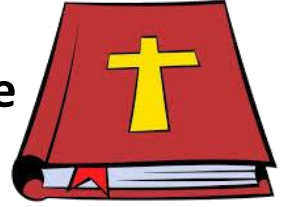


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
27 October 2024: Bible Sunday**



Anna has prepared our worship for today

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.

Blessed are you, Sovereign God, creator of all,
to you be glory and praise for ever.
You founded the earth in the beginning
and the heavens are the work of your hands.
In the fullness of time you made us in your image,
and in these last days you have spoken to us
in your Son Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.
As we rejoice in the gift of your presence among us
let the light of your love always shine in our hearts,
your Spirit ever renew our lives
and your praises ever be on our lips.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So let us turn
away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.
Lord God,
We have sinned against you;
We have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy upon us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
And restore to us the joy of your salvation;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the Father of all mercies
Cleanse us from our sins
And restore us in his image
To the praise and glory of his name
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessed is the Lord

For he has heard the voice of our prayer;

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy

And in our song will we praise our God.

Readings

New Testament Reading: 2 Timothy 3.14- 4.5

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

Thanks be to God for the gift of his word.

Canticle: A Song of David

**Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;
you are exalted as head over all.**

Blessed are you, God of Israel, for ever and ever, for yours is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty.

Everything in heaven and on earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head over all.

Riches and honour come from you and you rule over all.
In your hand are power and might;
yours it is to give power and strength to all.

And now we give you thanks, our God, and praise your glorious name.
For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

**Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;
you are exalted as head over all.**

Gospel Reading: John 5.36-end

But I have a testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form, and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent.

'You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?'

Thanks be to God for the gift of his Holy Word.

Reflection with Richard

The Bible is still the best-selling book in the world. In 2023 around 100 million were printed. It is estimated that it has sold around six billion copies. A Bible is sold every two seconds. I imagine that most households in the UK own a Bible and yet sadly many Bibles are not read at all.

So how often do you read your Bible?

If you join us for Morning, Evening or Night Prayer on the Benefice Facebook Channel then you will get a bit of the Old Testament and a bit of the New Testament each morning and evening, with a very short passage from the New Testament at Night Prayer.

If you go to our Benefice YouTube Channel (Just go to YouTube and search HWCDBenefice) you will find Richard reading quite a few books from the Bible to get you started.

It is a remarkable book, telling the story in the Old Testament of the relationship between God and the people who he chose to bless as a blessing to the world. In the New Testament we see that relationship develop when God comes to live among those people and to show them his great love which he tells them to live out among themselves and towards others.

And as the Gospel story concludes with the coming of the Holy Spirit and moves into the birth and life of the early Church we see how God continues to live among all people.

There are lots of different versions of the Bible, some are very traditional, like the King James Version or the Authorised Version. Some are a little more modern, but maintaining that traditional feel, like the New Revised Standard Anglicanised Version which we often use in our churches and written service sheets. Then there are ones which are made particularly for reading aloud or made easier to understand, like the Contemporary English Version, The Living Bible or The Message.

The most important thing though, is that whichever version we have, it is a book that we keep reading. Sometimes it is good to read a whole book. There are some great stories, like the Book of Acts, or the Books of Jonah and Ruth.

Some bits are more difficult, like Numbers or Revelation. But there are plenty of resources to help in our understanding. There are some wonderful videos for each book and on many Biblical themes at bibleproject.com which are a great way to strengthen our Bible knowledge while enjoying a cup of tea!

I'm not a great one for remembering many verses by heart. But there are a few which have stuck in my mind. Romans 5:8 says: "Even when we were still sinners, Christ died for us". It is a special encouragement to me about just what God's love is like. He did not wait for us to become good, or wait until we deserved it, but he died for it, even when we were still sinners. What a summary of the depth of God's love.

The other verse that comes to my mind is the reading which I do on Facebook most Fridays in Night Prayer. 1 Thessalonians 5:9,10: God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep, we may live with him." Again, it is a simple message about the hope we have in God.

I'm sure you have your favourite bits too. Enjoy finding them, reading them and finding hope in them!

Canticle: The Benedictus

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel
who has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us.
To show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath God swore to our father, Abraham;
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way.
To give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen

**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.**

Prayers of Intercessions with Judith Drake

As children of our heavenly Father,
trusting in his will and capacity to care for us all,
Let Us Pray

We thank you Lord for the precious gift of the Holy Scriptures, we give thanks
that the Word has been preserved and handed on through many generations.
The Bible can still surprise us, we can suddenly see new meaning to words we
have read a thousand times before. Guide us on our voyage of discovery as we
open the pages and hear the Living Word speaking to our hearts and minds.
In you, O Lord:
we put our trust

There are many troubled places in this world today. We pray for those suffering as a consequence of the decisions of others. For those living in war zones and fleeing their homes and countries, their lives disrupted by the evil of war. We pray for an end to all conflict and that there may be resolution, reconciliation and healing where there is anger and hurt.

In you, O Lord:

we put our trust

We pray that there may be food and shelter enough for each person on earth, and comfort and practical help for all in need. We pray for those who are suffering and distressed, in pain and in need of your healing. May they find a new inner peace, and even in the worst situations find hope and love.

In you, O Lord:

we put our trust.

We pray for the church throughout the world and for all in church leadership. Help us to see the kind of church you need today, and may we not lose sight of the many varied needs in our neighbourhood and the world beyond. We ask you to bless our local mission and outreach. We pray for all pastoral care in the Church, for the ministries of listening and counselling; the sharing of grief; the freeing from guilt. We pray for the grace to accompany others to Christ's healing love.

In you, O Lord:

we put our trust

We pray for all who mourn, and we pray for those they love and miss, commending all who have died to the everlasting arms of the God of love, in whom there is life in all its fullness.

Lord we thank you for the extent of your love which has no limits and no exceptions.

Merciful Father,

**Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Collect

Merciful God,

Teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty,

That trusting in your word and obeying your will

We may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on 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.**

Words of Praise

Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever. Bless the Lord you heavens:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord all people on earth:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
O people of God bless the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord you priests of the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord you servants of the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord all you of upright spirit:
bless the Lord you that are holy and humble in heart.

The Song of the Three 35-37, 60-65

**Bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
May the peace of God which passes all understanding, Keep our hearts and
minds in Christ Jesus. The peace of the Lord be always with us.
The Lord bless us and preserve us from all evil And keep us in eternal life.
Amen. Let us bless the Lord. Thanks be to God.**