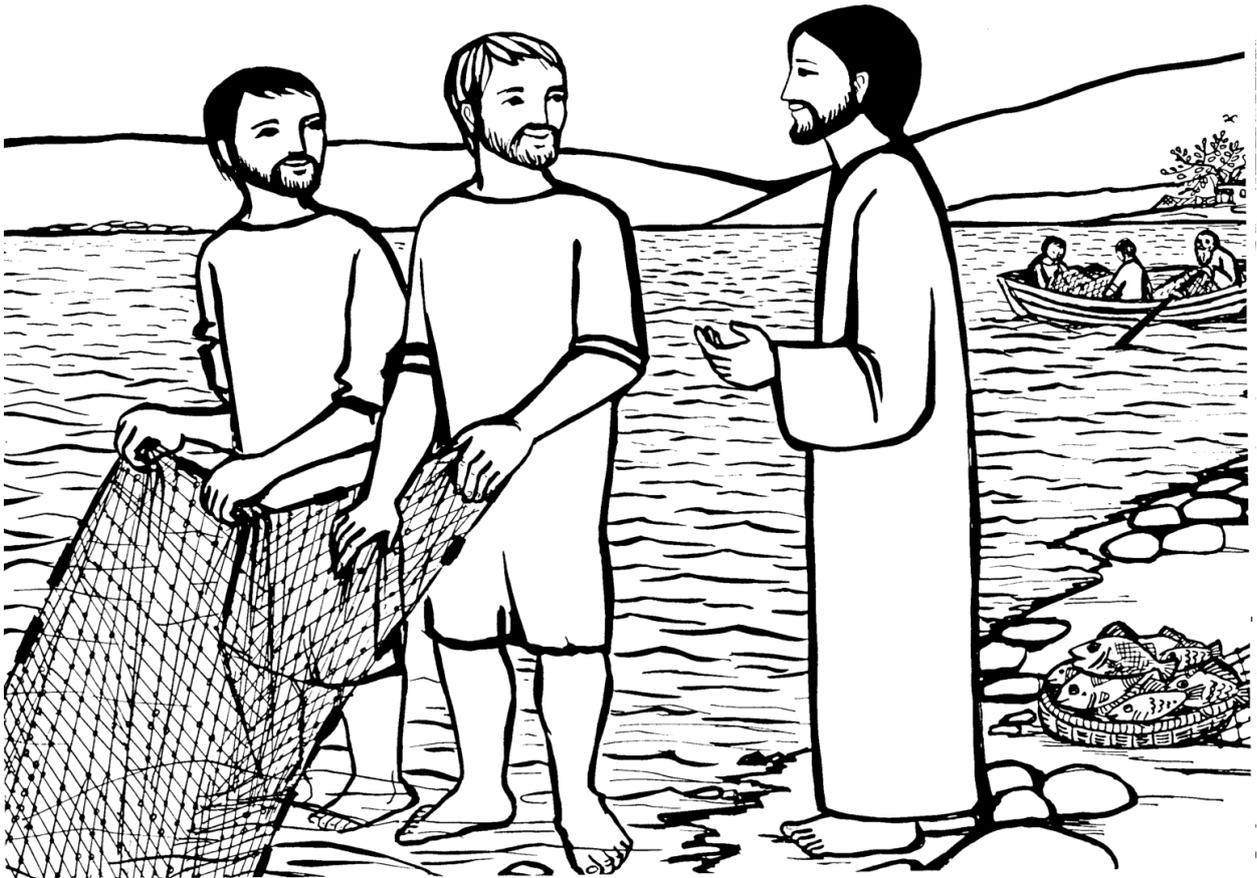


**United Benefice of Berrow with Pendock
Eldersfield, Hollybush and Birtsmorton**



**Holy Communion
for the Sundays after Trinity**

THE WELCOME

Do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready

THE FIRST HYMN

The Lord be with you
and also with you

**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.**

THE CONFESSION 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.

(There will be a time of silence for reflection before we say the Confession together.)

**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 life
to 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 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 WORD OF GOD

THE COLLECT

Lord, you have taught us
that all our doings without love are nothing worth:
send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted dead before you.
Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

THE READINGS: Ezekiel 17.22 to end, 2 Corinthians 5. 6-10, 14-17

THE GOSPEL READING: Mark 4: 26-34

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *N.*
Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end of the reading:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON



Being a member of any church today, we know about perseverance and patience. For as Paul tells the Corinthians, “When I am weak, then I am strong.”

In 2 Corinthians, Paul is defending his authority against attacks of false apostles. They have come to Corinth proclaiming a picture of Jesus that is at variance with the gospel the Corinthians first heard from Paul and in which they believed and placed their trust for salvation. So to establish their own authority, the usurping apostles spread falsehoods. His letters are weighty and strong, but Paul in the flesh is not so impressive. His preaching is seen as weak and of no special merit. Paul responds, in so many words, “If you take me for a fool, then I’ll play the fool. What does a fool do? He boasts. (Exactly what the false apostles have been doing.) So I will boast, matching the false prophets boast for boast. They claim to be sons of Abraham; so am I. They claim to be servants of Christ; so am I -- and hear how much I’ve suffered in Christ’s service.” Then he says, “If you think I am weak and a fool, I’ll show you just how foolish I am. I’ll boast, not of my strength, but of my weakness.” For only a fool would boast of weakness.

Paul keeps the details of his weakness strictly between himself and God. He speaks of it only cryptically, as “the thorn in [his] flesh.” Whatever the thorn was, Paul is able to boast of this weakness because this thorn in his flesh turns out to be a blessing. For when he beseeches God three times to take it from him, Paul receives Christ’s word of comfort: “My grace is sufficient for you; for my power is perfected in weakness.” When Paul boasts of his weakness, he has turned the false apostles’ criticism against them. For the hallmark of a true apostle is found, not in his strength, but in his weakness.

Our ministry is not about displaying our wisdom or eloquence or compassion or righteousness. Jesus commanded us, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see *your* good works and glorify *your* Father in heaven.”

The problem is that most of the people to whom you are preaching find it hard to see new possibilities of mission to the wider community. How do words paint a vision powerful enough to persuade people to buy into a reality they cannot see?

Jesus the preacher knew what he was talking about when he compared preaching the word with scattering seed.

As the flower grows from the seed, so God’s Kingdom grows from little deeds and gifts shared from people every day. Words just like seeds fall from the sower’s hands, are immediately beyond your control. They are picked up and carried by the wind to the ears of the attentive, the inattentive and the halfway attentive. These seeds of wisdom that you cast out fall upon hearts that are hungry and reflective, some are well-meaning but not over perceptive and some are downright indifferent or even hostile.

As Augustine explained, our words are but *signs* that gesture to the presence of an unseen God and invite the listener to seek the God who reveals himself in the secret recesses of the soul. Our words can witness, but they cannot convict. They do not have the power to cause the hardened heart to soften or the stiff neck to bow or the tongue to confess.

We may say: "Actions speak louder than words." Indeed, actions are more tangible than words; yet actions are still only *visible* signs. How often did Jesus perform signs and wonders among his people -- a people clamouring for signs and wonders -- and yet they still did not believe? He healed 10 lepers. But how many returned to give thanks?

Paul's ministry may be out of weakness but it also teaches us that God's grace is sufficient. God's power is "perfected" through our weak words. Like the sower, we do not have control over our words. Nor do we know *how* the seeds grow; growth is beyond the power of our crafts. But we know they do grow, and fruit for the kingdom is ready for harvest. It is the Holy Spirit, and not we ourselves, who gives the gift of faith. Our words speak the vision of the kingdom, but it is the Spirit alone who chastens, who convicts, who saves. The word of God has the power to be planted in our hearts and to grow. But that word needs to be sown. Every day we have a fresh start and opportunities to create times when we encounter others to plant just a small seed, a mustard seed ready to grow and be harvested by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let him understand the mysteries and the riddles of the kingdom of God."

Amen.

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 PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

At the end of the prayers:

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

**As the grain once scattered in the fields
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
are now reunited on this table in the bread and wine,
so, Lord, may your whole church
soon be gathered together from the corners of the earth
into your kingdom. Amen.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord is here.
His Spirit is with us

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

Let us pray

Father, we give you thanks and praise
through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word,
through whom you have created all things;
who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin,
he lived on earth and went about among us;
he opened wide his arms for us on the cross;
he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever 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.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
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.

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

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;

rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company of [N and] all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

**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.**

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast

(consume)

THE PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

Loving Father, we thank you for feeding us at the supper of your Son: sustain us with your Spirit, that we may serve you here on earth until our joy is complete in heaven, and we share in the eternal banquet with 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 FINAL HYMN

THE BLESSING

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
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.