



Worshipping & Praying Together as a community dispersed

*during the week beginning
Sunday, 25th October*

The Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

The Parish of Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle.

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

What does it mean for us to “really and truly” love the Lord God with all our hearts, with all of our souls, and with all of our minds? And even more challenging, because in doing this (or not) we are demonstrating our love for God, to love our neighbours as ourselves?

These “great” commandments of Jesus, which we are reminded of in our Gospel reading this week, are the aspirational rule of life for all people who authentically strive to be disciples of Jesus, aren't they?

But the human condition into which we have been wonderfully created, with all the challenges that we mere humans face into just living our lives, can make “really and truly” loving God so completely, and “really and truly” loving our neighbours, just that bit too much of a challenge for us to ever feel like we can measure up. Why would Jesus demand of us something that might just be out of our reach to achieve? Why do some people seem to adopt this rule of life relatively easily and why do we struggle? Our intentions are pure, and we are committed to living as disciples according to Jesus' commandments, but “stuff” happens, and people can be so “difficult” to love, and we just don't feel like we can manage this...

It's OK. Jesus calls us not to be perfect but to strive for what it means for us to be our best selves, always reaching out to God for help, to trust in his Spirit within us to guide us onto right pathways as we will undoubtably stray. God loves us “really and truly” and unconditionally, beyond our wildest imaginings. It is in the striving that we will find our sense of comfort and achievement, remembering that God's grace and forgiveness overcomes all our weaknesses, all of the time.

Our next Families@Five will be on Saturday, 7th November 2020 at 5.00pm at the Cathedral.

**Morning 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.

The Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

Deuteronomy 34: 1-12

Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and the Lord showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, and the Plain — that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees — as far as Zoar. The Lord said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.” Then Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, at the Lord’s command. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day. Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigour had not abated. The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the period of mourning for Moses was ended. Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses. Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. He was unequalled for all the signs and wonders that the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

Psalm 90: 1-6, 13-17

1 Lord you have been our refuge:
from one generation to another.
2 Before the mountains were born
or the earth and the world were brought to be:
from eternity to eternity you are God.
3 You turn us back into dust:
saying ‘Return to dust O children of Adam.’
4 For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday passing:
or like one watch of the night.
5 You cut them short like a dream:
like the fresh grass of the morning;

6 In the morning it is green and flourishes:

at evening it is withered and dried up.

13 Relent O Lord how long will you be angry?

take pity on your servants.

14 O satisfy us early with your mercy:

that all our days we may rejoice and sing.

15 Give us joy for all the days you have afflicted us:

for the years we have suffered adversity.

16 Show your servants your work:

and let their children see your glory.

17 May the gracious favour of the Lord our God be upon us:

prosper the work of our hands

O prosper the work of our hands!

1 Thessalonians 2: 1-13

You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us. You remember our labour and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers.

Matthew 22: 34-46

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: “What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”’? If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.



Love thy Neighbor is a mixed media by Angela L Walker

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

It's no secret – I love baptisms, and this weekend, at the Cathedral, I will baptise a baby, the twentieth baptism we have celebrated in the Cathedral this year, and the twelfth since the COVID-19 lockdown. In this year of change and uncertainty, one of the joy-filled constants has been people asking if we are still baptising – indeed, as I write this reflection, I have had another enquiry about baptisms.

Baptisms fill me with hope, because they are new beginnings and about a desire to belong and believe. Parents and godparents make promises about the shape of their lives, and what they will do to help shape the life of the child in their care.

And this weekend, I will ask the parents and godparents, as Angela and I have asked at every one of the twenty baptisms this year, the following question:

Will you each, by God's grace, strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself, until your life's end?

This question echoes the first part of our Gospel reading for this Sunday. And every time I meet with those preparing for baptism, we talk about this response, this question, which comes after they have accepted the responsibilities in coming for baptism, and after they have made the vows or promises. This question is about relationship, as indeed baptism is, but it's about the way in which we are called to live our life in relationship.

I love the fact that this question asks us to “strive to live as a disciple of Christ”, to strive, to try, to endeavour to live. We're not called to be perfect, but we're called to try our very hardest, **with God's grace** – not on our own, not by or through our own strength, but recognizing always that we need to seek God's grace, God's help, to enable us to live our lives as disciples of Christ, as followers of Jesus, as Christians.

And what does living a Christian life involve? Loving God with our whole heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, until our life's end.

We are to live life in relationship, with God, with others. We put God first, and then love, care, respect, treat others as we would want that for ourselves. How we relate to others comes as a natural response to our relationship with God. Because we are loved, so we love. Because we are forgiven, so we forgive. Because we are a child of God, so we see others as precious children of God too. I often say to the families preparing for baptism, “imagine what the world would be like if everyone did this. If everyone put God first, and treated others like they'd want to be treated themselves.” Think about it for a minute. Would the world be a different place?

I think it would be. And whilst we might scoff, and say, well that's not going to happen, that's not reality, I want to bring us back to that question that I ask the parents and godparents, that question which is theirs and is ours.

Will you each, by God's grace, strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself, until your life's end?

Each. Each one. All those motivational phrases, like, “the longest journey begins with a single step” and “a mighty river begins as a single drop” all reflect the same truth. It's the power of one. The power of one, plus one, plus one.

Many years ago, I read *God Next Door* by Simon Holt. This book resonated deeply with me, because it spoke of my experience of what it is for us to be church in the community, to recognize God in our midst. Holt talks about the power of the church in the community to make a difference, working from the inside out, to transform, simply by the way in which the members of the church community live out their faith, and their relationship with God. Holt doesn't talk about mega-churches, though he does mention them, but on the whole he talks about churches that identify strongly with their community, and seek to make a difference locally. Faithful communities, living and praying in their communities. And that encouraged me when I first read it, and continues to give me hope, because it affirmed my experience, and confirmed that what we do makes a difference.

Love God. Love others as you want to be loved yourself. It's not rocket science. A think tank didn't come up with it. But it's what Jesus said. It's what we're commanded to do. And it's as difficult and simple as that.

Readings for next week – The Feast of All Saints

Revelation 7: 9-17

Psalms 34: 1-10, 22

1 John 3: 1-3

Matthew 5: 1-12



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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