

Written Service 15th May 2022



Praise the Lord!

Praise him, you young men and women, old people and children.

Praise the Lord.

He alone is great.

He is greater than heaven and earth.

Praise the Lord! Taken from Psalm 148

Hymn All things praise thee, Lord most high, 331 H&P, 24 MP or choose another hymn of praise.

Prayers

Let us pray

Lord God, you are amazing, you are our creator and provider

You are the source of all life, full of wisdom and grace

We want to worship and adore you.

You created all things, the sun, moon and stars,
this earth and the heavens above.

You created all places, green meadows and rocky coasts,
deserts and snowy peaks.

You created all living creatures
from the tiny ant to the roaring lion.

We rejoice in the rich diversity of your world.

You then created people, millions of us,
but you know each one of us by name.

You love each of us with an everlasting love
that we can hardly understand.

Lord, we praise you for all you have done and all that you are.

Bless this time of worship so that we may learn more about you
and your involvement in our world.

Amen.

Lord, We come to say that we are sorry for the things we get wrong.

We forget to take the time to see your glory
and get too tied up in our own lives to worship you properly.

We forget that we have been asked to love each other,
instead, we hurt each other in words and deeds.

We forget that to love we sometimes need to give something of ourselves
but we hoard our possessions and time.

Lord Forgive us.

God sent his son Jesus to die for us and wipe clean our mistakes so that we
can start again to do what is right. **Amen.**

Say the Lord's Prayer...

Readings

John 13:31-35

Revelation 21:1-6

Hymn For the healing of the nations 696 StF, 402 H&P

Sermon

What was the last new thing you bought or were given, not including the weekly food shop. I recently got a new T shirt, nothing special, but with all new things, I'll treasure it, look after it and not just throw it on when I'm doing the dirty gardening. This morning we are thinking about things being new, a new commandment from Jesus and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth.

Our reading from John starts with the phrase 'when he had gone out..' it's one of those occasions we need to look at what has happened before this reading to put it into context. Jesus had just shared the last supper with his disciples and washed their feet, and then Judas had been identified as the one who was to betray him. It was Judas who then left the room, and now Jesus was about to give the remaining disciples his last pieces of advice and teaching before his arrest. Jesus knew his life was coming to an end, but that end would bring Glory through his death and resurrection, and in turn would provide us with a way back to a relationship with God, and bring Glory to God.

We remember don't we the last words and last time we spent with someone close to us before they died and often we can describe the scene and remember the words said in great detail. The disciples would have been no exception; they would have remembered that special evening spent with Jesus so clearly and Jesus knew that they would. He had little time left before his death and he wanted to use it wisely giving them some instructions on how they should live after he was gone.

He gave them a new commandment, a new fresh start in the way that they should treat each other. Love one another just as I have loved you. This was not the love your neighbor as yourself that is found in the other gospels. No, this was a lot more, a different challenge. Can you remember the days when we used factor 4 suncream? Or if you were fair skinned factor 8? We know now that that's not enough to protect us from the sun, I don't think you can even buy it any more. We usually buy factor 30 or 50 now. Jesus showed his disciples how to love, what they had known before just wasn't enough. It isn't enough to just love our neighbours as ourselves, after all we don't always love ourselves do we. And it sometimes can be a lot easier loving our neighbour than those really close to us, those who share our everyday lives. To love like Jesus, how hard is that? Jesus had just done the work of a servant, bent down and washed their dirty feet which had been on the dusty road, it wasn't even as if some of them deserved it, Jesus knew that Judas was about to betray him, Peter was about to deny he even knew Jesus, and Jesus still washed their feet. Jesus

had spent a long time teaching his disciples, he healed people and gave them a new life, he challenged people, forgave them and prayed for them. Then he suffered pain and humiliation on the cross. Not just for the disciples but for each person who has ever lived, each one of us, you and me. Now that is Love!

In some cultures, people include foot washing in their marriage ceremony. The bride will wash the groom's feet and the groom will then wash the bride's feet. This is a symbol for them of the non-romantic ways in which they love each other in relationship, doing the everyday things, sometimes the not so nice things, for each other. As Christians that is how we should love others, we should be ready to do the everyday, not so nice things for each other, not just those in our family but those outside, even those who have no knowledge of Jesus because that's how people will know we follow him. We might go and spend time with refugees who have nothing, we might fight for the rights of those who are oppressed, we might care for someone who is sick or we might write to our MP about things that are not fair in our society. There are all examples of showing love to others.

I'm sure this isn't the first time you have heard this commandment, and while it was new for the first disciples, sometimes it doesn't feel new to us anymore. Do we still treasure and put our time and energy into this commandment like we would a new job or a new car that we clean every week. Maybe this week we need to remind ourselves of how we should love others following the example of Jesus. If we show a little bit more love to the people around us we might get a little bit closer to the promise offered in revelations of a new heaven and a new earth.

Have you ever been somewhere new and thought, Wow! This is a special place! Have you ever felt like you have glimpsed heaven? I have, it was in a little cove in Cornwall, it was just one of those ordinary British summer holidays', rain, rain and more rain! With 2 young children in a tent! But the last day of our holiday the sun came out and it was glorious. So, what did we do... we headed for the beach, but so did everyone else! The closest beach was packed. The next bay down, we couldn't even park, but we then found a little cove with hardly any sand, so we wandered up slightly to the little stream that was running down to the sea, and we sat by that stream and found there the presence of God, in the people that were around us, who were strangers, and the lovely scenery and in the peace. It was as if the earth had been made new, everyone was happy and I remember that there was no fear letting the children talk to the other adults around, which this day is rare, there were no tears that day.

It is no surprise that this passage is often read at funeral, when we need the comfort of knowing that there is now no more pain or distress for those who have died. But that promise is also for us, that we will all one day be joined to a new Kingdom with God, but we also have a promise for now that if we follow

the commandments of Jesus more and more, then we will be closer to the perfection of God's Kingdom on earth which has been promised for so long.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, we pray today for your Church throughout the world. May every congregation be a community of love and every Christian a witness to your grace. Pray for the church community you belong to, those who worship alone and in a church building. Renew us, that we may be a living fellowship in your Spirit and love each other.

Lord Graciously hear us.

We pray for a world which struggles to live justly and in peace. We pray for those who have to search for daily food or walk long distances for clean water. We remember those whose lives are cut short by disease or violence, and those who have fled their homes in fear. Show us how to bear each other's burdens and to work together for justice and peace

Lord Graciously hear us.

Lord, we pray for our community, that through our witness they may be shown your love. We pray also for the social community of which we are part, that you would make it a place where all can flourish and the weak be cared for. Show us Lord how to reach out to those we meet each day at work at home or in the street.

Lord Graciously hear us.

We pray for those for whom this day will seem long and hard, for those in hospital or at home, those struggling with despair or depression, those waiting for a job or important news, or a friend to call. We ask you to touch with your generous love all those who are on our hearts today.

Lord Graciously hear us.

Finally, Lord, into your hands we remember all who have faithfully lived and all who have died in Christian hope. May your light shine upon them forever and our lives be richer because of their memory.

Lord Graciously hear us.

Keep us, Lord, in the joy, the simplicity and the compassionate love of the gospel. Bless us this day and those who you have committed to our care. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn Love divine 503 StF, 267 H&P, MP 449

Say the Grace...