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

**O thou who camest from above
the fire celestial to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!**

**There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return
in humble prayer and fervent praise.**

**Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up the gift in me.**

**Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat;
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.**

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