



Heacham Parish Church

Sunday 5th September 2021 – Trinity 14

Opening music – *Adrian plays a Rumba - 'Das ist ein kostlich Ding' - (This is a beautiful thing) by Gunter Gottsche.*

Welcome to Heacham Parish Church on-line. This is our Service of Worship for 14th Sunday after Trinity. Although we join this at various times, from various places and in various ways we come together as one body, the Church of Jesus Christ.

God in Christ has revealed his glory.

Come let us worship.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
the Lord's name is greatly to be praised.

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.

O praise the name of the Lord!

Loving God, we have come to worship you.

**Help us to pray to you in faith,
to sing your praise with gratitude,
and to listen to your word with eagerness;
through Christ our Lord.**

Amen.

God of our days and years,
we set this time apart for you.
Form us in the likeness of Christ
so that our lives may glorify you.

Amen.

Song: May the fragrance of Jesus fill this place
brought to us by Karen and Terry

MEN May the fragrance of Jesus
fill this place,
WOMEN may the fragrance of Jesus
fill this place,
MEN may the fragrance of Jesus
fill this place,
WOMEN lovely fragrance of Jesus fill this place,
ALL rising from the sacrifice
of lives laid down in adoration.

MEN May the glory of Jesus
fill His Church,
WOMEN may the glory of Jesus
fill His Church,
MEN may the glory of Jesus
fill His Church;
WOMEN radiant glory of Jesus,
ALL shining from our faces
as we gaze in adoration.

MEN May the beauty of Jesus
fill my life,
WOMEN may the beauty of Jesus
fill my life,
MEN may the beauty of Jesus
fill my life,
WOMEN perfect beauty of Jesus,
ALL fill my thoughts, my words,
my deeds,
my all I give in adoration;
fill my thoughts, my words,
my deeds,
my all I give in adoration.

Prayers of penitence

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though we have rebelled against him.

Let us then renounce our wilfulness and ask his mercy by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Almighty God, long-suffering and of great goodness:
I confess to you, I confess with my whole heart
my neglect and forgetfulness of your commandments,
my wrong doing, thinking, and speaking;
the hurts I have done to others,
and the good I have left undone.
O God, forgive me, for I have sinned against you;
and raise me to newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
who in his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins
to all those who with heartfelt repentance and true faith
turn to him:

have mercy on you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and bring you to everlasting life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Bible reading – Ephesians 4:29 – 5:7 read by Liz

A reflection – by Pip

Let's pray,

Loving Heavenly Father, thank you for your word. Help us now, as we think about it, to see a little more of You. For we ask in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Do you remember, back in the Stone Age, the original episodes of Mission Impossible? The episodes always began with a tape cassette arriving and being played in a cassette recorder.

Remember them? Then the lines "this is your mission, should you choose to accept it" were the precursors to the last one, which I'm sure we have all come across, "This tape will self-destruct in ten seconds." There was also the qualification that should anyone be caught "the secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions".

What's this got to do with the reading from Ephesians today? If you engaged with the service last week you will know that the second half of chapter four is where Paul speaks of how, as Christians, we should live our lives. He is rather emphatic, the Archdeacon drew attention to the verse which says, " So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord". Then he spoke of the old life and the new life in Christ. Today's verses continue with instructions of how we are called to live. Verses 29-32 speak of keeping control of our tongue, our tempers in check, and of being forgiving. This is where, for me, mission impossible comes in. This continues in chapter 5, verses 3-6. Where we are called to sexual purity, to avoid greed, obscenity, foolish talk, and coarse joking. These are all out of place and we are called to live differently, as children of light.

If we are honest with ourselves this standard is definitely mission impossible territory, in our own strength. Paul reminds us all in Romans 3, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". But wonderfully that verse goes on to say, "and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

So, for our brief reflection today we are going to look at three themes. They are control, commitment, and Christ. Let's begin with control. Let's accept honestly that the person who has control of the behaviour described by Paul is us. We all have a choice, we are free to behave as we like, within the framework of the society that we live. We can choose to let our tongue loose, give vent to our anger and bitterness, we can tear people down with unkind words or shock with obscenities and coarse conversation. We can have questionable morals in thought or deed. We can feed lack of forgiveness by continual remembrance of past offences. If we are in self-control, all these things can manifest any time, any place. However, if we have given up self-control the picture is very different.

We give up self-control when we make our commitment to Christ. Committed to Him our focus is on Him. When we are fully committed to something we give our time, our energy, our love, ourselves. Why? Because love calls us. If we have committed ourselves to Christ our desire should be to please, serve, follow, and be guided by Him in all aspects of our life. We learn to count ourselves dead to sin and to be alive in Christ.

Verse 1 of chapter 5 says, "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God". Christ has done everything for us, remember the spiritual blessings we have in Him from the first chapter of this letter.

Christ enables every one of us to live a life that sets us free from sin and death. His indwelling Holy Spirit gives us the ability to express the fruits of the Spirit and to turn away from our old nature and habits that are destructive and unworthy of His followers. Only in His strength can we walk in a way that pleases Him.

And most gloriously when we fall short and fail, He is not like some government secretary of the mission impossible type who would disown us. No, He is "faithful and just and will forgive our sins" when we turn to Him in repentance and confession.

So, our mission this week, should we choose to accept it, is to serve the Lord, love the Lord with all our hearts, with all our minds, and all our strength, to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God.

Let's pause as we finish, hold silence, and pray for the ability to do this.

Amen.

Affirmation of faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Song: **O Breath of Life**

O Breath of Life,
come sweeping through us,
revive Your Church
with life and power;
O Breath of Life,
come cleanse, renew us
and fit Your Church to meet this hour.

O Breath of Love,
come breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, Love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive Your Church in every part!

O Wind of God, come bend us,
break us
till humbly we confess our need;
then, in Your tenderness remake us,
revive, restore – for this we plead.

Revive us, Lord; is zeal abating
while harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord. The world is waiting –
equip Thy Church to spread the light.

Prayers of Intercession – led by John Whitbread

Lord, we stand amidst the wreckage of a world too often at war, communities too often in dispute and lives too often in despair. But we hold to the vision that you will wipe away every tear from our eyes and death will be no more; and mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things, the things of war, will have passed away.

Until then, O God, we ask you to keep the peace and carry the load, and show us how to do that too, and finally we may be called children of God who followed the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord we ask for your guidance for the leader of the nations, especially our own prime minister and colleagues, in the ways of truth, peace, and justice. We also pray for those who serve in Borough Council and local Parish Council, give them the same gifts that you give to the government.

We pray for Elizabeth our Queen, that she may put her trust in you.

As we are gathered here today we lift up our bishop, archdeacons, our own vicar Veronica, Simon and Kaitlyn, the ministry team, the PCC members, the treasurer, our own church warden Liz, and a number of others who help in the smooth running of the church. The people who come early and stay later enabling us to worship you in comfort. We hold them up to you for your blessings and guidance in all they under- take in your name.

Lord we remember those who have died in the peace of Christ, both those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone and grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom. We ask that you will be known to those who are left to grieve and that your peace will be with them.

Lord God you have called us to shine like stars in the world, to shed light like a lamp set upon a lampstand. Help us, and all your Church, to fulfil at least a little of that calling through our words and actions, our living and our loving, to share something of what we have received from you. Where there is darkness let us bring light.

Amen

The Lord's prayer

Collect for today

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
through 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

Closing prayers

Let us give thanks to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.

Before the world was made, God chose us in Christ,
that we might be holy and blameless before him.

Let us praise God for the glory of his grace,
for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son.

To Father, Son and Holy Spirit
**give praise and dominion, honour and might,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Now that we have been put right with God through faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

He has brought us by faith into the grace of God.
We rejoice in the hope of sharing God's glory.

This hope does not deceive us:

**God has poured his love into our hearts
by the gift of his Spirit.**

Draw your Church together, O God,
into one great company of disciples,
together following our Lord Jesus Christ
into every walk of life,
together serving him in his mission to the world,
and together witnessing to his love
on every continent and island.

Glory to God,
**whose power, at work among us,
can do infinitely more
than all we can ask or conceive;
to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Closing music – Adrian plays 'The Strong Tower Postlude'
(*Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*) by Matthias Nagel.

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