

Morning Service of the Word

Trinity 4 - Sunday 27 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

2 Sam 1: 1-17 - New International Version

After the death of Saul, David returned from striking down the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days. ²On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honour.

³"Where have you come from?" David asked him. He answered, "I have escaped from the Israelite camp." ⁴"What happened?" David asked. "Tell me." "The men fled from the battle," he replied. "Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

⁵ Then David said to the young man who brought him the report, “How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?” ⁶ “I happened to be on Mount Gilboa,” the young man said, “and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and their drivers in hot pursuit. ⁷ When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, ‘What can I do?’ ⁸ “He asked me, ‘Who are you?’ “‘An Amalekite,’ I answered.

⁹ “Then he said to me, ‘Stand here by me and kill me! I’m in the throes of death, but I’m still alive.’ ¹⁰ “So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord.” ¹¹ Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. ¹² They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and for the nation of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

¹³ David said to the young man who brought him the report, “Where are you from?” “I am the son of a foreigner, an Amalekite,” he answered. ¹⁴ David asked him, “Why weren’t you afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord’s anointed?” ¹⁵ Then David called one of his men and said, “Go, strike him down!” So he struck him down, and he died. ¹⁶ For David had said to him, “Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, ‘I killed the Lord’s anointed.’”

David’s Lament for Saul and Jonathan

¹⁷ David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, ¹⁸ and he ordered that the people of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

¹⁹ “A gazelle lies slain on your heights, Israel. How the mighty have fallen! ²⁰ “Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice. ²¹ “Mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, may no showers fall on your terraced fields. For there the shield of the mighty was despised, the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil. ²² “From the blood of the slain, from the flesh of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied. ²³ Saul and Jonathan— in life they were loved and admired, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

²⁴ “Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.

²⁵ “How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

²⁶ I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.

²⁷ “How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!”

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

Sermon

Sermon for Trinity 4 (2021)

2 Samuel 1: 1, 17-end

David's Relationship with Saul and Jonathan

Three weeks ago, we thought about who our king was after hearing that Israel didn't want God as their king anymore. Instead, they wanted a human king so that they could be the same as the nations around them. The Samuel reading today is a lament written by the second king of Israel about the first king of Israel, and his son, both of whom had died in battle. King David is the writer of the lament; Saul was the first king and Jonathan was his son.

Today, I'd like us to consider the relationships David had with both these men. We are told in the book of 1 Samuel that Samuel had anointed David as king while Saul was still holding the position of king, and many years before Saul's death. David had to wait a long time before this promise of God came to fruition: and during this time, as he waited to become king of Israel, he had many struggles to overcome.

These are chronicled in the first book of Samuel. Now, you remember David, don't you? He was the young lad who impressed Saul when he killed the giant Goliath using just his sling shot. After this, Saul enlisted David into his army, where he quickly rose up through the ranks and made a name for himself.

Everybody sang his praises because of all his accomplishments; and he soon became more popular than Saul, who had been highly thought of by the people up to that time. Subsequently, Saul became jealous of David: and eventually that jealousy became so intense that he tried to kill David several times. As a result, David had to run away and hide. For many years he hid in enemy territory and in the barren desert south and east of Jerusalem. He must have wondered when God's promise that he would be king would come true.

His perseverance throughout these struggles show that he was a man of great faith in God; but, more than that, these struggles were preparing him for the great responsibilities he would have to face later.

The second book of Samuel tells how David was finally rewarded for his patience and consistent faith in God. When Saul was killed in battle David and his men were still living in Ziklag, a Philistine city, pretending to be loyal to the ruler Achish in order to try and stay safe from Saul. When the news of Saul's death reached David and his men, they were visibly shaken. 'They mourned and wept and fasted till evening.' David, and his men, showed genuine sorrow over the loss of their king Saul, their friend Jonathan, and the other soldiers of Israel who had died that day.

How very extraordinary!!

Here we see David distraught over the death of the man who had tried for so long to kill him. Saul had caused so much trouble for David that he had every reason to hate him; but,

instead, and here's the thing, he chose not to. Instead he chose to look at the good Saul had done and ignore the times when Saul had attacked him; for example, by hurling a spear at him! Could we do that? Would our reaction in similar circumstances follow David's example? Would that be the easy option? I would suggest that it takes courage to lay aside hatred and hurt and instead to respect the positive side of another person, especially one who has become an enemy.

David was a talented musician who wrote many of the psalms and, here, he uses that gift to honour the man who had stalked him for so long with a view to kill him! Many of you have heard me tell about Zena from my working days. Although I was her line manager, she bullied me and made my life a misery at times and, like David, I tried to stay out of her way as much as I could. She hasn't been in my life now for 11 years and I rarely think about the hurt she caused me; but I know that, even now, I would find it very difficult to extol her positive side / her good points!

We know Davis wasn't perfect but in this instance his attitude was exemplary. An excellent example for us to try and follow.

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And now for David's relationship with Jonathan! We live in an age where same sex intimate sexual relationships are generally accepted and considered just as normal as heterosexual relationships. Nearly every drama now includes same sex relationships. Because in verse 26 David says that Jonathan's love was 'more wonderful than that of a woman', many people have surmised that they had a homosexual relationship. But was this actually the case?

We have already established that David was a man of God – an Old Testament man of God. He would have known the laws laid down in Leviticus where it says that homosexuality was absolutely forbidden in Israel. Leviticus 18:22 calls homosexuality 'detestable' and Leviticus 20:13 decrees the death penalty for those who indulge in such acts. Not easy reading for the way our mind sets have been altered by the liberal society in which we live today. Even among the few of us here there will be differences of opinion on the rightness or wrongness of same sex relationships and what God thinks about them. But that's not a debate for today.

I just want us to consider a different view on their relationship. When the two of them first met they became close friends at once. I'm sure some of us here can say the same about someone we clicked with from the word go – these people usually remain life-long friends. The friendship of David and Jonathan is actually one of the deepest and closest recorded in the Bible. So, what was so special about it? Well, they based their friendship on a commitment to God, not just each other.

They let nothing come between them, not even career or family problems. After all, Jonathan was a prince of Israel and should have succeeded his father to the throne; but he realised that David, and not he, was to be the next king. He decided that he would much rather lose the throne of Israel than lose his closest friend. In 1 Samuel 23: 17 he says to David 'You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you.' Reminds me a bit of John

the Baptist and Jesus! Then, on many occasions, Jonathan also defended David to his father Saul: that would have taken courage given his father's volatile disposition!

And they drew closer together when their friendship was tested; remaining friends to the end – through thick and thin. Here, in this lament, David is simply restating the deep brotherhood and the strong, faithful friendship he had had with Jonathan. Of course, it could be said that David also knew the commandments not to commit adultery or murder and he was guilty of both. However, it is well recorded in the Bible that he sorely repented of both those acts. There is no such repentance recorded regarding his relationship with Jonathan.

For me, I would like to think that they had a deep, non-sexual friendship which can show us how important it is to value good friends; as well as being a good friend back. In summary then, here we see David looking for the good in a friend who became a bitter enemy: and being a good and faithful friend to a friend who stayed a friend! Let's pray that in these respects we become more like David!

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 4 (2021)

Holy Father, we bring before you your worldwide Church with all its different denominations, situations, and ways of worship. The variety is huge, but we pray that the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ will be the common denominator between us all. Give us all the right interpretation of your teaching in the Bible so that we will all be of one heart and mind as we share the Good News with others. We pray that you will give us the grace needed to listen to and respect others who may be at different points in their journey with you and understanding of the Word. We ask you to ensure that we don't judge others, for

that is your job at the end of time: and keep us humble before you and obedient to you.

Holy Father, we pray for the sorry state of our world. Thank you that there are still places of beauty to be found: help us to treasure them and sustain them. Again, we ask that you give Godly wisdom to all those in authority: that they will be guided as to the best courses of action in all their deliberations. We pray that you will look with compassion on all those who are suffering as a result of war and continued conflict. When the way seems impossible, we ask you to make a way for them to find peace and security. And we continue to ask that you will enable all countries to open up without fear after the pandemic. Keep us all diligent and careful as restrictions are lifted.

Holy Father, we ask for your goodness to prevail within our community. Send upon us a spirit of generosity towards others. Many angry words are shouted both behind closed doors and in the street: so, we ask you to instil among us a new gentleness and a desire to encourage others. Replace anger with peace; criticism with kindness; hate with love; indifference with concern; and apathy with energy. Help us as a church to recognise where there is a need which we can assist with and then provide us with the love and resources to meet it.

Holy Father, we pray for all those who are in need of your healing touch upon them. In whatever way they are hurting we ask that you look on them with compassion and bring an end to their suffering. We name those we know silently before you now.....Lift them from their pain and anguish and bring them the joy of your presence and your light in their darkness.

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.