



Worshipping & Praying Together as a community dispersed

during the week beginning
Sunday, 27th September

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Parish of Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle.

The worshipping communities of the Cathedral and St Peter's Hamilton.

The wisdom of the psalmist is evocatively prophetic this week, and the Apostle Paul, writing from prison to the church in Philippi, answers the question of "Jesus' authority" for us once and for all: "And so God has greatly exalted him, and to him in his favour has given the name which is over all names: That now at the name of Jesus every knee under heaven shall bow – on earth, too, and under the earth; And every tongue shall confess that Jesus, Messiah, is Lord, to the glory of God, the father." (Phil 2: 9-11)

We may be frustrated and disillusioned by certain, seemingly corrupt, world powers and authorities that appear to only pay only lip service to the needs of the oppressed, the poor, the needy and the marginalised, and the deaths of almost one million people around the world from COVID-19, and the millions of people facing long term health issues, mental health issues and financial stability issues. And we may well ask, under whose authority?

Even though we are restricted on when we can open the doors of our churches during the pandemic and the pressure on our limited parish finances is to do more with less, as the people of God in this place, we are called illuminate the Gospel message of the only true authority in this world, and to welcome friend and stranger, always focused on the needs of others, in the same mind as Jesus Christ, the name above all names.

If you, or a family member or a friend, are looking for opportunities to support our ministries (financial or in-service), please contact Dean Katherine or Reverend Angela, or any of our Parish Council representatives for a confidential, no obligation, conversation.

**Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer continue to be streamed every day,
and Holy Communion at the Cathedral is streamed on Sundays and Wednesdays:**

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXyas2uhJUNOnDetOpPdUOg>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/christchurchcathedralnewcastle/>

**Eucharists are offered at Christ Church Cathedral on Sundays at 8.00am and 11.00am,
and Monday to Friday at 8.30am (following Morning Prayer).**

Eucharists are also offered at St Peter's Hamilton at 11.00am on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Families@Five has returned to the Cathedral at 5.00pm on the first Saturday of each month.

Our next Families@Five service will be on Saturday, 3 October.

Please encourage family and friends to join with us. All are welcome!

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 17: 1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

Psalm 78.1-4, 11-16

1 Give heed to my teaching O my people:
incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2 For I will open my mouth in a parable:
and expound the mysteries of former times.
3 What we have heard and known:
what our forbears have told us,
4 We will not hide from their children but declare to a generation yet to come:
the praiseworthy acts of the Lord his mighty and wonderful works.
11 for he did marvellous things in the sight of their ancestors:
in the land of Egypt in the country of Zoan.
12 He divided the sea and let them pass through:
he made the waters stand up in a heap.
13 In the daytime he led them with a cloud:
and all night long with the light of fire.
14 He cleft rocks in the wilderness:
and gave them drink in abundance as from springs of water.
15 He brought streams out of the rock:
and caused the waters to flow down like rivers.
16 But for all this they sinned yet more against him:
and rebelled against the Most High in the desert.

Philippians 2

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave,

being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death—

even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name

that is above every name,

so that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without murmuring and arguing, so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labour in vain. But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you—and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope

therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me; and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon.

Still, I think it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus - my brother and co-worker and fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need; for he has been longing for all of you, and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. He was indeed so ill that he nearly died. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, so that I would not have one sorrow after another. I am the more eager to send him, therefore, in order that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. Welcome him then in the Lord with all joy, and honour such people, because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for those services that you could not give me.

Matthew 21: 23-32

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.



Reflection on a page by *The Very Reverend Katherine Bowyer, Dean*

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2.5)

This week, Reverend Angela and I joined in an online clergy conference, where the theme was “the one thing St Paul says he teaches in all the churches”. Not being a Pauline scholar myself, I was keen to learn the answer. Would it be the importance of preaching Christ crucified, I wondered: “but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1.23-24). Or would it be love, as so memorably expounded in 1 Corinthians 13? Or would it be, as we see written in the St Paul window in the nave of the cathedral, Paul’s signature phrase: “the love of Christ compels us” (2 Corinthians 5.14).

I had even wondered if Paul’s radical, inclusive declaration “there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3.28) would rate a mention, as, in our last online session we had to name one of our favourite Pauline verses, and this is one of mine. Instead, Dr Mike Bird directed us to look at 1 Corinthians 4.17 “For this reason I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, **to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus**, as I teach them everywhere in every church.” (emphasis mine)

Paul lives a life modelled on Christ: Paul’s ‘ways’ are the lived expression of a life lived in Christ. It is the imitation of Christ, of which Thomas à Kempis most famously wrote in his book *The Imitation of Christ*. We were then asked what aspects of Christ do we find most challenging or difficult to imitate. It’s a challenging question, for we are not Christ, and yet through our discipleship, our following, we are called to live like Christ.

To live like Christ, to forgive like Christ, to love like Christ, humility and obedience to God’s will, these were all some of the areas in which we shared our challenges. In this chapter from the letter to the Philippians, which we hear this weekend, we hear this same encouragement, to let the same mind that was in Christ be in us, that is, to imitate Christ, to be Christ-like.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of being Christ-like is that which we read of in Philippians 2, that of self emptying – “but emptied himself” in order to be fully open to God’s will. In theological terms we call this by the Greek term *kenosis*. It is the most challenging aspect for us because we do not like to give up our control, and yet, it is only by emptying ourselves and being fully open to God, that we are able to most wholly live like Christ, forgive like Christ, love like Christ. All the aspects of the imitation of Christ flow from being open to God at work in us.

Looking through this lens, then, it was easy for me to see that all the things I had identified in the Paul’s writings stem from this imitation of Christ – they are all facets of a Christ-like life. And it made me wonder: when people look at me, look at us, do they see Christ? Of what do I need to empty myself, of what do we need to empty ourselves, in order that we might live a life that is more Christ-like?

This is a life long work – and St Paul knew it best of all: “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known.” (1 Corinthians 13.12) Still, we strive, seeking always to “let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus”.

Readings for next week – The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 20: 1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Psalm 19

Philippians 3

Matthew 21: 33-46



Prayers for use during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ever present God,
be with us in our isolation,
be close to us in our distancing,
be healing in our sickness,
be joy in our sadness,
be light in our darkness,
be wisdom in our confusion,
be all that is familiar when all is
unfamiliar,
that when the doors reopen
we may with the zeal of Pentecost
inhabit our communities
and speak of your goodness
to an emerging world.
For Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

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. **Amen.**

Please do not hesitate to contact Dean Katherine or Reverend Angela if you have any concerns at this time and if you would like for us to visit you at home.

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