

## **Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton and Hollybush**



### **Second Sunday before Advent**

***Welcome-do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready***

The Lord be with you  
and also with you

### **HYMN**

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

**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 Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF PENITENCE AND ABSOLUTION**

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins, in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,  
in thought and word and deed,**

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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.**

Almighty God,  
who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,  
forgive you your sins,  
open your eyes to God's truth,  
strengthen you to do God's will  
and give you the joy of his kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **THE COLLECT**

Heavenly Lord,  
you long for the world's salvation:  
stir us from apathy,  
restrain us from excess  
and revive in us new hope  
that all creation will one day be healed  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

**READING : 1 Thessalonians 5.1-11  
Matthew 25:14-30**

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

***(Please read Zephaniah 1.7, 12 to end at home)***

## **REFLECTION**

In our text today, apostle Paul deals with one of the most powerful and amazing things about the Word of God - its power to renew and encourage us to witness--to wake up and believe! It becomes light in the

midst of darkness! The words dark and starless and night are quite a contrast from the bright and morning star of Christ!

In his message to the Thessalonians, Paul's bold and light-bearing witness and preaching is a reminder to remember the gospel in the midst of prevailing gossip! His was refusing to be dimmed or discouraged by darkness or even death threats.

He encouraged them to keep going Paul keeps the Thessalonians focused on what they **can** know rather than what they **cannot** know. They can know that Jesus **is** coming, but they cannot know the Day of The Lord! Even Jesus told the disciples that such knowledge was unknown even to him.

What do you make of this text and times today?

In these times, we need a saviour and an anchor.

I believe it suggests to us that we too are people of the light. To wake up and believe. To be not afraid of the world's darkness and to anchor ourselves knowing that the Lord is our light and our salvation.

God has given everyone an abundance of gifts and talents, clusters of abilities, aptitudes, and resources. Many of your most precious gifts are qualities and resources which have been developed over time. We know that God wants us to use these gifts.

What are the talents that God has given to you?

How do we ascertain and use our gifts?

We rarely discover our gifts in isolation. Other people help you discover your gifts; may be parents, teachers, coaches, instructors, friends and others.

We need to accept these gifts and not to be envious of gifts we do not have.

God seeks for you to appreciate those gifts and develop them through hard work and the investment of time. Any talented musician, mechanic, sports etc. person needs to exercise their talents through a lot of commitment.

By offering our gifts for the benefit of others-we accomplish God's mission and service in this world, as they then become blessings for all.

In Matthew, this parable is another example of Jesus choosing the common and ordinary things of life as a teaching vehicle of his Godly truth.

According to the best Biblical scholars, the value of one talent was the average salary income for three years.

All three were given good gifts, talents and resources. Each slave was entrusted with capital according to his ability. Jesus, the storyteller, was aware of differing people having differing abilities.

We all know that God has given each one of us differing gifts, as represented by the varying talents that God has given to each person.

The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. The slaves doubled their money. Both people realized that their master and owner had given them resources and they were both to use these resources to benefit their master.

But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Here is the problem. By hiding the gift, he was somehow fearful and embarrassed that God gave him only one talent.

God has been generous to all of us, including those who feel that God has not given them sufficient gifts. Even so, we as human beings can bury treasures/resources that God has given us. We can minimize God's gifts to us and complain, "I have been given *only one* talent." God's gifts are always generous. Even the one talent gift was a generous gift.

After a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. This was a fundamental issue for the early Christian church; the delay of the Second Coming and what to do about it. Jesus warned the disciples that the delay of his Second Coming may be a long time but to be industrious with their talents.

You can sense the joy and pleasure in the servant's heart as he brings the five other talents forward to show the master.

We hear Jesus' words, "To whom much is entrusted, from that person much more will be demanded." In politics, business, medicine, education, sports, church and in every area of life, there are exceptionally gifted people who have been entrusted with inordinate gifts. Jesus taught that much more will be demanded/expected/insisted of these people.

His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master."

Salvation is a free gift, undeserved and unearned. Knowing that we are saved by God's grace, we then "do" the works that God wants us to do, not to merit salvation but because God has filled our hearts with love and our actions with compassion.

Those two servants hear those ringing words of affirmation, "Well done good and faithful servant. Receive the crown of glory."

Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." The servant fears God and by not being faithful, find excuses to blame God.

We human beings are often the same today, blaming God or circumstances for the fact that we did not use our God given gifts.

The Lord God does exercise judgment and punishment here. The owner takes the talent away and gives it to the one who had ten talents. Perhaps the more gifts/resources/abilities that God has given to you, the more that life requires of you.

By throwing him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matthew consistently is using phrases about hell, in contrast to eternal life.

This parable signposts us to using whatever we have been given for God's purposes. To invest our skills and abilities, our wealth and resources in whatever sphere we can. The implication being that we use our talents the best of our ability for God's glory, and when we have done that, we are a blessing for others and trustworthy servants of God. **Amen.**

## **HYMN**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*Please ask for any additional prayers*

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

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us.

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

## **THE PEACE**

We are all one in Christ Jesus.  
We belong to him through faith, heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.

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

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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

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.

## THE THANKSGIVING PRAYER

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts  
**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation.  
 You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.  
 His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.  
 And so we gladly thank you, with saints and angels 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.  
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
 Hosanna, in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
 And as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit  
 that broken bread and wine outpoured  
 may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

**Here is the table set for a special meal.**

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and taking  
 bread, he praised you.  
 He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
 Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
 Do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took a cup of wine.  
 Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
 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.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
 in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once upon the cross.  
 Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
 We proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith  
**Christ has died:**  
**Christ is risen:**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
 Help us work together for that day  
 When your kingdom comes  
 And justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

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Look with favour on your people,  
 Gather into your loving arms with St Faith, St John the Baptist, St  
 Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul and all the Saints to  
 feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
 for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

**Jesus, Lamb of God**

**have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, bearer of our sins,**

**have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, redeemer of the world,**

**grant us peace.**

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

**Therefore let us keep the feast**

**(consume)**

## **POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

Gracious Lord,  
 in this holy sacrament  
 you give substance to our hope:  
 bring us at the last  
 to that fullness of life for which we long;  
 through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**Amen.**

**We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us**

**in this physical and spiritual sacrament,**

**united us with Christ,**

**and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all  
 peoples.**

**Amen.**

## **HYMN**

## THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

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 sin of the world:  
 have mercy on 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 BLESSING

May the father from whom every family  
 in earth and heaven receives its name  
 strengthen you with his Spirit  
 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts;  
 and the blessing of God almighty,  
 the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
 be among you, now and forever.  
 Amen.

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