

In Touch across North Barrow

Sunday 16th. August 2020 The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

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Worship during the day, alone or with household members

Lord, hear my prayer,
and in your faithfulness heed my supplications;
answer me in your righteousness. *Psalm 143:1*

O Lord, open our lips.

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Collect for today

Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers before you;
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Readings : Isaiah 56:1,6-8; Romans 11:1-2a,29-32; Matthew 15:21-28
or during the week from the daily prayer and readings.

The Bible Reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

11:¹ I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. ³² For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayers

Almighty and everlasting God,
we thank you that you have brought us safely
to the beginning of this day.

Keep us from falling into sin or running into danger;
order us in all our doings and guide us to do always
what is righteous in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

God of our pilgrimage,
you have willed that the gate of mercy
should stand open for those who trust in you:
look upon us with your favour
that we who follow the path of your will
may never wander from the way of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Is it possible to have your cake and eat it? This week's exam fiasco would seem to say NO. On the one hand you can keep the broad results the same as previous years, but disadvantage those from poorer backgrounds and those in larger colleges; on the other you can follow the teachers' assessment and accept a rise in the higher grades.

Israel and salvation in Christ present Paul with a similar dilemma. Either you can write the Jews out of salvation history because of the cross, or their inclusion questions God's love in Jesus. Paul argues that God has not rejected his people and all salvation comes through Jesus Christ. For Paul, the answer is found in God's faithfulness; Christ's fulfilment and the response of faith and the key to this is found in God's faithfulness and mercy.

The mystery of mercy.

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. Paul knew personally God's mercy. If anyone should have been rejected and condemned by God, it was Paul. Paul the persecutor of the church; Paul the architect of the eradication of the followers of Jesus Christ. Did God condemn and reject Paul? NO. He is brought face to face with the risen Christ, and called by the mercy of God from persecutor to proclaimer of God's mercy in Jesus Christ.

God hasn't changed. God still turns disobedience to redemptive purposes today. Jonathan Aitken, former Conservative minister in John Major's government imprisoned for perjury and perverting the course of justice began studying the bible and learning Greek in

prison, and is now an ordained priest in the Anglican Church. Our disobedience is never good, and often produces terrible suffering, but God is always at work behind the scenes to turn our disobedience to redemptive purposes if we allow him.

The paradox of mercy.

Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their (Israel's) disobedience,³¹ so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. Israel's purpose and calling was to be a blessing to the whole of humanity and to live out God's justice, love and faithfulness. Where they failed through human disobedience, their calling was fulfilled by Jesus and God's saving mercy offered to all through the cross. Israel's disobedience leads to God's saving love being shared with the Gentiles, but says Paul, that same mercy will once again embrace Israel through the message of the cross. God's purpose is to be merciful to all, but for a time the focus moves from Israel to the Gentiles so that all may access God's mercy and love.

The breadth of mercy.

God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all. Our modern vision distorts the breadth of salvation. We are totally fixated on the individual, on ourselves, and on our decision to choose to follow the Way of Jesus. Paul would find issue with us, not just that God's mercy and foreknowledge is bound up in our human response to his love, but that salvation is somehow wider than the individual, though not necessarily universal. It is a powerful reminder that when it comes to accomplishing salvation, everything is in God's hands; not in the hands of the church, nor in those of 'Israel.'

What is left in our hands is the proclamation of God's mercy and love in Jesus, the telling of good news and the living out of the values of God's kingdom. Like Israel we are called to be a blessing to others and constantly surprised by those who like St. Paul, have disobedience turned to good through the mercy and grace of God.

With love and prayers,

Fr. Jack.

Psalm 67

1 May God be merciful to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,

2 That your way may be known upon earth,
your saving power among all nations.

3 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

4 O let the nations rejoice and be glad,
for you will judge the peoples righteously
and govern the nations upon earth.

5 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

6 Then shall the earth bring forth her increase,
and God, our own God, will bless us.

7 God will bless us,
and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

SUNDAY
MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY
Reflections during the week using Lectio Divina <i>Use the verse, or verses, for each day following the pattern on the previous page. Each colour corresponds to a day of the week. Write any reflections, or ways in which you feel God is speaking to you in the boxes above</i>

NEWS AND NOTES

WORSHIP FROM THIS SUNDAY

St. James : Sunday 10.30am.
Wednesday 10.00am.

St. Francis : Sunday suspended until further notice
Thursday 10.00am.

We keep a register of those attending for track and trace purposes.

Face Coverings : The Government is making the wearing of face coverings (mouth and nose) is now mandatory. We wear masks to protect and lower the risk to others. We need to continue to be careful about distancing and frequent hand cleansing. With these safeguards, and if you are healthy, it is safe and good to come to church.

Parish Magazine : We are looking for an editor / compiler if the magazine is to restart once they can again be delivered by hand.

St. James School : Angela Rawlinson has announced her retirement from the end of the month. We wish her well and thank her for all she has contributed over the last twenty or so years.

For your prayers : Eddie, Brenda (St. James).

Fr Jack & his brother, Robin, after the sudden death of their brother, Sam.

Alan Williams died peacefully in the early hours of Wednesday morning. There will be a requiem at St. Francis at 10.am on Thursday followed by his funeral service at St. James at noon.

Community Support HUB 9am - 5pm Mon to Fri.
Call 01229 444407.

Resources : Sunday Worship will be live streamed and available on the St. James facebook page from Sunday morning.

Daily Hope Prayer Line - 0800 804 8044 - A Church of England resource with hymns, prayers and reflections for especially for those who are not connected to the internet.

DAILY PRAYER and BIBLE READINGS

SUNDAY *We give thanks that* the Good News of Jesus Christ is open to people of all nations, languages and faith.

MONDAY Ezekiel 24:15-24, Matthew 19:16-22
Pray for St. James school as they begin a new chapter in the life of the school.

TUESDAY Ezekiel 28:1-10, Matthew 19:23-end
Pray for our local Nursing Homes, for all residential care across the county, and all residents and carers.

WEDNESDAY Ezekiel 34:1-11, Matthew 20:1-16
(75th anniversary of the end of World War 2) Pray that we may learn the lessons of war and seek peaceful solutions to all disputes.

THURSDAY Ezekiel 36:23-28, Matthew 22:1-14
Pray for Mary and the family as Alan William's funeral takes place today.

FRIDAY Ezekiel 37:1-14, Matthew 22:34-40
Pray for the members of the Diocesan Board of Finance planning for the future in the light of the coronavirus crisis and for the members of the Bishop's Council's Task Group.

SATURDAY Ezekiel 43:1-7, Matthew 23:1-12
Pray for work of the United Nations and its agencies and for the Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the UK's Ambassador Karen Pierce.

NEXT SUNDAY

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

Isaiah 51:1-6; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20