

27 February 2022

Hymn TIS

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

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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

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ^{John 1.14}

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

O God, glorious and faithful, you reveal the beauty of your face to those who seek you with a sincere heart: strengthen us in faith to embrace the mystery of the cross, and open our hearts to its transforming power, so that, clinging in love to your will for us, we may walk as followers of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exodus 34.29-35

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord.

³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them.

³² Afterwards all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.

³³ When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ But whenever he entered the Lord's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵ they saw that his face was radiant.

Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the Lord .

Psalm 99

¹ The Lord is king, let the nations tremble: he is enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake.

² The Lord is great in Zion: he is high above all nations.

³ Let them praise your great and terrible name: for holy is the Lord.

⁴ The Mighty One is king and loves justice:

you have established equity, you have dealt righteousness and justice in Jacob.

⁵ O exalt the Lord our God: and bow down before his footstool, for he is holy.

⁶ Moses and Aaron among his priests,

and Samuel among those who call upon his name: they called to the Lord and he answered.

⁷ He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud: they kept to his teachings and the law that he gave them.

⁸ You answered them, O Lord our God: you were a forgiving God to them, and pardoned their wrongdoing.

⁹ O exalt the Lord our God: and bow down towards his holy hill, for the Lord our God is holy.

2 Corinthians 3.12-4.2

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

Luke 9.28-36

²⁸ About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray.

²⁹ As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. ³⁰ Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendour, talking with Jesus. ³¹ They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfilment at Jerusalem.

³² Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.

³³ As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, 'Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters – one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' (He did not know what he was saying.)

³⁴ While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud.

³⁵ A voice came from the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.'

³⁶ When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

³⁷ The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. ³⁸ A man in the crowd called out, 'Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him.

⁴⁰ I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.'

⁴¹ 'You unbelieving and perverse generation,' Jesus replied, 'how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here.' ⁴² Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the impure spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father.

⁴³ And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

Sermon

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.

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

Prayer of Approach

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.

But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. 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.

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.

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

Hymn

OFFERATORY PRAYER

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.

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.'

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, we worship you, Father eternal, in songs of never-ending praise:

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

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.

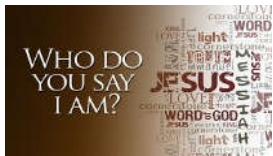
Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

When was the last time you had a glorious moment? Perhaps it was when you were able to see loved ones for the first time in ages or something special occurred. But the reason these times are so special is because they are rare. My kinds had a book where teddy's friends gave him a birthday party and said he could have anything he wanted in their power to give. Teddy said he wanted a birthday party every day for a week but on the seventh day he said 'let's not do a birthday party. Let's go fly some kites.' It wasn't special anymore.



We continue reading in Luke, but we have skipped a few chapters where Jesus had continued to teach his disciples and the crowds and heal those who are sick. At the beginning of this chapter just before eight days before Jesus had asked the Disciples, 'who do men say that I am?' and 'who do you say I am?' and Peter had answered 'you are the Christ, the son of God'.

So, a week later, and Jesus knows what he is about to face and needs some support from his Father, so he takes the 3 and goes up a mountain to pray. The disciples as usual fall asleep while Jesus is praying but wake up when things start to get interesting.



In our Old Testament reading Moses would go and pray and come back with his face glowing, at first the leaders were frightened but they came to recognise that this was a sign that God had spoken with Moses and as Paul tells us Moses would then cover his face so that people couldn't tell when the glory faded. Here Jesus has been spending some time with his Father and not just his face but his whole being changed.

We don't know what went on while the disciples were asleep, we don't know what words of encouragement, and power the Father gave to Jesus, but we know that Jesus was then able to carry on and go through with the plan and we know that he was also strengthened and encouraged by Moses and Elijah

Moses was the one who had given the law to Israel, not just the ten commandments but in Israel's mindset: all the laws, all the first five books of the Old Testament, which are called the Law. Elijah represented all the prophets, and he was the one who didn't die but was taken directly to heaven.



So here we have two men who understand what Jesus is going through, leaders in their own time, who together embody the belief in Yahweh. Jesus has already demonstrated his mastery over the sea and fed the multitude in the wilderness, just as Moses parted the sea and fed the Israelites in the wilderness and Jesus has multiplied loaves, cleansed lepers, and raised the dead, just as Elijah and Elisha did in their ministry. So, they speak with Jesus and then depart, leaving him to embody the faith of Israel.

Moses and Elijah spoke to him about his 'departure' or 'Exodus'. In Greek this is the same word. Luke wants us to understand that this means, as it did in the Old Testament: 'departure, going away' as in Moses led the Israelite slaves away from Egypt to freedom and home to the promised land.



In this new Exodus Jesus will lead his people out of slavery to sin and death and home to their promised inheritance - the new creation in which the whole world will be redeemed.

Exodus can also be a euphemism for death, just like we might say 'when I am departed' so Jesus' exodus would mean his death on the cross.

Jesus went through this wonderful mountain top experience, knowing that it was preparing him to follow where the law and prophets had pointed: down into the valley, into the mundane and worse the place of despair and death, the place where the son of man will be handed over to sinners.



The disciples also found it an amazing experience, they were overwhelmed and blurted out things they didn't mean. Peter, perhaps thinking of the festival of booths which reminded the Israelites of their time in the wilderness, suggested that they freeze the moment, or preserve it forever, but faithfulness requires following Jesus to the cross, not commemorating the place of the transfiguration. But just as Peter is speaking a cloud overwhelms them and God speaks from the cloud. No wonder they were afraid. The voice says: "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."

The other time that God spoke in an audible voice was at Jesus' Baptism, there he spoke to Jesus: *you are my son...* but on this occasion he is speaking to the disciples: *This is my son* and just as Jesus spoke in last week's reading to those who are listening so this week The Father instructs us to listen.

We often in the ups and downs of life find it difficult even bewildering to know how to understand all that God is doing and saying. But the word that comes to us, leading us to follow Jesus even when we haven't a clue about what is going on, is this word from the cloud. 'This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him.'



Many of you will have heard us speak of this house or two houses we want to build with our daughter. We seem to have had every possible things go wrong, initially we had trouble finding a bank that would lend us money, the plans have been submitted and resubmitted many times, we were given contrary advice from the department and many other delays and frustrations in the process, finally a few weeks ago we had the approvals and resigned the contract with the builder only to have the bank say that we need to reapply for the loan. The reapplication has been done and now we are waiting. I keep asking the Lord what to do but we hear nothing except that he is in control. All we can do is trust and keep knocking on doors and waiting to see if they open. It is frustrating but we trust and keep listening.



How many times have you had a mountain top experience and then had to come back to the real world? There often seems to be a bit of a down when we come back from holidays, or after something wonderful has happened. We can't stay on the mountain; we cannot also be experiencing the highs of life spiritually or any other way. I have known people who are addicted to those highs but that is not real life. When does the work get done? When do they see their neighbours to tell them that God loves them?

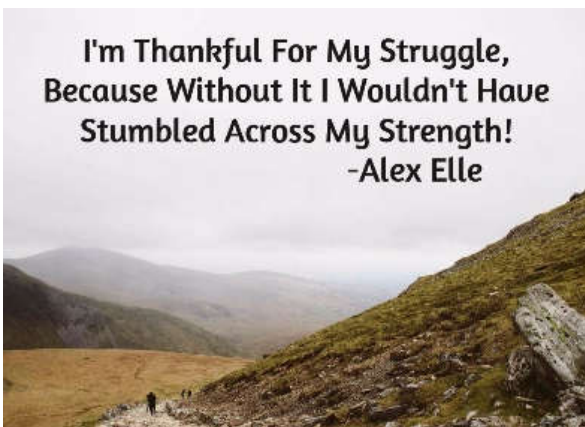


Jesus and the disciples come down the mountain and there is another crowd of people with needs. And in this crowd, there is a little boy who the remaining disciples are unable to cure. Can you imagine how Jesus felt at that moment? He is all set to go and give himself to save the world, he is looking at the big picture but the people closest to him have failed and he is brought back to the daily grind with a big bump. Saving the world one person at a time.

You and I may never have an experience like the transformation, we may not see Jesus in his glory on this earth but there are moments of great joy in our lives, there are times when the light breaks through and we suddenly understand how much God loves us and what he wants us to do. These are wonderful moments but equally there are moments when everything goes wrong or talking to God is like talking to the ceiling and we hear nothing. And in between there are the daily moments, we just get up and do the things which need to be done today and get up again tomorrow and do it all again. This is life.

There is a temptation to think that it would be wonderful to have glorious moments every day, but it is not going to happen. We rather think it would be at least appealing to never have those moments of despair ever again but then how would we appreciate the moments of contentment? It is all part of your path. All of it. The path is called Life

**I'm Thankful For My Struggle,
Because Without It I Wouldn't Have
Stumbled Across My Strength!**
-Alex Elle



As you walk through life, notice the flowers and the butterflies, hear God just saying 'hi' or 'I love you' as he shows you beautiful things and people in his creation. He might not give you a huge revelation today but he is there and he will continue to walk with you through the highs and the lows and the mundane in your life.