

## **A Service for Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020 - Bible Sunday**

**Bible Readings: Psalm 1, Leviticus 19, 1-2,15-18; Mathew 22, 34-46; 1 Thessalonians 2, 1-8;**

**Hymn: Of the Father's love begotten - Singing the Faith (STF) 181**

Of the Father's love begotten  
Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the source, the ending he,  
Of the things that are, that have been,  
And the future years shall see  
Evermore and evermore

By his word was all created;  
He commanded; it was done;  
Earth and sky and boundless ocean,  
Universe of three in one;  
All that sees the moon's soft radiance  
All that breathes beneath the sun,  
Evermore and evermore

This is he whom seers in old time  
Chanted of with one accord,  
Whom the voices of the prophets  
Promised in their faithful word;  
Now he shines, the long-expected;  
Let creation praise its Lord,  
Evermore and evermore.

O you heights of heaven, adore him;  
Angel hosts, his praises sing;  
All dominions, bow before him,  
And extol our God and King;  
Let no tongue on earth be silent,  
Every voice in concert sing,  
Evermore and evermore.

### **A Prayer of Adoration.**

Creator God, you spoke the world into being.

(We praise your Holy Name).

Saviour Jesus, you are the word of God incarnate.

(We Praise your Holy Name)

Sustaining Spirit living in us, ever help us in our calling to love both God and neighbour.

(We praise your Holy Name).

In our Worship, in our Prayers, in our study and in our daily lives.

(We praise your Holy Name)

For you alone are Lord, you alone are worthy of all praise;

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen

### **A Prayer of Confession.**

Forgive us good Lord, when we do not look to you for help and inspiration.

Forgive us good Lord, when we are distracted and lack focus.

Forgive us good Lord, for our lack of love, care and compassion.

In the stillness we make our own confession.....

Thanks be to God, that by the love of Christ, our sins are forgiven.  
Amen

## **Sermon**

Psalm 1 is our set Psalm for Bible Sunday. Many Psalms in the Bible draw on the original Hebrew concept of 'taking delight in the law.' In practical terms we are called to both know the Law and Love the Law.

In Psalm 1 we are provided with a wonderful image, a picture is painted for us, to help us have a deeper understanding of what we are being called into, in regard to our upholding of God's laws. The Psalmist tells us that the individual who truly loves the law is like a tree planted by a stream of water, that produces fruit in season.

This inspiring picture reminds us that the Life of Faith needs continual nourishment in order to grow and bear fruit. Throughout Scripture, water frequently symbolises that nourishment. Remember the conversation Jesus has with the Woman at the Well in John Chapter 4, v 4-42; Jesus goes as far as to say he is 'living water'. This passage in John resonates with many passages of scripture not least the striking of the rock in the wilderness by Moses; (Numbers 20 v11). The Symbol of Water is also frequently used in relation to God's Holy Spirit and paramount in the Sacrament of Baptism. In order to bear fruit in our life we need to receive continual nourishment.

The Tree in Psalm 1 is ideally placed by the water. We are ever called to position ourselves, if at all possible, in the place where we will continue to receive nourishment and help. Such nourishment and help are nurtured in three main ways; Worship, Bible Study and Practical application of our Faith. Bible Sunday reminds us of the importance of the Word of God in our lives and how it can continue to mould, shape and transform our lives. Jesus is the living embodiment of that word.

To delight in the Word of God is to be the ever-eager pupil willing to learn from our teacher who is the Creator of all.

In today's reading from Leviticus we are presented with what is often referred to as THE HOLINESS CODE. Rules given to our Jewish brothers and sisters from God via Moses. This whole section of scripture is perhaps best summoned up in the second half of verse 18. "You shall love your neighbour as yourself, I am the Lord."

In today's Gospel, a Pharisee, who is also a lawyer, approaches Jesus with the age-old question. "What is the greatest commandment?" To which Jesus replies "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment and the second is like it. You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

The command to be Holy, for I the Lord your God am holy, is a Covenant calling and again runs throughout the body of our scriptures.

In today's epistle, Thessalonians 2; verse 1-8, Paul reminds the early Church and us that we need to both read the law and live out the law. Paul gives guidance on how best to live out the Law in verse 7 stating, "We were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children".

There is great humility in this statement, a humility that we see most fully in the model of Christ (Philippians 2, verses 1-12). Paradoxically there is great strength in gentleness.

In order for our key workers and ourselves to rise to the occasion of the pandemic we are currently living through, our faith needs to be robust enough to continue to be gentle and tender in our interactions with others.

So, let us conclude where we began, in practical terms we are called to both know the Law of God and love the Law of God. May the Holy Spirit be living in us, ever equip us in our knowledge, our love and our application of the Law.

Amen

## **A Prayer of Intercession**

On this Bible Sunday, we pray for all who enable us to hear and understand the Bible.

We pray for biblical scholars, who produce commentaries and give lectures.

We Pray for all lead Bible Study groups and all who preach your word.

We Pray for all who translate the Bible and give thanks for the many helpful versions we have today.

We Pray for all who produce Bible study notes and all who set the words of scripture to music.  
We Pray for all skilled in Liturgical dance and all who produce a variety of art work inspired by the Bible.

We thank you that we can always turn to the Bible for guidance, inspiration and help.

We pray that all people may have access to your Holy Word.

We thank you, that Jesus Christ our Lord is the word of God incarnate.

Help us to ground our knowledge and love of Jesus daily in our lives.

May the word of God dwell richly within us.

Amen.

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

#### **Hymn: STF 459**

Captain of Israel's host, and Guide  
Of all who seek the land above,  
Beneath your shadow we abide,  
The cloud of your protecting love;  
Our strength, your grace; our rule, your word;  
Our end, the glory of the Lord.

By your unerring Spirit led,  
We shall not in the desert stray;  
We shall not full direction need,  
Nor miss our providential way;  
As from danger as from fear  
While love, almighty love, is near.

### **The Blessing.**

(Verse 1 of Hymns and Psalms 478)

O Word of God incarnate  
O wisdom from on high  
O truth unchanged, unchanging  
O night of our dark sky,  
We praise thee for the radiance  
That from the hallowed page,  
A lantern to our footsteps  
Shines on from age to age.

**The Blessing of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you this day and ever more.**

**Amen.**