

22 May 2022

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Blessed be God's kingdom, now and for ever.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

And also with you.

Sentence

'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you,' says the Lord. 'Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.' John 14.27

Prayer of Preparation

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 Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Great and loving god, Your will for us in your son Jesus Is the peace which the world cannot give, Your abiding gift, the Advocate he promised will Calm all troubled hearts Dispel every feat And keep us steadfast in love and faithful to your word. Grant this through Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the dead, Who lives with you now and always In the unity of the Holy Spirit God for ever and ever Amen.

Acts 16.9-15

⁹ During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'

¹⁰ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. ¹¹ From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis.

¹² From there we travelled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.

¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptised, she invited us to her home. 'If you consider me a believer in the Lord,' she said, 'come and stay at my house.' And she persuaded us.

Psalms 67

¹ Let God be gracious to us and bless us: and make his face shine upon us,

² That your ways may be known on earth: your liberating power among all nations.

³ Let the peoples praise you, O God: let all the peoples praise you.

⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing: for you judge the peoples with integrity, and govern the nations upon earth.

⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God: let all the peoples praise you.

⁶ Then the earth will yield its fruitfulness: and God, our God, will bless us.

⁷ God shall bless us: and all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Revelation 21.10-14; 21.22-22.5

¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

¹¹ It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

¹³ There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ²⁴ The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. ²⁵ On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. ²⁶ The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷ Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. ¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

John 14.23-29

²³ Jesus replied, 'Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴ Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. ²⁵ 'All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. ²⁸ 'You heard me say, "I am going away and I am coming back to you." If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

Sermon

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

prayers

Let us pray for the world and for the Church.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Jesus said: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. John 13.34

Confession

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,

who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn

OFFERTORY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.

Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom.

Blessed be God for ever.

Thanksgiving

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 our thanks and praise.**

Preface

It is indeed right, it is our duty, our joy and our salvation, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ your only Son our Lord.

For he is the true high priest, who has freed us from our sins and made us a royal priesthood to serve you, our God and Father. 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.

Holy and gracious God, all creation rightly gives you praise. All life, all holiness, comes from you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom you sent to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

Hear us, merciful Lord; through Christ accept our sacrifice of praise; and, by the power of your Word and Holy Spirit, sanctify this bread and wine, that we who share in this holy sacrament may be partakers of Christ's body and blood. Who, when his hour had come, on the night before he went up to the cross to make full atonement for the sins of the whole world, offering once for all his one sacrifice of himself, 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.'

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore, in obedience to his command, we commemorate and celebrate his saving passion and death, his mighty resurrection and ascension into heaven and we eagerly await his coming again in glory.

We thank you that by your grace alone you have accepted us in Christ; and here we offer you a spiritual sacrifice, holy and acceptable in your sight.

Through Christ, receive this our duty and service, and grant that we who eat and drink these holy gifts may, by your Holy Spirit, be one body in Christ, and serve you in unity and peace.

In your grace and mercy, bring us to the joy of your eternal kingdom with all the company of the redeemed. May we praise you in union with them, and give you glory through your Son, Jesus Christ.

Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honour is yours, gracious Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us:

Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made. Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread:

so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life.

Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life.

Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you and be thankful.

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and love.

Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in love and obedience that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you for ever.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Hymn

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**



Our gospel reading today is a portion of the farewell discourse. One of the disciples has asked when Jesus is going to show himself to the world, but Jesus doesn't directly answer him just begins to talk about love and abiding.

When the disciples live in love and thereby keep Jesus' commandments, they experience the love of God the Father, and it is through that love that they and us will also experience the indwelling of the Father and Jesus through the Holy Spirit. The noun translated as 'home' is the same Greek word translated as 'dwelling place' earlier in the chapter. We will dwell with God, and God will be at home in us whenever we live in love. To love Jesus is to live with God and Jesus - that is to enter into relationship with them, to come home.



Do you think that I talk about love a lot? I do, but that is because Jesus talked about love a lot. The only commandments that Jesus ever gave were about love: The greatest

Commandments: Love God, love your neighbour, last week's reading 'love one another', all of the gospels full of instructions to love and references to love: either God's love for us, or our love for him, or our love for others.

The revelation of God in Jesus is explicitly linked to the community's love of Jesus and God's love of them. The abiding presence of God and Jesus within the church community is thus both the foundation, and the result of the community's love. The love for God is present whenever those who love Jesus keep his commandments.

It is because of God's incredible, mind-blowing love for us that Jesus came to earth, that Jesus died on the cross and rose again and that the Father has sent the Holy Spirit, the advocate to be with us and lead us every day, reminding us of what Jesus did and said when he was on earth. This is the Holy Spirit's job, to constantly remind; cause us to remember, what Jesus did and what the Father wants us to know.



After Jesus' resurrection, the disciples remembered what Jesus had said and done, and they were brought to deeper understanding and faith, various people wrote it down or and eventually the gospel writers compiled it. That is how we are blessed to have the gospels; because people remembered. Those men who walked with Jesus did not understand what he was saying but the Holy Spirit caused them to recollect and understand. The Holy Spirit does not teach new things but keeps Jesus' own teaching alive in the post resurrection church. That is how we know that anything that comes into our mind that is contrary to scripture is not from God.

I know a lots of scripture, but I find that the Lord often uses scripture set to music or hymns which tell the gospel to remind me of what I need to know.

Jesus had told his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, so when Paul got a vision to go to Macedonia, he knew he was being led by the holy Spirit and by staying with Lydia they were able to do great work for God in that place.

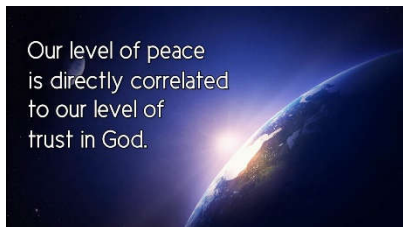


Jesus words of assurance to his disciples contain a new promise. In the Old Testament and sometimes even for modern Jews the word for Peace; 'Shalom' was a conventional leave taking address, but Jesus is not simply saying farewell to his disciples with this promise of peace. Jesus is about to go, so in this context the verb 'leave' takes on the meaning of a bequest, a parting gift. The disciples will not be alone because they will have the Holy Spirit and God's peace.



The peace that Jesus offers is not the world's peace - neither the false promise of security, nor the end of conflict. The peace that Jesus gives is His peace, a peace that derives from his heart, his life. The peace of Jesus is his love, his joy. Those who hold fast to Jesus, and refuse to settle for second best, will find that his peace comes to them as a gift, a peace of a kind that the world can never give. This peace will assure them of his presence and support, cheering them with the knowledge that the Jesus they know, and love, is indeed one with the Father.

The promise of Jesus' peace is not an occasion for complacency: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid' (which he had also said at the beginning of this chapter when he assured them that he was going to prepare a place for them). This phrase could be translated literally as 'do not be cowardly', it is not a nice pat on the head, not a sentimental imperative, 'everything will be OK', telling the disciples not to worry but a call to find strength in the new circumstances in which Jesus' departure places them. Real courage is not the absence of fear but facing the threat and doing what needs to be done anyway.



It is also for us, a call for strength, for bravery and trust in whatever circumstances God is leading us through. God does not expect us to hide when the storm comes, he expects us to face it with the full knowledge that he is in control and trust him. We know that life is not always easy, the older we get the more the aches and pains seem to accumulate and the longer it takes us to get things done but God still walks with us, guides us comforts and loves us every moment.



Our reading from Revelation today, that continuing vision of the reality of life that the early Christians needed to hold on to during the persecutions, is a continuing picture of the New Jerusalem. It is a picture of perfection; the walls mark the boundaries, but the twelve gates allow total freedom to come and go without restriction. There is no temple because a temple is the place where one goes to be in the presence of God but in the Holy City everyone is already in the presence of God.

Similarly, there is not need for light because of the radiance of divine glory and the nations are guided by this glorious light and nothing corrupt will be able to enter. It will be a city of perfect peace. All this is a huge metaphor for life after the second coming, but it is also something that is expected to be reflected in the reality of our lives now. God dwells in us now and is the light of our lives now, even as we wait for the final fulfilment.



In the Bible the word 'world' is used in two different ways: sometimes it is used as 'God loved the world so much. . . 'and sometimes, like in our gospel reading today, it is used to refer to everything that has gone wrong or been distorted. The simplest ways to understand it is that God rejects wickedness and is totally opposed to it, and at the same time he loves the universe, the people, that he made. He comes as the light of the world, so that people can have the light of life; but many prefer the darkness.

One day our home will be the Holy City with God but now our dwelling is in God, even while we live on the earth. We walk every day in his love and peace. He leads us by his Holy Spirit, who reminds us of all that Jesus and the Father are to us and in us.



And the Peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Great and loving god,

Your will for us in your son Jesus

Is the peace which the world cannot give,

Your abiding gift, the Advocate he promised will Calm all troubled hearts, dispel every feat And keep us steadfast in love and faithful to your word.

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