

Morning Service of the Word

Trinity 1 - Sunday 6 June 2021

Welcome and Opening Prayer

SONG

Introduction

O Lord, open our lips:

and our mouth shall sing your praise.

O God, make speed to save us

O Lord, make haste to help us.

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.

Praise the Lord:

The Lord's name be praised.

Confession

A moment of silence:

Christ our Passover Lamb has been offered for us. So, let us rejoice by putting away all malice and evil and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

God our Father, we are sorry for the times when we have used your gifts carelessly and acted ungratefully.

We are sorry when we enjoy the fruits of the harvest but forget that you have given them to us.

We are sorry that, while we belong to a people who are full and satisfied, we ignore the cry of the hungry.

We are sorry that we are thoughtless and do not care enough for the world you have made.

We are sorry that we store up goods for ourselves alone as if there were no God in heaven.

Father, in your mercy, forgive us and help us. Amen.

Absolution

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins and restore us in his service to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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Bible Reading

1 Sam 8: 4-11,16-20 - New International Version

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

⁶ But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the Lord. ⁷ And the Lord told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights."

¹⁰ Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. ¹¹ He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots...

... ¹⁶ Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. ¹⁷ He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the Lord will not answer you in that day."

¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us.

²⁰ Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."

²¹ When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the Lord. ²² The Lord answered, "Listen to them and give them a king."

Then Samuel said to the Israelites, "Everyone go back to your own town."

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SONG

Gospel Reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to..... **Glory to you O Lord.**

Mark 3: 20-35

²⁰ Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

²² And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

²³ So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷ In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man’s house. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

³⁰ He said this because they were saying, “He has an impure spirit.”

³¹ Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.”

³³ “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked.

³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Who is your King?

Trinity 1 (1 Sam 8: 4-11,16-29)

Royalty!

Many countries which used to have a royal family no longer have one. The people decided that a royal family was irrelevant and so got rid of them – often via assassination!

As we all know, in this country, we still have a royal family – although it must be said that many people would rather we hadn’t. Some would even go so far as to say that they hate the monarchy! I sometimes wonder if it’s because they are jealous of their privilege.

Who knows? And I expect there are differences of opinion among us here today.

Personally, I like our Queen: and even more so since discovering that she has a real and enduring faith in Jesus Christ. (Mark Pryce)

But hasn’t our royal family dominated the news in recent times: the disgrace of Prince Andrew: the exciting promise of Prince Harry’s marriage to Megan and the subsequent disappointment, heartbreak and pain that followed: the death of Prince Philip: as well as the growing grace, commitment and compassion shown by William and Catherine: and the continued faithfulness of the Queen to her country through all this turmoil and grief.

For us the monarchy has been around for quite a while and may stay around for a lot longer yet.

This was not the case for the Israelites in our Old Testament reading today. They hadn't got, nor had ever had, an earthly king. The very last verse in the book of Judges which comes before Samuel says, 'In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.'

However, this had never been God's plan for them. God himself had already given his people laws showing them how to live Godly lives – the 10 commandments given to Moses in the book of Exodus. God had also laid down the manner in which they were to worship him.

So, no-one should have been doing 'as he saw fit'. They were well aware that the holy God was their King: and the laws he had given to them to live by were the very best and for their good.

Nonetheless, at this point in their history, they chose to ignore all that God had done for them and decided that they wanted instead an earthly king.

Why was this I wonder?

Well Samuel, who had guided them in the ways of God for many years, was now old. His sons should have succeeded him in this role, but the people knew that they were not fit to lead Israel.

Added to this the 12 tribes of Israel continually had problems working together because each tribe had its own leader and territory. They figured that an earthly king would unite the tribes into one nation with one army.

But, the worst reason of all was because they wanted to be like their neighbours who all had kings: which is exactly what God didn't want for them because he was their King.

In itself it wasn't wrong for them to want a king. God had even mentioned the possibility of them having one back in Deuteronomy 17: but once they had an earthly king it would be much easier for them to forget that God was their real leader.

In effect, they were rejecting God, thinking that a human monarch in his human strength, with his human laws and human army would do a better job than God Almighty could. They thought an earthly king would enable them to flourish more in the hostile land of Canaan!

Unfortunately, they failed to recognise that their basic problem was their disobedience to God; and, because of that, no new human administration would make their problems disappear.

What they needed was a unified faith in, and obedience to, God, not a new system of ruling.

Samuel carefully explains all the negative consequences of having a human king because such a man would demand that he had the best of all they had!

Sadly, they refused to listen to him, and, in the end, God gave them a king.

First there was Saul who started off quite well but, over time, became somewhat deranged. David replaced him, renowned even now for being their greatest ever king, although even he was by no means perfect!

His son Solomon came next, famous for his incredible wisdom: but, sadly, his eye for a pretty face drew him away from worshipping God. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines who turned his heart to other gods. (Deuteronomy 17)

After Solomon's death the kingdom was split into two and each part had lots and lots of kings – very few of them following the ways of God.

And when **they** didn't follow God, neither did the people!

So, what's all this got to do with us in the here and now?

We know our queen doesn't have much real power; and we know that many of those in government who do hold the real power have often proved to be untrustworthy.

We also know that, while our laws were originally founded on Christian doctrines, they are now being quietly but consistently stripped of their Christian elements as men and women seek to control with their own ideas – many of which run contrary to Gods'.

However, ultimately, we all have to decide at some point who is our king: and for some that will be themselves!

For those of us who profess to be Christians our only King should be Jesus – King of Kings and Lord of Lords in our lives.

This is not easy because, like the Israelites, we live in a hostile land; and following Jesus is far from the easy option!

However, we'll only realise that fact when we start making the effort to find out how Jesus wants us to live and change accordingly.

It takes determination to come to church every Sunday to learn how to worship, to hear the scriptures read and explained. It's a conscious choice we make to attend the Bible Studies to learn on a deeper level with others. We need a strong will to read the Bible ourselves at home regularly and to steadfastly find time to talk to God every day.

None of this is easy: and that's before we start changing our characters to become Christ-like. Always other things will seem more important than obedience to God: but it's no good saying we want Jesus as our King and asking him to lead our lives if we continue to live by the world's standards and values and not his.

Having Jesus as our King means that he has control of all areas of our lives and characters.....and I can honestly say, without a doubt, that I have found that that's the best way to live.

The Creed

We believe in God the Father, by whose plan earth and heaven sprang into being and all created things began.

We believe in Christ the Saviour, Son of God in human frame, virgin-born, the child of Mary, upon whom the Spirit came.

Christ, who on the cross forsaken, like a lamb to slaughter led; suffered under Pontius Pilate and descended to the dead.

We believe in Jesus risen, heaven's King to rule and reign, to the Father's side ascended till as judge he comes again.

We believe in God the Spirit; in one church, below and above: saints of God in one communion, one in holiness and love.

So, by faith, our sins forgiven, Christ our Saviour, Lord and Friend, we shall rise with him in glory to a life that knows no end.

Peace

Intercessions

Intercessions for Trinity 1 (2021)

King of Kings, we pray that you will give to your people the unerring conviction that you are, not just the King of the Christian Church, but King of the all the world. May all of us who profess to follow you live lives that are characterised by Godliness and holiness. May we stand firm in the belief that obeying you first and foremost is paramount, despite what the world shouts at us to think and do. Give us the determination to study and know your word of truth in all things: and then give us boldness to practically witness that truth to those around us, however scary that may feel.

We pray for churches who are being actively persecuted because they live in obedience to you before all else. Give them stout hearts of courage to follow you even though it is the way of the cross.

King of Kings, we recognise that not many governments around the world recognise you as the ultimate King: and so we pray for all those places where man's rule and supposed wisdom has made a mess of things: those places where constant tragedy and heartache afflicts the people: those places where cruelty and oppression rule supreme: those places where people are terrorised and have to fight for survival.

We feel helpless; but we cry out to you and ask that, in your compassion and mercy, you will raise up Godly leaders, who acknowledge you as King in their lives, and who will inspire peace, unity and harmony among those they govern.

We especially ask for special care for the very old, the very young and the vulnerable.

King of Kings, we pray for your blessing on our community.
Where there is sorrow and grief bring your joy and hope.
Where there is anger and discord bring your peace and calm.
Where there is hate and cruelty bring your love and compassion.
May the light of Christ the King permeate the homes around this church and completely scatter the darkness

King of Kings, we bring to your throne of grace all those we know who are suffering, whether in body, mind, or spirit. We name them silently now.....We ask you to fill them with your presence, heal them with your touch, speak to them words of love in their anguish, and draw them into salvation with you for eternity.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

SONG

Blessing and Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.