

Worship at Home

The Third Sunday After Trinity

Preparation

O Lord, open our lips

All and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

- 1 Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 2 Bless the Lord you heavens: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 3 Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 4 Bless the Lord all people on earth: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 5 O people of God bless the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 6 Bless the Lord you priests of the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 7 Bless the Lord you servants of the Lord: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
- 8 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

All Bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: ♦
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

This opening prayer may be said

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

All Amen.

The Word of God

Psalm 13

Prayer for Deliverance from Enemies

1 How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

2 How long must I bear pain^a in my soul,

and have sorrow in my heart all day long?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

3 Consider and answer me, O LORD my God!

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,

4 and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";

my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

5 But I trusted in your steadfast love;

my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

6 I will sing to the LORD,

because he has dealt bountifully with me.

**All 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.**

Bible Reading Genesis 22 verses 1-14

22 After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." ³ So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the

donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.”⁶ Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?”⁸ Abraham said, “God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together.

⁹ When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill^[a] his son.¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”¹² He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.”

¹³ And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.¹⁴ So Abraham called that place “The LORD will provide”;^[b] as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.”^[c]

Bible Reading : Romans 6 verses 12-end

¹² Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions.¹³ No longer present your members to sin as instruments^[a] of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments^[b] of righteousness.¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵ What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?¹⁷ But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted,¹⁸ and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations.^[c] For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

²⁰ When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.²¹ So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death.²² But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life.²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Canticle

Splendour and majesty are yours, O God;

you are exalted as head over all.

1 Blessed are you, God of Israel, for ever and ever, ♦

for yours is the greatness, the power,

the glory, the splendour and the majesty.

- 2 Everything in heaven and on earth is yours; ♦
yours is the kingdom, O Lord,
and you are exalted as head over all.
- 3 Riches and honour come from you ♦
and you rule over all.
- 4 In your hand are power and might; ♦
yours it is to give power and strength to all.
- 5 And now we give you thanks, our God, ♦
and praise your glorious name.
- 6 For all things come from you, ♦
and of your own have we given you.

1 Chronicles 29.10b-13,14b

**All 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.**

Scripture Reading

⁴⁰ “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴² and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

A time of silence.

Sermon

Last week was Fathers’ day and, when I realised that one of the Old Testament readings this week was the story of Abraham and Isaac, it got me thinking about the dynamics of the relationships exposed in that story. I’ve often thought about the immensity of it and tried to comprehend it from the different angles: what were each of them thinking: God, Abraham and Isaac? How did each of them feel about what they were asking or what was being asked of them. I’ve even wondered, without being facetious, what Sarah said when she found out the truth of what happened on that journey, especially when we consider that Isaac was Abraham and Sarah’s longed for son and heir, conceived in their twilight years.

From whichever aspect you look at it, the scene set on Mount Moriah is a dark, challenging and disturbing story. One of extreme loyalty and trust, of testing, both Abraham’s in God, and

Isaac's in Abraham; tested beyond any reasonable limits, even by Old Testament standards. But to help understand it we have to consider an earlier sacrifice he made.

He'd already lost faith waiting for God more than once- but especially when God promised him a son and it wasn't happening. He became father of Ishmael by Hagar- through Sarah's offer of her slave girl. It seems she later regretted that choice, or was consumed by jealousy, because her subsequent treatment of Hagar is harsh, and cruel. And in the end, following Isaac's birth, with Ishmael about 14 years older, Abraham accedes to Sarah's demand that Hagar and Ishmael are banished, into the wilderness. Where, with Abraham's provisions, and the providence of another angel, they survive to be part of the later story.

And so back to Mount Moriah, where Abraham appears to be totally submissive in this story. It has left a deep imprint on the Jewish, Muslim and the Christian faiths to even consider that Abraham would have been prepared to go so far as to sacrifice his precious son. The son who was God's gift to him and his ageing, previously barren, wife. Other faiths prevalent at the time, had allowed or demanded human or child sacrifices, but never the followers of Yahweh, Jehovah. But more shocking to me is this image of Abraham and Isaac as passive actors in this drama, captured by many artists over the years. Few of them portraying the raw emotions expected in such a scenario.

In 2 Sam: 24.24 we hear, "I will not offer to the Lord my God whole offerings that have cost me nothing". But as we know, ultimately the sacrifice of his son was not called for, as angelic intervention ensured a ram was provided, Abraham had seemingly 'passed' a test of faith, and Isaac was released. The offering of his son returned to him unharmed, also represented the death of pride, ambition and, from those things of the self, freedom. His response was to give thanks, and as in earlier encounters with God, portrayed in Genesis, the place was named. Mount Moriah became known as the place 'The Lord will provide' tying its significance into the greater story through the meaning of the name. Although however you view it, it's a pretty tough test to put the son through and that's why the early Christians likened this to an early signpost of what God himself would offer the world through his beloved son, Jesus. As NT Wright says, "The Lord will provide, said Abraham; Christianity began in the basis that he has, finally and fully".

So, what can this tell us for today about God, how can we comprehend or want a relationship with the God we meet here or understand what we might be called to offer of ourselves in the light of this reading?

It brings to mind a prayer I once prayed on retreat at All Hallows, Ditchingham saying, "anything I'll do anything" but simultaneously internally asking that I not be asked to witness through the loss of one or both of my sons. And as it turned out we had a pretty awful challenge of our own to face, just not the one I had been most worried about at that earlier time. And in and through that time, and time after time, God has provided.

But there are those who have suffered such a loss and have still found the faith and the grace to turn toward, to turn in to, rather than away, from God at that time of such deep and searing loss. Who simply said that if they had turned away from God, then they truly would have lost everything.

So as I write, rather than see the bleakness and the fear behind this story, I hear the haunting, beautiful strains of Tavener's "The Lamb" calling us beyond our fear of the demanding God portrayed in this story to remember that he will, as he always has, provide for us through himself, His Son and the Holy Spirit. I invite you, if you're willing, to journey on as companions together, further and further, with the God of Abraham; because there is always more to learn of this life changing Love.

As TS Eliot wrote in Little Gidding:

"We shall not cease from exploration

And at the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
and Know it for the first time...
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flames are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the Rose are one”

I conclude with these familiar words of the BCP: Here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto thee.

Amen.

Reverend Judy miller

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

All And Christ shall give you light.

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

All Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

Set your minds on things that are above,
not on things that are on the earth.

All And Christ shall give you light.

When Christ our life appears
you will appear with him in glory.

**All Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give you light.**

from Colossians 3

Gospel Canticle

**You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of your servant David.**

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, ♦
who has come to his people and set them free. ♦
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, ♦
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old ♦
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,

- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors, ♦
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: ♦
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear, ♦
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, ♦
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God ♦
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, ♦
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Luke 1.68–79

**All 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.**

All
**You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of your servant David.**

Prayers

That this day may be holy, good and joyful:

All we pray to you, O Lord.

That we may offer to you our worship and our work:

All we pray to you, O Lord.

That we may strive for the well-being of all creation:

All we pray to you, O Lord.

That in the pleasures and pains of life,
we may know the love of Christ and be thankful:

All we pray to you, O Lord.

That we may be bound together by your Holy Spirit,
in communion with [N and with] all your saints,
entrusting one another and all our life to Christ:

All we pray to you, O Lord.

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Silence may be kept.

The Collect of the day

Almighty God,

you have broken the tyranny of sin

and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts

whereby we call you Father:

Give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,

that we and all creation may be brought

to the glorious liberty of the children of God;

through Jesus Christ you Son our Lord.

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

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.

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

All Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

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