

# Morning Prayer

A service to use at home

Sunday 25 October 2020



Bible Sunday

Shaped by God's word

## Preparation

O Lord, open our lips  
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Blessed are you, creator of all,  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
As your dawn renews the face of the earth  
bringing light and life to all creation,  
may we rejoice in this day you have made;  
as we wake refreshed from the depths of sleep,  
open our eyes to behold your presence  
and strengthen our hands to do your will,  
that the world may rejoice and give you praise.  
Blessed be God, father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Blessed be God for ever.

## Hymn: Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty!

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and Mighty!  
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth, and sky, and sea;  
Holy, Holy, Holy! merciful and mighty,  
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

## A prayer of confession and God's words of forgiveness

May your loving mercy come to me, O Lord,  
and your salvation according to your word:  
Lord, have mercy.

Your word is a lantern to my feet and a light to my path:  
Christ, have mercy.  
O let your mercy come to me that I may live,  
for your law is my delight:  
Lord, have mercy.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness  
draw *us* to himself,  
and cleanse *us* from all *our* sins  
that *we* may behold the glory of his Son,  
the Word made flesh,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Silence is kept.*

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

## **The Word of God**

### ***A reading from Leviticus 19.1-2; 15-18***

**19** The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> ‘Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them:  
“Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

<sup>15</sup> ““Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the  
great, but judge your neighbour fairly.

<sup>16</sup> ““Do not go about spreading slander among your people.

““Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour’s life. I am the LORD.

<sup>17</sup> ““Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbour frankly so  
that you will not share in their guilt.

<sup>18</sup> ““Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but  
love your neighbour as yourself. I am the LORD.

### ***A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew 22.34-46***

<sup>34</sup> Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. <sup>35</sup> One  
of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: <sup>36</sup> ‘Teacher, which is the  
greatest commandment in the Law?’

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’

<sup>41</sup> While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, <sup>42</sup> ‘What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?’

‘The son of David,’ they replied.

<sup>43</sup> He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him “Lord”? For he says,

<sup>44</sup> “The Lord said to my Lord:  
‘Sit at my right hand  
until I put your enemies  
under your feet.’”

<sup>45</sup> If then David calls him “Lord”, how can he be his son?’ <sup>46</sup> No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

## Reflection on the readings

On 15 October, *Limitless*, the autobiography of Tim Peake, the British International Space Station astronaut, was published.

In the book Peake shares his story and brings to life what it takes to shape an astronaut. From the shy boy who loved a Lego model of an orbiter shuttle; to the army officer who served in Northern Ireland, Kenya, Bosnia and Afghanistan often as an air Corps helicopter pilot. Then training as an Apache gun pilot; becoming an instructor and a military test pilot before he became the one out of 8,000 hopefuls who was selected and undertook 6 years training to be an astronaut.

He was rocketed to the International Space Station for six months culminating in his spacewalk on 15 January 2016, the first Briton to do this.

Peake was shaped by years of military experience and dedicated training to become an outstanding astronaut.

Today on this Bible Sunday, the Sunday in the year when we give particular attention to the importance and meaning of the Bible in our lives, let us reflect on how the Bible, the Word of God, can shape our lives, so that we can become all that God calls us to be.

Let's begin with the Old Testament reading from Leviticus. Not necessarily the first 'go to' book one might think of – yet the passage set for today is as breath-taking in spiritual terms as Tim Peake seeing the universe.

*“Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy” (Leviticus 19.2).*

The chapter starts out by calling God's people to reflect the very character of the God. Dr Chris Wright comments on this in his book, *“Living as the People of God”*:

*“We might be inclined to think of ‘holiness’ as a matter of personal piety or, in Old Testament terms, of ritual cleanliness, proper sacrifices, clean and unclean foods and the like. But the rest of Leviticus shows us that the kind of holiness which reflects God's own holiness is thoroughly practical. “*

Look at verse 15 of our Leviticus reading for example:

*<sup>15</sup> “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favouritism to the great, but judge your neighbour fairly”.*

Wright continues: *“Holiness is the biblical ‘shorthand’ for the very essence of God. This is what makes the command of Leviticus 19.2 quite breath-taking. Your quality of life, it said to the people of God then, must reflect the very heart of God's character.”* Mind-blowing!

But we know that for our hearts and minds and wills to be shaped in this way to reflect God's character it is not something we alone can do. It is indeed our obedience in keeping the spiritual disciplines which include Bible reading and study, but it is also the work of God through his Holy Spirit. It's what happens when we put our lives into the hands of God.

What better way to think about what that means than pondering the work of a potter shaping a clay pot.

Have a look at the photo on the front of this order of service. Working with clay is a hands-on job. A roll up your sleeves, get your hands messy job. It's the relationship of the potter to the clay which can create something beautiful.

In the prophecy of Jeremiah, God uses the image of the potter and the clay to talk to Jeremiah about the way God shapes his people:

*<sup>3</sup>“So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. <sup>4</sup> And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. <sup>5</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>6</sup> “O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has*

*done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. Jeremiah 18.1-6*

At the heart of our faith God is longing to have a relationship with us that's as close as that!

In our Gospel reading from Matthew, the Pharisees ask Jesus - probably testing him out - what he thinks is at the heart of their religion – what is it that shapes God's people:

<sup>36</sup> *'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?'*

<sup>37</sup> *Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."* <sup>38</sup> *This is the first and greatest commandment.* <sup>39</sup> *And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself."* Matthew 22.37-39.

Jesus tells the Pharisees in one sense what they already know from the Jewish law, but in twining these commandments of love of God and love of neighbour, so they have equal importance, Jesus brings a fresh emphasis.

Perhaps Jesus perceived that those asking the question lived a religious life which was about keeping rules and rituals. Whereas what is at the heart of faith for Jesus, what shapes the lives of God's people, is a relationship with God and embodying that relationship in the way one treats others and the whole of creation.

William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1942–1944 once said: *"It is a great mistake to suppose that God is only, or even chiefly, concerned with religion"*. Temple was passionate that our relationship with Jesus Christ should lead to action in the world in God's name, not only adoring that name within the church.

The Book of Common Prayer tell us: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary for salvation". But as someone has said: the text is nothing without the believer. Let us therefore be careful how we live. We may be the only Bible some person ever reads.

### **We declare our faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

### Prayers of intercession

Gracious God, fountain of all wisdom,  
we pray for all Christian people:  
for our Bishops Graham, Alan and Jonathan  
for our Rector Adrian  
and for all who teach and guard the faith...  
may the word of Christ dwell richly in our hearts,  
and knit us together in the bond of your love.  
Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for the leaders of the nations,  
and for those in authority under them...  
Give them the gift of your wisdom,  
and right judgement in all things.  
Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for our villages of Mulbarton, Bracon Ash, Flordon and Hethel and for those  
who live and work here.  
Speak your word of peace in our midst,  
and help us to serve one another as Christ has served us.  
Hear us, good Lord.

We pray for those bowed down with grief, fear or sickness,  
especially those on our hearts and minds ....  
May your living Word bring comfort and healing  
to all those in need.  
Hear us, good Lord.

We give remember and thanks for all those we love  
but see no longer;  
for those who have died in recent days and those whose anniversaries fall at this  
time.  
May they rest in peace and rise in glory.  
Lord of all, hear our prayers  
and make us one in heart and mind  
to love and serve you with joy for ever. Amen.

### **The Collect for the last Sunday after Trinity**

Blessed Lord,  
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:  
help us so to hear them,  
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them  
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,  
we may embrace and for ever hold fast  
the hope of everlasting life,  
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
One God, now and for ever. Amen.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

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.



## Hymn: Take my life and let it be

Take my life, and let it be  
consecrated, Lord, to thee;  
take my moments and my days,  
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my will and make it thine;  
it shall be no longer mine.  
take my heart, it is thine own;  
it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour  
at thy feet its treasure store;  
take myself, and I will be  
ever, only, all for thee.

## The Blessing

May the love of the Lord Jesus  
draw us to himself,  
the power of the Lord Jesus  
strengthen us in his service,  
and the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our hearts;  
and may the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be among us and remain with us always.  
Amen.

## Acknowledgements

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Hymns: CCLI Licence 6283:

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God almighty! Reginald Heber (1783-1826).

Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee; Frances R. Havergal (1836-1879).

## THE BIBLE – A BOOK TO READ & TREASURE

30 short daily readings for the coming month (tick off as you read). Before you read, PRAY *'Lord, help me to understand this passage and speak to me through it.*

*AMEN'* As you read....

IMAGINE the scene at the time;

NOTE anything that especially stands out;

THINK 'what does this say for my life today?'

1. Luke 24 vv (verses) 13 – 35: Ask Jesus to come alongside you as you read his word in the coming weeks.
  2. Psalm 119 vv. 57 – 64: read the Bible with thanks
  3. 2 Timothy 3 vv. 10 – 17 (especially verse 16 – 'God-breathed')
  4. Hebrews 1 vv. 1 – 4: God speaks through writers of his word
  5. 2 Peter 1 vv. 16 – 21: these are God's words
  6. James 1 vv. 16 – 27 (especially verse 22)
  7. Matthew 7 vv. 24 – 29: Jesus says, now DO it!
  8. Romans 15 vv. 1 – 7: read for hope and encouragement
  9. Psalm 119 vv. 97 – 112: praise God for his word
- Now we look at Jesus' attitude to the Scriptures:
10. Matthew 5 vv. 17 – 20: he values and fulfils it
  11. Matthew 22 vv. 34 – 45: writers were 'speaking by the Spirit'
  12. Luke 4 vv. 16 – 30 (especially verse 21)
  13. John 5 vv. 26 – 46: the Old Testament tells about Jesus
  14. Matthew 4 vv. 1 – 11: using Scripture to defeat Satan.
  15. John 12 vv. 44 – 50: when Jesus speaks it is God's word
  16. Psalm 119 vv. 129 – 144: HOPE in God's word

There's a lot we can learn in the Old Testament:

17. Isaiah 8 v. 19 to chap. 9 v.2: rely on God not astrologers, etc
18. Deuteronomy 17 vv. 14 – 20: requirement for rulers
19. 2 Kings 22 vv. 8 – 13 + chap. 23 vv. 1 – 4: finding Scripture (almost certainly it was the lost book of Deuteronomy that Josiah found, heard the words you read yesterday, and acted)
20. Jeremiah 36 (skip the names!): a long story but an example of Scriptures being preserved against all the odds
21. Nehemiah 8 vv. 1 – 12: Understanding the word = joy
22. Ezekiel 2 v. 1 to chap. 3 v. 11: a prophet given God's word
23. Psalm 119 vv. 169 – 176: sustained by God's word
24. Revelation 22 vv. 16 – 21: beware of adding extras!
25. Acts 2 (especially vv. 14 – 24): preaching the word
26. Acts 3 vv. 17 – 26: explaining the word
27. Acts 8 vv. 26 – 29: evangelising from the word
28. Acts 15 vv. 12 – 21: wise guidance from scripture
29. Ephesians 6 v. 10 – 20: find the reference to the word
30. Psalm 19 vv. 7 – 14: praise God for his word and all he has said to you in these past weeks.



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*Sharing the journey*

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