

The Rectorial Benefice of the East Vale  
Morning Prayer  
Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 | Trinity 12

First Reading

(Joshua 24.1-2a, 14-18)

A reading from the book of Joshua.

*Hymn:*

**O Lord, my God,  
when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works  
thy hands have made,  
I see the stars,  
I hear the mighty thunder,  
thy pow'r throughout  
the universe displayed**

*Then sings my soul,  
my Saviour God, to thee:  
how great thou art, how great thou art.  
Then sings my soul,  
my Saviour God, to thee;  
how great thou art, how great thou art.*

**And when I think that God,  
his Son not sparing,  
sent Him to die,  
I scarce can take it in  
that on the cross,  
my burden gladly bearing,  
he bled and died  
to take away my sin.**

*Then sings my soul...*

**When Christ shall come  
with shout of acclamation  
and take me home,  
what joy shall fill my heart;  
when I shall bow  
in humble adoration  
and then proclaim:  
my God, how great thou art**

*Then sings my soul...*

**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**

Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, 'Revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.' Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.'

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

(Psalm 34.15-22)

**R/ The righteous cry and the Lord hears them**

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their cry. The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to root out the remembrance of them from the earth. **R/**

The righteous cry and the Lord hears them and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the broken hearted and will save those who are crushed in spirit. **R/**

Many are the troubles of the righteous; from them all will the Lord deliver them. He keeps all their bones, so that not one of them is broken. **R/**

But evil shall slay the wicked and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The Lord ransoms the life of his servants and will condemn none who seek refuge in him. **R/**

Second Reading

(Ephesians 6.10-20)

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is

not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

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

*The Gospel*

*(John 6.56-69)*

**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 John.  
**Glory to you, O Lord!**

Jesus said to the Jews, 'Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.' He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is

granted by the Father.' Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

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**

**Fr David**

It's that time of year when lots of my insurances have come up for renewal, the pet insurance is one of them! Since first taking out pet insurance when Gordon was a kitten, I've noticed each year the payments naturally creeping up by about £2 per month, but when he turned 9 his insurance jumped up a further £6 a month. I called them to ask why that was and they said it's because he's now 9 years old and from that age onwards was statistically more likely to get ill. I personally thought he was in his prime, in human years he was only 52, and now he's only a mere 64! Anyway, I decided to shop around and do some price comparisons and discovered that other pet insurers were likely to charge me more! So, I actually decided to stick with my original provider.

It's interesting how when something becomes more costly, we tread more carefully in deciding whether it's worth it or not, especially when we can explore other options and shop around a little. We don't like to think we're being taken for a ride when it comes to the things we invest in. There's always that possibility in the back of our minds that we might be missing out on something better and more worthwhile. Sometimes, when we invest in something we just have to bite the bullet and trust that we're doing the right thing, that we're making the right decision. What is true of things we invest in financially is also true of investments we make in other things, such as those things we invest our time in and those things we invest in emotionally, relationships and work commitments for example.

The same is also often true in terms of the investment we make in time, energy and finance to our faith, in our commitment to Christ. There are times in our lives where we question the investment we make. We might be travelling along quite happily then all of sudden something changes either for better or worse, and we might find ourselves at a crossroad where we are presented with a decision to make concerning our faith allegiance. Sometimes when big decisions come they might impact on our faith, meaning that we might decide to move forward with or without God. What I mean is,

if we experience something negative like a bereavement for example, we sometimes come to a split in the road where people decide that they want to continue with God or continue without him. When we experience difficult times, we might ask ourselves the question is God worth the investment, when I'm feeling so miserable, or when we might invest so much of our time and energy in maintaining a relationship with him that we might sometimes feel doesn't give us what we want or need.

The disciples came to one of these crossroads in their lives in the gospel reading today, which concludes the 'bread of life discourse' that we've been working through these last couple of weeks. They had reached a point where they had seen and heard what Jesus had to offer them and they had to make a decision, they had to decide whether they were prepared to make the investment. For some, it was too much to believe and they walked away, for others it was enough for them to make the commitment, especially the twelve. Jesus' followers were complaining that his teaching was unacceptable, so some chose not to follow him, the twelve however, chose to stay with him. Also, in the Old Testament reading, we have the account of Joshua who asks the tribes of Israel to choose which God or God's they wish to worship. They too have witnessed the works of God and they must decide whether they want to continue to keep their covenant with him or not.

Sometimes it's a good habit to review and renew our commitment to God and ask ourselves as Joshua asked the tribes, who or what are we most eager to serve? Is it God or do we serve other things before him? Do we serve and worship the false Gods of wealth, power or celebrity? Do we serve self-interest and worship our own egos? What are the false idols in our lives? The disciples in making their decision to follow Jesus said, *'You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'* This is fundamentally what we are committing to when we chose Jesus, we're affirming our belief in his promise of eternal life and we're saying, he is the Messiah, the holy one of God. And that, despite life's up and downs, we are prepared to hold fast to these truths. Investing in these things is a big deal because it means that we give our lives to them, not just our Sundays! Although for a lot of people today, giving each Sunday to worship is also a big investment, especially with family commitments, the pressures of work and so on, but if this is God we're talking about, the maker of heaven and earth, then surely, he's worth all our efforts and worth investing in. This is fundamentally because he has invested in us through his Son, because he thought we were worth it.

By committing to faith, we're also investing in the life of the church, we're investing in each other. Without each person the church would be a poorer place because we all bring something special to the family. It can be easy for

some people to look at the church or treat the church as a service provider, something we might always expect to get something from, but if we see the church in this way we misunderstand it. The character of the church is built largely on what we put into it, the investment we make of ourselves, and I'm grateful for the continued investment you all do make in varying ways to help build it up. For some of us it has very much been a lifelong commitment, for others a shorter time, but regardless of length may the investment of our lives in this faith and in this church which we hold dear be an encouragement to others to invest similarly in building the kingdom of God and in the inheritance of eternal life.

### **Hymn:**

**Christ is made the sure foundation,  
Christ the head and cornerstone,  
chosen of the Lord and precious,  
binding all the church in one;  
holy Zion's help forever,  
and her confidence alone.**

**To this temple, where we call thee,  
come, O Lord of hosts, today:  
with thy wonted loving-kindness  
hear thy servants as they pray;  
and thy fullest benediction  
shed within its walls alway.**

**Here vouchsafe to all thy servants  
what they ask of thee to gain,  
what they gain from thee forever  
with the blessed to retain,  
and hereafter in thy glory  
evermore with thee to reign.**

**Laud and honour to the Father,  
laud and honour to the Son,  
laud and honour to the Spirit,  
ever Three and ever One,  
One in might, and One in glory,  
while unending ages run.**

### **The Intercessions**

Let us bring the needs of the Church and the world to the God who gives us living bread from heaven.

Protect the Church with the whole armour of faith and righteousness. Strong in spirit, may your people work powerfully for the coming of your kingdom and keep us faithful in our loyalty to Christ. We pray especially for June, our bishop, and in our cycle of prayer with Lagunda we remember our choirs and musicians.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring peace to the many places of strife in the world, remembering especially the nation of Afghanistan during this time of anxiety and unrest. Turn the hearts of those who take the weapons of destruction and give them a vision of your peace.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant that we will never betray in word and deed the faith which we profess. Empower us as examples of love to those whose lives come into contact with ours. Bless all in our communities who are charged with the guidance of others, that they may do so with integrity and wisdom.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Have mercy on those who struggle with their faith or have lost faith completely. Come to them with the assurance that you will never forsake them and the awareness that you long to bring them home. We pray too for those who struggle with illness and adversity, especially... May their faith bring them comfort, healing and strength.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for those who, having come to the Father through the Son, have entered into eternal life. We remember particularly... Give them rest and peace now and evermore.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In quietness, we present to our loving Father our own needs and the needs of those who have sought our prayers.

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

**Hymn:**

**One more step along the world I go,  
one more step along the world I go;  
From the old things to the new,  
keep me travelling along with you:**

***And it's from the old I travel to the new;  
keep me travelling along with you.***

**Round the corners of the world I turn,  
more and more about the world I learn;  
and the new things that I see  
you'll be looking at along with me.**

***And it's from the old...***

**As I travel through the bad and good,  
keep me travelling the way I should.  
Where I see no way to go,  
you'll be telling me the way, I know.**

***And it's from the old...***

**Give me courage when the world is rough,  
keep me loving though the world is tough;  
Leap and sing in all I do,  
keep me travelling along with you:**

***And it's from the old...***

**You are older than the world can be,  
you are younger than the life in me;  
Ever old and ever new,  
keep me travelling along with you:**

***And it's from the old...***

#### **Prayers for the sick this week:**

Elizabeth Mortimer	Barbara Goodway
Kath Loughor	Colin Bailey
Eunice Wood	Terry Jones
Helen	Colin
John Quick	Joy Rees
Lorna and Geoffrey Powell	Doug Blake

#### **Hymn Requests**

If you have any hymn requests for our Zoom worship, please send them to one of the clergy team.

#### **Volunteer Administration Role**

There are now 29 Ministry Areas throughout the diocese. Each Ministry Area is being encouraged to look at how administration is undertaken. We are looking for a volunteer to help with administration tasks, initially focusing on the production of the pew notes. Whoever does this could work from home with computer and internet access. Anyone prepared to consider helping in this way should contact the clergy, Lay Chair or Churchwardens.

The clergy team continue to meet for morning prayer each day. Please send any prayer requests, for yourself, family, friends etc to one of the clergy team.

If you need any help or assistance, practically or spiritually in these difficult times please contact one of the team:

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