

**Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton
and Hollybush**



12th. Sunday after Trinity

***Welcome-do have a candle, glass of juice/wine
and cracker/piece of bread ready***

The Lord be with you
and also with you

OPENING PRAYER

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE AND ABSOLUTION

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son
Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our
advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins, in penitence and faith, firmly
resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in
love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our
neighbour, in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry, and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died
for us, forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of
lifeto the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive you your sins,
open your eyes to God's truth,
strengthen you to do God's will

and give you the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE COLLECT

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

READING: Romans 12.9 to end

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(At home, please read Matthew 16:21 to end)

REFLECTION

When something really awful happens to someone you love, could you forgive? Maybe when people have the courage of their faith to forgive and not retaliate, it is a great gift not to seek revenge.

Watch children, and they quickly react. How many times have you witnessed in the playground the assault or nasty comment? I was cut up by a driver the other day whilst I had Grandchild, Jake, in the car. I am amazed when driver thought it was appropriate to gesticulate rudely when he was actually in the wrong. Even the sweetest and gentlest of people have been known to turn ferocious if they run up against some serious pain or anguish caused by another person's cruelty. I wondered why this man felt the need to react as he did, without realising he had put himself and our car in great danger?

If it can happen on the playground among children--which happens every day of the week--it can certainly happen among adults who have a special knack for rationalizing behaviours. Fighting back and responding in-kind seem to be basic human impulses when we are mistreated.

Most of us have a strong built-in sense of justice--at least, we know when we have been the victim of some injustice. So when we have the chance to implement a little justice of our own, any commitment to love we have can sail right out the window, usually based on what we may be feeling at the moment.

We can assume that we know or understand perfect justice. But perhaps only God knows such things. And a bit more modesty on our part would go a long way toward recognizing God's take on justice. Those of us with a faith perhaps need to walk through life in a tread more sensitive and tender.

Maybe you've used the expression before or had it used on you, "I have my scruples and I'm going to stand on them." To be scrupulous, we reason, is to be concerned with what is honest and right. But a scruple can be a sharp stone. In the dictionary, the phrase "to stand on your scruples" comes from the idea of being bothered by the nuisance of a small sharp stone in your shoe.

That small stone in your shoe may feel problematic, but you stand there anyway. You stand there faithfully. "Standing on your scruples" means to stand firm. It implies--because of that little stone--that we are going to stand with sensitivity or with tender feet. Jesus teaches a kind of walk through life that involves tender feet and sensitivity.

The apostle Paul lays out a whole set of scruples in our reading from the 12th chapter of Romans--little sharp stones in the shoes of Christian people that encourage us to walk with lots of sensitivity.

Let love be genuine [says Paul]; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Paul follows up this idea of both loving or blessing our enemies.

Bless those who persecute you [says Paul]; bless and do not curse them ... Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, given them something to drink ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Wow! Try this line of reasoning out in our world?

Paul has effectively taken the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and after assessing its core principles, ruled out any use of revenge. Personal vengeance is excluded.

It is forbidden. Now in its place, we might think Paul is ready to encourage some passivity. But, no. Instead of passivity, he recommends that we actively bless our enemies with kindness.

Critics of Paul say he is soft on justice, a bit naïve with so many ethical admonitions that lean toward kindness. But, actually, Paul is full of justice. All he is doing is placing the burden of who is allowed to carry out the revenge part *exclusively in the hands of God*.

"Vengeance is mine," says the Lord, when read most of the Old Testament stories. All of them attest to God settling scores on that future day. Only God has that responsibility.

If everything about you and me and our lives belongs to Christ, which is Paul's deepest understanding of the Christian life, then not only is revenge not our right or our possession to keep ... but even the wrongs we suffer do not belong to us. We are not to hold onto these hurts and wrongs as a basis for bitterness. No, they are not ours to keep. They belong to Christ. That's what Paul suggests, so turn them over!

Now in case you are wondering where the strength comes from to live in this way, Paul has incredible confidence in the power of love. What else would propel him to speak so compellingly in favour of blessing those who persecute? To conquer evil is to absorb it. Take it into yourself and disarm it. Neutralize its acids. Serve as a charcoal filter for its smog. Put a straitjacket on it and turn it over to God, so that when you breathe out again the air is pure. The next time you see someone in a tough situation who acts as if love is just a warm, fuzzy glow don't believe your eyes. Especially when it comes to breaking the vicious cycle, where evil often seems to beget more evil. Consider just how hard it is to love an enemy. It's incredibly difficult work, but Paul offers up the reminder that our Lord is looking for accomplices who are interested in breaking this cycle of hatred that so easily infects even the best among us. **Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As followers of Jesus Christ, let us pray to our loving Father.

Father, help us all in your church to understand what it really means to serve you. At the times of testing,

strengthen us, at times of unexpected or undeserved suffering, support us, at the end of our energy, revive us and teach us through it all the peace and joy that comes from doing your will.

(pause)

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Father, have mercy on us for any misdirected use of time, money and resources in this world. In the struggle against evil and sin, empower us, so that justice and righteousness are established, upheld and celebrated.

(pause)

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer

Father, renew our commitment to you and in all our relationships, our work and leisure. In the hard choices, give us wisdom, in the painful decisions, affirm us and may our words speak your truth, whether that is to encourage, to comfort or to challenge.

(pause)

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer

Father, bring healing and wholeness to those who suffer in mind, body or spirit. In the sleepless nights and days of endless pain, give the grace to persevere with patience, and turn these dark times into places of spiritual growth.

(pause)

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Father, may those who have died rest in the eternal peace of your presence, their burdens laid down and their suffering ended.

(pause)

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Please ask for any additional prayers

**Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done ;
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil;
for thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE PEACE

We are all one in Christ Jesus.
We belong to him through faith,
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
and also with you.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the
dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

THE THANKSGIVING PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.

And so we gladly thank you,
With saints and angels praising you, and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna, in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord.**

Hosanna, in the highest.

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
And as we obey his command,
Send your Holy Spirit that broken bread and wine
outpoured may be to us the body and blood of your
dear Son.

Here is the table set for a special meal.

On the night before he died, he had supper with his
friends and taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
Do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended, he took a cup of wine.
Again, he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this all of you; This is my blood of the new
covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the
forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of
me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him
we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once
upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection
Until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith
Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life, help us work together for that day
When your kingdom comes and justice and mercy
will be seen in all the earth.
Look with favour on your people, gather into your
loving arms with St Faith, St John the Baptist, St
Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul and
all the Saints to feast at your table in heaven.
Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are
yours, O loving Father,
For ever and ever. **Amen.**

Jesus, Lamb of God
have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast

(consume)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

God of all mercy,
in this eucharist you have set aside our sins
and given us your healing:
grant that we who are made whole in Christ
may bring that healing to this broken world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

We thank you, Lord,
that you have fed us in this physical and spiritual
sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a
foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all
peoples. Amen.

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his
people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and
Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise
you for your glory.

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
 Lord God, Lamb of God,
 you take away the sin of the world:
 have mercy on us;
 you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
 receive our prayer.
 For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the
 Lord,
 you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
 with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the
 Father.
 Amen.**

THE BLESSING

May the father from whom every family
 in earth and heaven receives its name
 strengthen you with his Spirit
 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts;
 and the blessing of God almighty,
 the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
 be among you, and remain with you always.
Amen.

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