



SUNDAY 25th OCTOBER,

BIBLE SUNDAY

We're now able to meet in church for worship but for those of you who prefer to wait or if you're not able to be with us for whatever reason this outline will help you have a short time of worship in your home. To prepare, choose a place where you can sit comfortably and if you have them, gather a few things that will help you create a sacred space – we suggest a cross, Bible and candle.



INTRODUCTION

We keep the Last Sunday in Trinity as Bible Sunday, giving thanks for the record we have in Holy Scripture. In her reflection, Jan speaks about discovering more about the Bible in our Lent and Advent groups and how that helped our understanding of the story of our faith.

I first became fascinated by the Bible when I studied for A-levels and then carried on in college as part of my theology degree. It has never lost that power to hold my attention. Throughout my ministry, I have continued to research and study the passages set for our readings, as background to my preaching.

I never became fluent in the languages of the Bible: I didn't have the opportunity to study Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, and only did a little Greek, for New Testament studies. A true scholar would always read a text in its original language! So I have to make do with commentaries written by those who do.

The second essential is to learn something about the original context of a passage, as far as that can be discovered. That gives a sense of the first meanings, which set us on the path to our own understanding.

Even though all the writings date from so long ago we still find something in them for us today, in our very different lives and expectations. But our hopes and fears are not so different from those Jews and Christians who were the writers and readers of the books of the Bible. We still seek God and his will for us. We still yearn to worship and serve him. We still look to the pages of Scripture for the light to guide us.

Sermons are supposed to help us all see what the message is for today. You who listen to sermons have your own view as to how successful the preachers you have heard are in that. I would be glad if my sermons gave you only one thing to think about. God will do the rest!

Revd Jan

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**

CONFESSION

Let us take time to reflect on the last week and say sorry to God for the things we have done or not done.



Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.

We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen

GLORIA



Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ only Son of the Father,

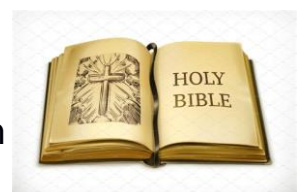
Lord God Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy upon us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COLLECT

Blessed Lord, who caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:

help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word, we may embrace them and forever hold fast the hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,



who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

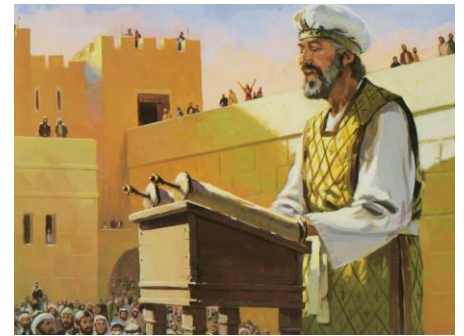


OLD TESTAMENT READING Nehemiah 8 1-4, 8-12

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel.

Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month.

He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.



The scribe Ezra stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand; and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hash-baddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand.

So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.'

So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, 'Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved.' And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

NEW TESTAMENT READING Colossians 3, 12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord* has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ* dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.*

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



GOSPEL MATTHEW 24, 30-35

Hear the Gospel of Christ according to Matthew –**Glory to you O Lord**



Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see “the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven” with power and great glory. And he will send out angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

“ From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

This is the Gospel of the Lord – **Praise to you O Christ.**

REFLECTION

Today we are celebrating Bible Sunday and thinking about that very special book that tells us everything about our faith, told from the experiences of lots of different people from different backgrounds. Indeed it is really a library of books from different authors, rather than one individual book.

Books are wonderful things, they can give us hard facts and knowledge, they can give us freedom to escape the realities of life and let our imaginations run wild or can give us hope, relaxation and peace of mind. I think the Bible can also do all of those things.

How often have we read a book and imagined the place it is set, the characters and have a dream in our heads of the visual story. We then sometimes get to see a film that it is based on and sometimes it's very different and sometimes very disappointing because it is not how we imagined it. The Bible was done the other way round and the real life was acted out first and then we read about all the wonderful and horrific things that took place. However the Bible gives us a diary of events and witness statements and the New Testament then gives us this wonderful commentary of God's message coming to us through Jesus.

The readings reinforce this message, in Nehemiah it tells of Nehemiah the governor asking Ezra the priest and scribe to read out God's word to the people. Of course only selected people could read so the practice of reading to the everyday person was vital, he cleared things up for them and they understood what they were supposed to do and went away happy that they were doing the right thing for God. The New Testament reading is showing how the word of Christ told to the Colossians taught them forgiveness and harmony and the importance of looking after one another.

The gospel reading tells us of getting ready for the coming of God's kingdom and the reference to the fig tree, a common fruit tree of Israel, often used as a symbol of Israel, got ready for summer showing signs of change, this likened the tree to us getting ready for change in that we must prepare and always be ready for the Kingdom of God, it talks about a generation passing away but scholars often think that the generation is not talking about that age but of us as a race.

Today we think of the words of God from the Bible, we weren't there to hear them so we have to rely on what was written and hope that unlike the films of other books we have read that there has not been any changes to make them more interesting. Indeed it is still the case that we need our scholars and clergy to help us understand the true meaning of what is being said so that we can get it right. Our Lent and Advent groups were really interesting because we read a story and then discussed the characters and actions and tried to understand all the different meanings that can be interpreted. It was fascinating how often we got different messages and ideas. Hopefully we can set these up again at a later date, I personally found them really helpful and inspiring.

God's spoken words in the Bible bring creation into being and through Jesus' teachings and actions they show us as humans how we can fulfil God's expectations of us.

Stay safe and keep in touch, I hope you are finding our services helpful and you still feel connected, we are thinking of you.

Jan B.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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; 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 INTERCESSION

During the intercessions, we pray for the church, our country, our government, people in difficulty and those who have died. You can use your own prayers or if you *prefer here are some on today's theme.*



In the power of the Holy Spirit and in Union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Loving God we give thanks for the fellowship of the church and for all who have taught us the faith. We pray for preachers and teachers, for evangelists and Bible translators. We ask your blessing on all our church groups that are unable to worship and learn together and thank you for all those who are finding new ways to

reach out and keep us together. We pray for our church and team and all clergy and lay ministers who help us learn and understand your word.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our Prayer**

Loving God we give thanks for all who reveal your love and care through dedicated lived. We ask your blessing upon all those who work among the deprived and under privileged peoples of the world. We remember all who seek to bring peace and unity to communities and nations. We pray for the homeless and those in need.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Loving God, we give thanks for all who have shown us love and care. We ask your blessing upon our homes and loved ones. We remember all who are separated from their loved ones through illness or circumstance. We pray especially for the lonely and any who feel unloved.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Loving God, we thank you for all who reveal you love through working in the healing professions. We pray for nurses and doctors and remember our own hospitals and health centres that are coming under increased pressure again, give them the strength to carry on. We ask your blessing on all who are ill or suffering (add your own names here) especially those who have no one to care for them.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear your prayer**

Loving God, we give you thanks for the gift of eternal life. We rejoice in the fellowship of St. Maxentius and all our saints and ask your blessing upon all our loved ones departed. May we share with them in the fullness and glory of your kingdom.

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER



**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.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from
evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are
yours**

now and forever. Amen

THE BLESSING

The Lord bless us and watch over us, the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us, the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace; and blessing of God almighty the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord – **In the name of Christ. Amen**

