

Sunday 22nd November 2020 WORSHIP AT HOME
GOSPEL Matthew 25.31-46 The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats
Welcome to our act of Worship for the Sunday before Advent

Call to worship Mark 12v29-31

²⁹Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."³¹The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.'

A Prayer of Approach

We come to you,
people who are hungry,
people who are thirsty,
strangers, imprisoned, exposed,
knowing that you have come to us, too,
in these same guises.
In our brokenness, welcome us.
And open up our defences as we come to you,
O Lord of many guises. **Amen.**

HYMN

T Theodoric

God is love: His the care,
Tending each, everywhere.
God is love, all is there!
Jesus came to show him,
That we all might know Him!

Sing aloud, loud, loud!
Sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good! God is truth!
God is beauty! Praise Him!

None can see God above;
We can share life and love;
Thus may we Godward move,
Seek him in creation,
Holding every nation.

Jesus lived on the earth,
Life and hope brought to birth
And affirmed human worth,
For He came to save us
By the truth He gave us.

To our Lord praise we sing,
Light and life, friend and King,
Coming down, love to bring,
Pattern for our duty,
Showing God in beauty.

HP220, MP, RS274, STF403

(Some of the hymn books widely used in the
Wiltshire United Area)

Prayers of Praise

Glory be to you, Lord God, King of the universe;
Glory be to you, Lord God, dwelling in light and
majesty;
Glory be to you, Lord God, giver of light and life.
Glory be to you from the company of heaven who
see you face to face;
Glory be to you from your people on earth who
have seen your salvation.
Glory be to you, Lord God; through Jesus Christ our
Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession you may wish to pray this
twice changing the plural into singular

Truly, we say to you that we have seen the broken
and have not been moved to compassion.
Truly, we say to you that we have heard people
mourning and have not given them our time.
Truly, we say to you that we have witnessed
oppression and have not raised our voices.
Truly, we say to you that we have seen the
stranger and not said a word.

**God, hiding in all strangers, all around us,
we are truly sorry for what we have done,
and what we have not done.
And we ask you to deepen your welcome in us,
so that we might deepen our welcome around us.
Amen.**

HYMN

T Kelvingrove

Will you come and follow me
If I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
And never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown?
Will you let my name be known
Will you let my life be grown in you
And you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind
If I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
And never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you
And you in me?

Will you let the blinded see
If I but call your name?

Will you set the prisoners free
And never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
And do such as this unseen
And admit to what I mean in you
And you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide
If I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
And never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around
Through my sight and touch and sound in you
And you in me?

Lord your summons echoes true
When you but call my name
Let me turn and follow you
And never be the same
In Your company I'll go
Where Your love and footsteps show
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you
And you in me

HP-, MP-, RS558, STF673

Ministry of the Word of God

RCL Proper 29 Year A

Ezekiel 34.11-16,20-24; Psalm 95.1-7a; Ephesians 1.15-23; **Matthew 25.31-46**

31 'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, "You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for

the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me." ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?" ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me." ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'

This is the Gospel of Christ.
Praise to Christ our Lord.

Reflection

Last year we spent a day at Lynton and Lynmouth taking in the Valley of Rocks: famous for its unique cricket ground, being a location in RD Blackmore's classic Lorna Doone and of course the feral goats. From having lived in North Devon it is very much sheep country, but not the valley.

Sheep and goats ... even today they regularly graze together in the Middle East but at night need to be separated so that the goats, being less hardy can be kept warm.

³²He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats..'

This was not so much a story that Jesus told—like the parables—it was more of a teaching discourse.

This passage is uncomfortable because of its relevance to impinge on contemporary situations. This passage is uncomfortable because it shows how easily we can be wrong when we imagine or believe we are right!

This passage is uncomfortable because there is no getting away from asking the question of oneself "Sheep or Goat?" And it expects a truthful answer!

This parable is deeply personal! Always it challenges: "Where is Christ in YOUR attitude/response?" We need to remember that God is found in the unexpected – not least of people! The key is verse 40, **"whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."** It strikes a parallel with the call to worship (Luke 10v27).

It reminds of other parables Jesus told like of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector when the one who

thought he was justified was not and the one who believed himself almost beyond redemption was redeemed. (Luke 18 :9-14) It has similarities to the Rich Man and Lazarus in that the time to repent, the time to care for the poor on one's doorstep, is past – now is the time to be called to account! (Luke 16:19–31)

Sheep and Goats.

This is not simply a “judgement/justice” parable. It is not simply about obligations but also about the personal support we should experience when we find ourselves in a “valley of rocks” when we are in vulnerable situations - let us be honest, many of us have felt traits of this parable during Lockdown.

We tend to forget that our actions change others—for good or ill—not just those we might help, but those who witness our reaching out - or holding back. There is the sense, in the passage, that the actions of those who ministered to the needy encouraged others to stretch out a helping hand ‘contagious compassion.’ While those who withheld kindness laid a common path for the community surrounding them towards hostility, fear and isolation.

No matter how much we mourn the loss of the church’s place in society, it is clear that there is still an important element of interest in the actions that we promote and undertake as a community of Christians. Within and outside Church we are called to show kindness. Community is sharing together and influencing each other. That is living out the image of God in us.

Some “rules for Christian living” by John Wesley:

“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”

Prayer of Response

Dear Lord,
I am both sheep and goat,
loving and selfish, caring and complacent.
Take the best of me,
and shape it into that which can serve you and my
community
with more passion,
more commitment and more humility,

knowing my frailties,
but rejoicing in your strength. **Amen.**

HYMN *T Servant Song*
Brother, sister, let me serve you,
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
And companions on the road;
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,
When you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven
We shall find such harmony
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
Let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant, too.

HP, MP, RS474, STF611

Our Prayers

God in whom everything lives and moves
and has its being,
teach us to serve others,
as we serve you.

We pray for the hungry,
for those who cannot afford food,
and for places where there is no food to buy.
Teach us to serve others,
as we serve you.

We pray for the thirsty,
for those who cannot find water,
for where there is no water that is safe to drink.
Teach us to serve others,
as we serve you.

We pray for strangers,
for immigrants and refugees,
for the lonely and dispossessed.
Teach us to serve others,
as we serve you.

We pray for those without the basics of our lives,
for those who cannot clothe their children,
for the places where children make the clothes we
wear.
Teach us to serve others,
as we serve you.

We pray for those unwell and their carers,
for those who could be healed if medicine was
affordable,
for the deceased and their families
and friends who mourn their loss.
Teach us to serve others,
as we serve you.

We pray for prisoners,
for those coming to terms with the nature of their
crimes,
For those wrongfully imprisoned
and prisoners of conscience.
Teach us to serve others,
as we serve you.
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.**

HYMN *T All for Jesus*

All for Jesus, all for Jesus,
this our song shall ever be;
for we have no hope, nor Saviour,
if we have not hope in thee.

All for Jesus, thou wilt give us
strength to serve thee, hour by hour,

none can move us from thy presence,
while we trust thy love and power.

All for Jesus thou hast loved us;
all for Jesus thou hast died;
all for Jesus thou art with us;
all for Jesus crucified.

All for Jesus, all for Jesus,
this the Church's song must be;
till, at last, we all are gathered
one in love and one in thee.

HP251, MP, RS, STF341

Blessing and Dismissal *you may wish to pray this
twice changing the plural into singular.*

Go in peace to serve the Lord.

Feed the hungry: **we will.**

Refresh those who thirst: **we will.**

Welcome the stranger: **we will.**

Provide for those in need: **we will.**

Care for those who are ill: **we will.**

Remember the imprisoned: **we will.**

For, truly, just as you serve
the least of Christ's sisters and brothers,
you are serving our Lord Jesus Christ.

Go in peace to serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Rev David Coppard Superintendent @ Wiltshire
United Area
Bank Chaplain @ Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton

Our churches may not be open, but the Church is active.

*This is service is offered to any and all, with love
and prayers.*

Reflection for the week

Sheep and Goats, Sheep and goats— are they
really so different? How can we tell? How would
we know? And which are we? Will we find
ourselves on the right side or the left? With the
blessed or the cursed? What separates us and how
would we fare? A cup of cold water, a scrap of
food, some hand-me-downs we can spare; these
separate us, sheep from goats. Offering friendship,
or a visit to the sick; for these trifles, God calls us
blessed, by these trifles God separates the sheep
from the goats.

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