

The Rectorial Benefice of the East Vale
Morning Prayer
Sunday 15th November, 2020 | Kingdom 3

Hymn

From heav'n you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled;
not to be served but to serve,
and give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours,' he said.

This is our God, the Servant King...

Come see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice;
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God, the Servant King...

So let us learn how to serve,
and in our lives enthrone him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.

*This is our God, the Servant King
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King*

The Gloria

Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father.
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

We worship you,
glory in the highest,
give you thanks,
glory in the highest,
praise you for your glory.

**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

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,
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer,
receive our prayer.

Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

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 glory of God the Father.

**Glory to God, glory in the highest,
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Amen. **Amen.**

The Collect

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; grant this for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, to whom with you and the Holy Spirit, be the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

First Reading (Zephaniah 1.7, 12-18)

A reading from the book of the prophet Zephaniah.

Be silent before the Lord God! For the day of the Lord is at hand; the Lord has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests. At that time, I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, 'The Lord will not do good, nor will he do harm.' Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them. The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the Lord is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin

and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the Lord, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the Lord's wrath; in the fire of his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

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

Responsorial Psalm

(Psalm 90.1-8)

R/ O Lord my God, in you I take refuge.

Lord, you have been our refuge from one generation to another. Before the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the world were formed, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. **R/**

You turn us back to dust and say: "Turn back, O children of earth." For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday, which passes like a watch in the night. **R/**

You sweep them away like a dream; they fade away suddenly like the grass. In the morning it is green and flourishes; in the evening it is dried up and withered. **R/**

For we consume away in your displeasure, we are afraid at your wrathful indignation. You have set our misdeeds before you and our secret sins in the light of your countenance. **R/**

Second Reading

(1 Thessalonians 5.1-11)

A reading from Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians.

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we

may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The Gospel

(Matthew 25.14-30)

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give thanks to the risen Lord.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Give praise to his name.

**Jesus is Lord of all the earth,
he is the king of creation.**

Alleluia! Alleluia!...

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Listen to the gospel of Christ
according to Saint Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'It is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 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. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." 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." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." 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." 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." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what

they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

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

**Spread the good news o'er all the earth,
Jesus has died and risen.
Alleluia! Alleluia!...**

The Homily

Rev'd Angela

In both our gospel and epistle this morning we are called to 'Be Alert', for the coming of the Kingdom, the end time. Jesus and Paul imply that we will not know when the day or the time will be, but we need to be alert, the time will come whether we are ready or not. Paul tells us the Lord will come like a thief in the night, when we least expect him.

How ready are we for unexpected events that may take us by surprise; a flood, a power cut, a fire or an accident? We cannot be worrying about the possibility of these unexpected events, but we can be prepared for some. I know that as a child my dad was always ready and alert to certain circumstances. As a chief building control officer for the council he was well aware of the dangers that could happen in the home. We had a fire exit plan from our house, with different choices of which way to go if the fire was in a certain place, how to break windows, which was the best one to jump out of etc... If we went on holiday in a hotel, he would always talk me and my brother through the safest exit if we had to get out in a hurry. I was brought up being aware of the dangers around me and how to stay alert to a problem. What about yourselves? Are you a person who knows exactly where the candles are if you have a power cut or are you running around in the dark? In this pandemic we have been called to be alert to the danger of the virus around us and to take all necessary precautions to keep ourselves and others safe. I think to 'be alert' was one of the phrases the government used at one point.

The parables, in this part of Matthew's gospel, focus on the end time, like the parable last week about the bridesmaids with the lamps filled with oil and ready for the bridegroom, but they did not know when he would turn up. Some of them were prepared for a wait and took extra oil with them and others failed in the task. Today we hear about the landowner who left his slaves in charge of his property while he was away. Before his journey the landowner entrusted one slave with five talents, one with

two talents and another with one talent according to their ability. In this parable the word 'talent' corresponds to a coin which is worth a lot of money. One talent is equivalent to 6000 denarii, when one day's work will earn you 1 denarius. This gives us the idea of how valuable these talents were to the slaves and the landowners. The slaves were asked to do what they wanted with the talents, but they needed to be ready when the landowner returns from his journey. The ending of this parable is difficult because the slaves were judged harshly on what they had done with the talents, with the one that hides his talent and took no risk being banished into the outer darkness, with the gnashing of teeth. Those words are quite unpalatable for us today and would have also had a great impact on the crowds in Jesus time.

Of course, we tend to interpret this parable as the talents being the gifts God gives to each of us which are to be used for his service. God doesn't want us to hide our gifts or squander them, but he wants us to work on them so that they grow, as we grow in faith. John Henry Newman, a great 19th Century writer and cardinal used to say that each of us has been put here with a particular purpose and calling which only we can do. Our task is to find out what that is and do it. That remains true whether the purpose is playing the trumpet, cooking meals, planting trees, performing heart transplants or even preaching sermons. Sometimes of course it's a struggle to discover what our calling is. Sometimes it is very hard to say what we are good at. Have you ever been in an interview when you are asked that question 'What are your strengths or talents?' People get very awkward about expressing their strengths and talents, with a fear of bragging about themselves. But I think God would want us to celebrate the gifts he has given us, especially when using them for his service in our churches and communities.

Each of us however is called to exercise our primary underlying gifts, of living as a wise, loving human being, celebrating God's love, forgiving, praying, seeking justice, acting prudently and courageously and waiting patiently for God's will to be done. If we are trustworthy with these gifts, God will be ready with his answer, he will say 'Well done good and trustworthy servants'. To hear those words from an earthly master would bring a glow of satisfaction. To hear them from the Lord of love will be greater than the greatest delights we can imagine. So, our challenge is to identify our gifts, work on them, practise them and use them for God's service in the world.

Hymn (Requested by Delyth Hurley)

**As the deer pants for the water
so, my soul longs after you.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.**

**You alone are my strength, my shield
to you alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship you.**

**I want you more than gold or silver,
only you can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy giver
and the apple of my eye.**

You alone are my strength, my shield...

**You are my friend and you are my brother,
even though you are king.
I love you more than any other,
so much more than anything.**

You alone are my strength, my shield....

The Intercessions

Let us pray that God's gifts may be rightly used for the good of the church and the world.

Bless the church with generosity and care for all. Give grace to your people to use all that has been entrusted to them that they may bring new hope to many and show forth your glory. In our cycle of prayer with the parish of Lagunda, we pray for the ministry of the group of deacons in Lagunda and for all who organise social outreach in our parishes.

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

Where business is done in the world, drive out dishonesty and self-seeking. Help us to value more grateful the gifts we have been given and to develop and use them for the good of others. Give wisdom to those who are responsible for the resources of our communities.

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

Have mercy on the poor who have little resource to develop to ease their burdens and guide them to ways where they might find relief and support. Raise up from despair those who know they have not fulfilled their potential and enable and empower them to discern your will. Draw into your service all in our community that they may be used for the coming of the Kingdom.

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

As we enter a time where lockdown restrictions are eased, keep us ever mindful of the needs of the sick and vulnerable. Protect them from harm and uphold those who support them.

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

We pray for those who have completed their task in this world and have entered into the joy of their Master. May they rest in the peace promised to his faithful servants.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

In a moment of stillness, let us offer our personal prayers trusting in Christ from whom all good things come...

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

Hymn

**Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
Give me joy in my heart, I pray;
Give me joy in my heart, keep me praising,
Keep me praising till the end of day:**

**Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
Sing hosanna to the King of kings.
Sing hosanna, sing hosanna,
Sing hosanna to the King.**

**Give me peace in my heart, keep me resting,
Give me peace in my heart, I pray;
Give me peace in my heart, keep me resting,
Keep me resting till the end of day:**

Sing hosanna, sing hosanna...

**Give me love in my heart, keep me serving,
Give me love in my heart, I pray;
Give me love in my heart, keep me serving,
Keep me serving till the end of day:**

Sing hosanna, sing hosanna...

**Give me light in my heart, keep me shining,
Give me light in my heart I pray;
Give me light in my heart, keep me shining,
Keep me shining to the end of day:**

Sing hosanna, sing hosanna...