



Heacham Parish Church



Sunday 8th August 2021 – Trinity 10

Opening music - Adrian plays 'Romance sans Paroles' by Joseph Bonnet

A very warm welcome in the name of the Lord on Sunday the 8th of August. We meet together in different ways, in church, at home, and online. Though we may meet at different times and in different ways we are all one in Christ, and we join together in worship and praise. Once again we are mindful that this is possible because of the work behind the scenes. So again, big thanks to all who contribute to make this service possible.

We hold silence and welcome the Lord into our hearts.

Father thank you for all the blessings of this week, for all the times you have been our anchor and harbour in the storms of life. Be with us now as we turn our thoughts to praise and worship. For we ask in Jesus name.

Amen.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**We have come together in the name of Christ.
To offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek the
forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may give
ourselves to the service of God.**

Prayers of confession

Jesus says "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand". So let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done
evil in your sight.**

**We are sorry and repent. Have mercy on us according
to your love.**

**Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our
sin.**

**Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy
of your salvation;**

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

May the father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins and
restore us in his image to the praise and glory of his name,
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessed is the Lord

for he has heard the voice of our prayer.

therefore shall our hearts dance for joy

and in our song will we praise our God.

Song: **Before the throne of God above**

Before the throne of God above
I have a strong, a perfect plea,
a great High Priest whose name is Love,
who ever lives and pleads for me.
My name is graven on His hands,
my name is written on His heart;
I know that while in heaven He stands
no tongue can bid me thence depart,
no tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair,
and tells me of the guilt within,
upward I look and see Him there
who made an end to all my sin.
Because the sinless Saviour died,
my sinful soul is counted free;
for God the just is satisfied
to look on Him and pardon me,
to look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there! The risen lamb,
my perfect, spotless righteousness;
the great unchangeable I AM,
the King of glory and of grace!
One with Himself I cannot die,
my soul is purchased with His blood;
my life is hid with Christ on high,
with Christ my Saviour and my God,
with Christ my Saviour and my God.

One with Himself I cannot die,
my soul is purchased with His blood;
my life is hid with Christ on high,
with Christ my Saviour and my God,
with Christ my Saviour and my God.

Bible reading – Ephesians 3: 1-13 read by Sue

A reflection – on these verses by Penny

This is another passage from Paul's letter to the Church at Ephesus which needs a bit of unpacking. He starts "For this reason" and we quite reasonably ask what reason? This refers to the position of Gentile Christians which he described in the previous chapter. How, by His death on the cross, Jesus Christ demolished both the barrier between Jew and Gentile and the barrier between God and man to create a single, new, multi-cultural human society, the Church of Jesus Christ. This is not only the family God loves but also the temple in which he dwells.

Now Paul turns to himself, reminding them that he is a prisoner in Rome "for the sake of you Gentiles". This was factually correct. He was arrested and taken to Rome because of fanatical Jewish opposition to his mission to the Gentiles. Paul believed implicitly in the sovereignty of God over the affairs of men and thus that his imprisonment served God's purposes. With the benefit of hindsight, we know that to be the case, but it must have been so hard at the time. He refers to two great privileges which God bestowed upon him, describing them as "God's grace that was given to me".

He starts with "**the mystery** made known to me by revelation". This is not what we understand by the English word mystery. There is nothing eerie or inscrutable about a New Testament mystery, it is a truth that was hidden by God in the past and is now revealed to those who are in his family. A sacred secret, hidden from unbelievers but understood and treasured by the people of God. This mystery concerns Jesus Christ and his united Jewish/Gentile society – the Church. To emphasise how different this is Paul uses three unusual Greek words to describe what Gentile and Jewish Christians share.

Together they are: -

Fellow heirs	of the same	blessing.
Fellow members	of the same	body.
Fellow beneficiaries	of the same	promise.

Each share in the same privileges both in Christ and through the gospel. Therefore, the mystery of Christ describes a double union of Jews and Gentiles with each other, through the union of each with Christ. This is what the Holy Spirit made known by revelation to Paul and his fellow Apostles and evangelists, for the purpose of making the mystery known to the universal Church. Why was this so radical in Jewish eyes? Because it terminated the existing Theocracy, i.e., God and His chosen people Israel. There is now a new international community, the Church.

Paul's second great privilege was **his ministry**. Just as mystery was a truth revealed to Paul, so the gospel is truth proclaimed by Paul. He believed that the gospel had been made known to him so that he could pass it on and that he had been commissioned to announce that good news to the Gentiles. This enabled Paul and his fellow evangelists, powered by the Holy Spirit, to tell Gentiles about "the unsearchable riches of Christ". Riches that were freely available because of Christ's death on the cross, making believers alive with Christ, raised with Christ, and seated with Christ in heaven. Sounds familiar? Yes, it is the same three as we looked at in Chapter 2. Membership of a new society with Jewish believers to end hostility and bring about peace. Enabling free access to the Father through Christ and the Holy Spirit. To become a full member of God's household and all this merely a foretaste of riches to come. Paul and his contemporaries were charged with making the mystery known to all men.

What do we learn from Paul's mystery and ministry?

1. These are two powerful incentives to our evangelism because all revealed truth is held in stewardship to be shared.
2. The biblical centrality of the Church. An isolated personal relationship with Christ will not work. We are members of the body of Christ.
3. The plan of the mystery. Conceived in eternity and kept hidden for ages. Not made known to previous generations but now realised in Christ our Lord via the historical work of salvation and the proclamation of the gospel by faithful Church members.

Affirmation of faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

I believe in God the father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father, he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession led by Penny

O Lord our God,
source of all goodness and love,
accept the fervent prayers of your people;
in the multitude of your mercies look with compassion
upon all who turn to you for help;
for you are gracious, O lover of souls,
and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Living God,
deliver us from a world without justice
and a future without mercy;
in your mercy, establish justice,
and in your justice, remember the mercy
revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

O God, who would fold both heaven and earth in a single
peace:
let the design of thy great love
lighten upon the waste of our wraths and sorrows:
and give peace to thy Church,
peace among nations,
peace in our dwellings,
and peace in our hearts:
through thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

At this time, we remember the nations of Afghanistan,
Tunisia, and other places where there is ongoing unrest.

Lord in your Mercy. Hear our prayer.

We pray for your Church throughout the world. We remember especially those working for you in Mission. Andrew and Shona Goodman in North Thailand as they support the church in Myanmar. We pray especially that more people will be vaccinated and those with Covid will get the medical treatment they need.

We continue to pray for Rachel Karrach at Tansen hospital Nepal for strength and wisdom and resources as the hospital continues to treat many people.

As the Olympics continue in Japan we pray for the nation of Japan and those bringing the Gospel to this nation. We thank you for the sports men and women and the positive contributions they make to many lives.

Lord in your Mercy. Hear our Prayer.

Here at home, we pray for our government and those in positions of responsibility. We pray too for our Queen and her family as she leads by example. Finally, we pray for the many people we know who are ill at this time. We pray that you will come close to them through your Holy Spirit and heal them according to your good and perfect will.

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

The Lord's prayer

Song: Thank you for saving me

Thank You for saving me;
what can I say?
You are my everything,
I will sing Your praise.
You shed Your blood for me;
what can I say?
You took my sin and shame,
a sinner called by name.

*Great is the Lord,
great is the Lord.
For we know Your truth has set us free,
You've set Your hope in me.*

Mercy and grace are mine –
forgiveness is my sin.
Jesus, my only hope,
the Saviour of the world.
'Great is the Lord', we cry,
'God, let Your kingdom come!'
Your word has let me see,
thank You for saving me.

Great is the Lord...

Great is the Lord...

Thank You for saving me –
what can I say?

Closing prayers

Father, thank you that you have revealed your love to us today. We invite You to send us out in the power of your Holy Spirit. Fan into flame the gifts you have given us. Come reveal your grace and truth to us each day. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face to shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord turn his face towards us and give us peace. And the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit remain with us and those we love now and always Amen.

Closing music – Adrian plays 'Koraal from Suite Modale' by Flor Peeters

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