

Welcome

Hymn

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.**

**Our Lord Jesus Christ said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment.**

And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22:37-40

### Sentence

Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah: 'The Spirit of the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives.' Luke 4.18

### 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

Life-giving God, who sent your Son Jesus to proclaim your kingdom and to teach with authority: anoint us with your Spirit, that we too may bring good news to the poor, bind up the broken-hearted, and proclaim liberty to the captive; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### Nehemiah 8.1-3, 5-6, 8-10

<sup>1</sup> Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded for Israel.

<sup>2</sup> So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. <sup>3</sup> He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

<sup>5</sup> Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. <sup>6</sup> Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, 'Amen! Amen!' Then they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

<sup>8</sup> They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read. <sup>9</sup> Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep.' For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

<sup>10</sup> Nehemiah said, 'Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'

## Psalm 19

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament proclaims his handiwork;

<sup>2</sup> One day tells it to another: and night to night communicates knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> There is no speech or language: nor are their voices heard;

<sup>4</sup> Yet their sound has gone out through all the world: and their words to the ends of the earth.

<sup>5</sup> There he has pitched a tent for the sun: which comes out as a bridegroom from his chamber and rejoices like a strong man to run his course.

<sup>6</sup> Its rising is at one end of the heavens, and its circuit to their farthest bound: and nothing is hidden from its heat. <sup>7</sup> The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul: the command of the Lord is true and makes wise the simple. <sup>8</sup> The precepts of the Lord are right, and rejoice the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, and gives light to the eyes. <sup>9</sup> The fear of the Lord is clean, and endures for ever: the judgements of the Lord are unchanging, and righteous every one. <sup>10</sup> More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, than the honey that drips from the comb.

<sup>11</sup> Moreover, by them is your servant taught: and in keeping them there is great reward.

<sup>12</sup> Who can know their own unwitting sins?: O cleanse me from my secret faults.

<sup>13</sup> Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins, lest they get the mastery over me: so I shall be clean, and innocent of great offence. <sup>14</sup> May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight: O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

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## 1 Corinthians 12.12-31

<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

<sup>14</sup> And so the body is not made up of one part but of many. <sup>15</sup> Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

<sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

<sup>18</sup> But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one part, where would the body be?

<sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, but one body. <sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, <sup>24</sup> while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

<sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it. <sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.

<sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. Love is indispensable And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

## Luke 4.14-21

<sup>14</sup> Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. <sup>15</sup> He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

<sup>16</sup> He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

<sup>18</sup> 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

<sup>20</sup> Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. <sup>21</sup> He began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

### Sermon

#### Creed

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, 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 from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

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.

#### Prayers of intercession

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has promised that you will hear us when we ask in faith: receive the prayers we offer.

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.**

#### Invitation to Confession

Christ the Son of God has been revealed as a light to the nations.

Let us bring our darkness to his light, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love, but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done. We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them. For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us and change us. By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

God is slow to anger and full of compassion, forgiving all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. God therefore forgives you in Christ Jesus, in whom there is no condemnation. **Amen.**

#### The Peace

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

#### Offering

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

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.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. You anointed him as Messiah, the light of the nations, and revealed him as the hope of all who thirst for righteousness and peace.

By his death on the cross and rising to new life, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his 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.**

And now, gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, according to our Savior's word, in remembrance of his suffering and death, may share his body and blood.

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying,

'Drink from 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.'

We eat this bread and drink this cup **to proclaim the death of the Lord.** We do this until he returns.

**Come, Lord Jesus!**

Father, as we recall his saving death and glorious resurrection, may we who share these gifts be renewed by your Holy Spirit and united in the body of your Son.

Bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom, there to feast at your table and join in your eternal praise:

**Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise and honour and glory and power for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

*We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread. 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 with thanksgiving.*

*The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen*

*The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. Amen*

## THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

God of the nations, we thank you for nourishing us with this holy sacrament.

Guide us by your presence, that we may bring your light to those who dwell in darkness, and establish your justice in the earth.

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

*Blessing*

May Christ the Son of God be manifest to you, that your lives may be a light to the world; 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**



Our gospel reading today follows immediately on from Jesus being tempted in the Wilderness, which follows immediately on from his Baptism. Each of these sections begins with a reference to Jesus being filled with the power of the Spirit. And throughout his ministry Jesus was always filled with the Spirit. This is not different occasions when he had somehow run out and needed to receive a fill up but a continuous process that occurred through out his life. As Jesus blessed people with an outpouring of God's love and blessings so he was constantly refilled with God's spirit of love.

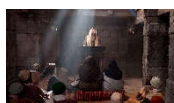
Another way we might talk of his ministry would be to say that he was 'inspired', and it would be true, but it didn't just happen. Throughout his life Jesus was constantly learning, learning to obey, learning patience, learning the scriptures, learning to live a life directed by his heavenly father and leaning who he was.



That in part is what the temptations were about, he was sure that he was the Messiah, but what form would that take in his life? It would have been so easy to assume that the Father would not want his son hungry or worried about mundane things like where he was going to get food. It would have been so easy to just fulfil the prophecy that he would be sovereign in one easy step, and it would have been so easy to prove to everyone that he was the Messiah with impressive displays of power but after all those years of prayer and study he knew that what the Father wanted was not some divine super hero but a Messiah who would show the Father's loving nature and will for the world.

If God was working by his Spirit through Jesus then Jesus' life had to be formed by the Spirit, through testing at every level. If Jesus could not win the victory there in the wilderness, there was no point in carrying on. If God is working through us by his Spirit, then our lives must be formed by the Spirit, through tough times and testing at every level. If we cannot win the victory now, then we must learn more and be tested again because there is no point in carrying on.

So, Jesus resisted the temptation to put his own needs first, to grab the glory by compromise or to put God's promises to the test and starts his ministry by teaching the good news in Galilee and the people's response is praise. So, he continues his ministry into his hometown of Nazareth and, as is his custom goes to the synagogue.



They didn't have rosters in those days but anyone willing to read stood up at the appropriate time and as they had heard about Jesus' teaching, he was given the scroll.

The appointed scroll for the day was Isaiah so Jesus found what we know as chapter 61 and begins to read. In typical fashion we have only a short quotation, but he may have read on or simply known that his hearers knew the rest of the passage.

Then he hands the scroll back and sits down. In our society that action would imply that he was finished but, in that time, it meant exactly the opposite. One stood to read the scripture but sat down to teach, so everyone was watching him, waiting for his sermon. And he began by saying, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'

Wow. That made everyone sit up and take notice didn't it.



*18 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'*

This is not a mission to the rich and favoured it is a mission to the poor, to the prisoners, the disabled and the oppressed. It is a mission of good news, of freedom, recovery, and freedom.

Throughout his ministry Jesus fulfilled these words, he often preached to the masses, the crowds, the ordinary poor of the land and he also preached about the poor and preached blessing to them.



The word used here as 'captives' in many translations or 'prisoners' in our translation is only ever used here in the New Testament, but we see it at work as Jesus released many from economic bondage, from bondage to disabilities and ailments and release from political condemnation, release from demons and bondage to sin.

The restoration of sight to the blind was closely associated with the prophetic vision of God's promises to Israel so when Jesus restores sight to the blind, he is figuratively fulfilling God's work of salvation. Jesus is dramatically fulfilling the role of the one who would be a light for the nations. Like Jesus his followers are to be a light to others.



The year of the Lord's favour is another name for the Jubilee year. After seven lots of seven years the fiftieth year was supposed to be a year when liberty was proclaimed throughout the land, land was allowed to lie fallow, slaves we set free, and all land was restored to its original owners.

Jesus' ministry signalled that the time for the liberation of the impoverished and oppressed had come, and in that respect at least his work would fulfil the ideal and social concern of the Jubilee year.



If Jesus was walking on earth today, what would he be doing? He would do exactly the same, he would preach good news to the poor, proclaim

freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight to the blind, set the oppressed free and proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

How would he feel about the poor and disadvantaged we know? How would he react to the refugees kept locked up for years? What would he do about our sick? What would he think of our government restricting Rapid Tests? What a shame he's not here to deal with all the wrong of the world.



But he is here. We are the body of Christ; he works in this world through us. What is he expecting us to do?

. <sup>27</sup> Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. <sup>28</sup> And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.

<sup>29</sup> Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup> Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup> Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. Love is indispensable.

This passage from our gospel today is the scripture that God put on my heart when I was 19 years old. It is my life word. I lived my life trying to live it out. Because I am a follower of Jesus, I try to become more like him and so his call is my call. Long before I was ordained, I served as tea lady, as prayer partner and table servant and many roles in various ministries and lived my life trying to do what he would do.

Because we are followers of Jesus, we try to become more like him and so his call is our call. We look to him every day and live our lives trying to do what he would do.



<sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be?

If the whole church were priests, where would the real work get done. If the whole church were Parish Councillors who would mow the lawns or run the Mums and Bubs morning, or cook meals for anyone who is sick?

<sup>18</sup> But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one part, where would the body be?

Life-giving God, who sent your Son Jesus to proclaim your kingdom and to teach with authority: anoint us with your Spirit, that we too may bring good news to the poor, bind up the broken-hearted, and proclaim liberty to the captive; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.