



Call to Worship - Let us pray

O Lord, our shepherd and master, sheep often have the reputation of following blindly. This morning we follow you with our eyes wide open, eagerly listening for what you have to say to us. **Amen**

Hymn - STF 479 - The King of love my shepherd is

<https://youtu.be/8w98IJGY7A>

The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
and he is mine for ever.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me.

Where streams of living water flow
my ransomed soul he leadeth,
and where the verdant pastures grow
with food celestial feedeth.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and O what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
but yet in love he sought me,
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home rejoicing brought me.

And so through all the length of days
thy goodness faileth never:
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house for ever.

Henry Williams Baker (1821–1877)

Prayer

Glory to you O God: you raised Jesus from the grave, Bringing us victory over death & giving us eternal life. Glory to you, O Christ: for us and for our salvation You overcame death & opened the gate to everlasting life. Glory to you, O Holy Spirit: You lead us into the truth & breathe new life into us. Glory to you, Father, Son & Holy Spirit, Now and for ever. **Amen**

Scripture: John 14 v1-14..

Reflection

This week (Wednesday May 3rd) was the feast day of Philip and James, both of whom were Apostles chosen by Jesus to follow him and to continue his work of building the Kingdom of God. Their feast is celebrated on the same day because, although they died at different times and in different places, their bodies were moved and are buried together in the Church of the Twelve Apostles in Rome.

We meet Philip in John's Gospel. Philip is the third man Jesus called to "Follow me" (John 1:43). We know that Philip immediately recognized that Jesus had been sent from God. The first thing he did as Jesus' newest disciple was to invite his friend, Nathanael, to come and see the Lord. From the very beginning, he wanted to share the Good News about Jesus with others!

Philip was also a curious man who wanted to learn everything he could about Jesus and his teachings. At the Last Supper, Philip said to Jesus, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us" (John 14:8). Jesus was shocked by Philip's request. He replied, "Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Philip's question and Jesus' answer help us to understand that we are called to continue growing in our faith every day.

After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Philip travelled to Asia Minor, the area we now call Turkey, to tell others about Jesus' life and teachings. He died as a martyr for our faith.

James was given the nickname "the Less" so that he would not be confused with the other Apostle named James. We believe that it means that he was younger than the other St. James, who was called "the Greater." James the Less was the son of Alphaeus. His mother stood at the Cross with Mary on the day Jesus was crucified.

After Jesus' Ascension, James the Less became an important part of the Church's growth in Jerusalem. Tradition tells us that he led an important meeting of the early Church, the Council of Jerusalem, in the year 50 A.D. At this meeting, St. Paul, St. Peter and other Church leaders discussed whether Gentiles, or people who were not Jewish, could become followers of Jesus. James listened carefully to the discussion and helped the group to decide that the Church was open to all and that all people could be saved by living as followers of Jesus.

Like Philip, James was martyred for spreading the Gospel. We honour Philip and James the Less as saints on May 3. Their lives of faith inspire us to listen for the Lord's call in our lives and to respond with love and faith.

I'd like to reflect on verse 8 and Philip's request to see the Father – a request with which many can identify. Imagine Philip's surprise when Jesus replied, in effect, that he had already seen the Father – but had not realised it. The glory of God was both hidden and revealed in Jesus.

Jesus' promise in verse 12 that the disciples will do "greater works" than he had done, raises the question of what makes a work 'great'. It is easy to assume that this means 'spectacular' but for John, Jesus' works were 'signs' – they showed something of who God is. What works that we do today can do the same?

What about the Coronation of King Charles III? Here we had yesterday an opportunity, for the people who wished to do so, to swear allegiance to Charles as King and to his heirs. This was done by "scores of millions" around the UK and the world (according to Lambeth Palace) meant that we had here millions of people accepting Charles as King. What strikes me about all this is what about Jesus? Why don't the millions of believers all acclaim His kingship! Now that would be something.

So, I am left wondering, what can we do today that shows something of who God is? How can we all swear our allegiance to God? AMEN

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for all who grieve today: risen Christ, **hear our prayer.**

For those mourning the loss of their land, or their home, or their identity... For those mourning the loss of their dignity, or their independence, or their understanding...

For those mourning the loss of their health, or their mobility, or their strength... For those mourning the loss of someone they love... risen Christ, **hear our prayer. Amen.**

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

Hymn – STF 351 - In Christ alone.

<https://youtu.be/eDTcw0t2JA8>

In Christ alone, my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
'Til on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live, I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Blessing

The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be with you and those you love, this day and for ever more. **Amen**