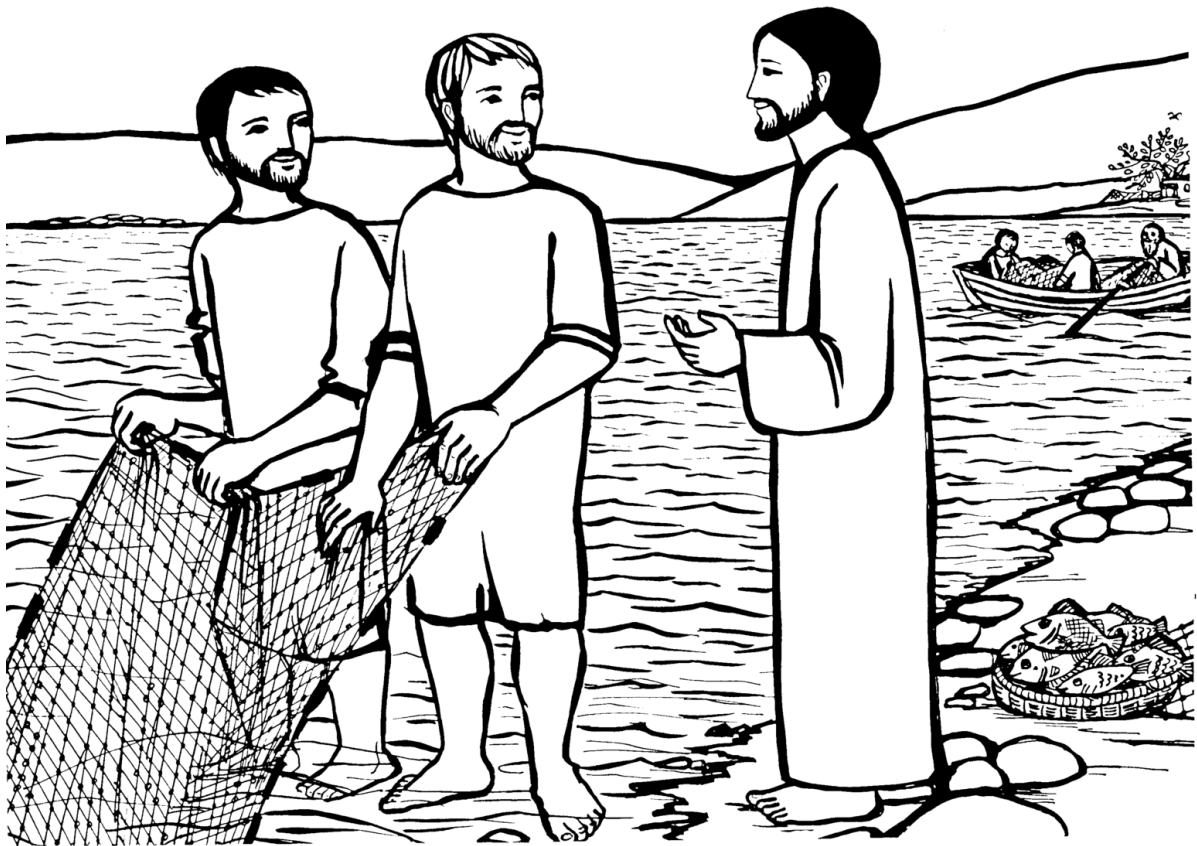


United Benefice of Berrow with Pendock Eldersfield, Hollybush and Birtsmorton



Holy Communion
for the Sundays after Trinity

THE WELCOME

Do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready

THE FIRST HYMN

The Lord be with you
and also with you

**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.**

THE CONFESSION 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.

(There will be a time of silence for reflection before we say the Confession together.)

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

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 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 WORD OF GOD

THE COLLECT

**Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid
and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.**

THE READINGS: Joshua 24: 4-9a, 14-18, Ephesians 6: 10-20

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

THE GOSPEL READING: John 6:56-69

**Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *N.*
Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the end of the reading:

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

THE SERMON

Decisions, choices. It seems life is full of them.

If God's having chosen us -how do continue to be faithful to Him?

Joshua had grown old, under his faithful and wise leadership, the Israelite tribes had entered the Promised Land. They had been successful in their military campaigns against the Canaanites. The Israelites had occupied the Promised Land and the land had been allocated to the various tribes.

However, Joshua knew as God's faithful servant that there were dangers with this settled way of life. It could cause the people to become indifferent towards God and their commitment to him.

Joshua called them together, to renew the covenant between God and the Israelite tribes and reinforce their identity and unity. Joshua sets the example before the people—to serve God. The people remember how God had delivered and protected and provided for them. Then they promise to serve God and the covenant renewal ceremony is completed by Joshua.

In our faith and life journey, we too can run into decisions, dangers and temptations. We, like Joshua and the Israelites of old need to remember where we've been, where we are now, and where we're going.

Jesus makes that quite clear that for the Israelites and us, that have been called, loved, and forgiven by God. We have been assured that Jesus is still with us always. Do we take that too much for granted? Do we divide our commitments and our loyalties? Or do we, like Joshua and the Israelites say: "We will serve the Lord"?

Each day, we are given the opportunity to remember whose we are, who we are, where we are, where we are going and who to get there.

One quality that we don't like about us as human beings is our human willingness to engage in war. War is common and familiar, throughout all of our history.

When I think of armour, I normally think of King Arthur and his court. I think of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in France, Germany and England where armour was so highly developed.

Everyone who ever wore such a suit of armour put on all the pieces of armour. The Apostle Paul is advising and motivating us to put on the whole armour of God, to use all the resources we have to protect ourselves from the cunning onslaughts of the power of evil who is keenly aware of where we are vulnerable.

So, how to do apply Paul's lesson and analogy about the armour to us ?

First, we are living in a battlefield. The Bible says that we are fighting with an evil force greater than ourselves, the very powers of darkness. Who causes all the many atrocities in our human history? It certainly isn't God who has caused all these enormous devastation around the globe. The power of evil is insidious, global, and there is no place to escape it.

Paul suggests a type of battle plan for Christians. It is wise to put on the whole armour of God each day. Paul then lists seven pieces of armour, seven qualities we can benefit from. The number seven is symbolic of wholeness, the full suit of armour. Paul talks about standing up against the powers of darkness.

First, put on the belt of truth, strong, wide and protective. Truth in all our relationships, about God and God's love. The truth about ourselves. To live truthfully.

Then, put on breastplate of righteousness. To have right and healthy relationships with everyone.

Then put on foot protectors of peace. Not to be looking for a fight, but to work through the legitimate conflicts that are always found between people and nations and ethnic grounds. To be a peacemaker in all our relationships.

Then, put on the shield of faith. To trust God, to trust that God is with you, to strengthen you for every situation that you are facing.

Then, put on the helmet of salvation. The gift of being saved and eternal life are a gift from God.

Put on the sword of the Spirit that is the power in the Bible, the Word of God. God's words are living words, intended to live in us. A constant resource so we can learn from God's words.

And finally, last but not least is "praying in the Spirit," in the remembrance of all these gifts from God.

Even with whole armour and our inner heart, the darts of the devil still get through and wound us. We are most at risk when we are vulnerable, to wound us but not destroy us. There are many stumbling blocks in our lives. These wounds but never can kill us, for that is God's promise.

So, the Apostle Paul suggests that we should not run away from the battles with the powers of darkness and evil. These qualities actually can be found in the armoury. You can pick the qualities up daily and learn to use them by putting on the armour of God.

We talked about the 'I am statements last week' and the metaphor or images that were startling and challenging to his followers even then: of the bread and the wine. In Hebrew the 'flesh and blood' means the 'whole person', body and soul. Today, there seems to be wide consensus in both Protestant and Roman Catholic circles that the manner and means of Christ's presence in the bread and wine cannot be captured in one explanation. Sacraments are important, in part, because they take us where words

cannot go. Christ's presence is real in this sacrament of the Holy Communion, but the manner and means of that presence may remain mysteries to us forever.

If we focus intently on the words of Jesus, we can believe that the words of Jesus are spirit and life. Jesus' words feed our inner spirit. Jesus' words nourish life within us and our belief in eternal life. It is the ultimate communion--the coming together, the union of the Saviour and the saved.

People of faith do not find themselves immune to times of disaster and challenges. Following Jesus entails some risk, having values that are counter cultural. Each day, as we put the armour of God into place, remember where we've been, where we are now, and where we're going.

Amen

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 PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

At the end of the prayers:

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

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

**As the grain once scattered in the fields
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
are now reunited on this table in the bread and wine,
so, Lord, may your whole church
soon be gathered together from the corners of the earth
into your kingdom. Amen.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Let us pray

Father, we give you thanks and praise
through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word,
through whom you have created all things;
who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin,
he lived on earth and went about among us;
he opened wide his arms for us on the cross;
he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy 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.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
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.

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

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company of [N and] all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

**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.**

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast

(consume)

THE PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

God of all mercy,
in this eucharist you have set aside our sins
and given us your healing:
grant that we who are made whole in Christ
may bring that healing to this broken world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
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.**

THE FINAL HYMN

THE BLESSING

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

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