

Sunday Worship at Home, 14th August 2022, Ninth Sunday after Trinity



Opening Prayers:

O Lord, open our lips, and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Give us the joy of your saving help, and sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.

A Prayer of Confession:

As we reflect on the wrong we have done and the good we have not done, we pray for forgiveness for ourselves, confident of God's love and saving grace:

We have not always worshipped God, our creator. **Lord, have mercy.**

We have not always followed Christ, our Saviour. **Christ, have mercy.**

We have not always trusted in the Spirit, our guide. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Collect for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen**

Reading: Luke 12:49-56

'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

He also said to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, "It is going to rain"; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, "There will be scorching heat"; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?'

'Reflection on the reading:

We might look at today's Gospel reading and say to ourselves "Oh my Goodness! What is all this talk of fire and division? What happened to our loving and gentle Jesus meek and mild?". The Bible says some hard things or things that appear to be hard and we should not just ignore them. Instead we are to wrestle with them, and come to understand them, and to seek to apply them, if we can, to today's world. People often say to me that they consider themselves Christian because they live a good life. I have even had someone say to me recently that "Christianity should only be about goodness and kindness and religion shouldn't come into it". The truth is simply being kind does not make anyone a Christian. You can be a kind Buddhist or a kind Moslem. It is believing in Christ, and studying and following the teaching that makes us Christian. Which brings me back to today's hard sayings, But I think they do make sense when we consider them all together. Jesus promised that after he returned to heaven he would leave us with a helper – the Holy Spirit. He talks of his baptism to come – his crucifixion perhaps? But I am also reminded of John the Baptist's words "I baptise you with water but the one who comes after me will baptise you the Holy Spirit and with fire". And most of all Jesus wants His Father's kingdom to come on earth. Jesus calls us to follow him, but he knows that following his less popular teachings may make us unpopular with our friends and family. An "ex-Hindu" friend of mine from university told me that when he converted to Christianity, on the day of his baptism his own family had a funeral service for him, and they never spoke again. So this is our challenge. Will we follow the obviously easy but hypocritical path that the world wants us to take, or the hard path of righteousness and truth that Jesus calls us too?

The Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Be still and pray: God of love, peace, justice and healing; we pray for all those in our benefice who are ill at this time, and those who are caring for them whether at home or in hospital; we pray for those struggling with rising cost of fuel and food, and who are fearful of how they may pay for tomorrow; we pray for our Government, distracted from national leadership by the election of a new prime minister; we pray for the people of Ukraine who fear what this day will bring; We pray that those in authority will seek peace and the laying down of weapons; we pray for all your precious children living at risk or in fear, that you would hold and protect them; We pray for all those who are on our hearts at this time.

Finish with The Lord's Prayer:

Conclusion

May God bless us and keep us, make his face to shine upon us, and give us his peace; **Amen**

Reverend Eddie