

Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 13 July 2025 - The Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Lectionary Readings (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Deuteronomy 30.9-14; Psalm 25.1-10; Colossians 1.1-14; Luke 10.25-37

Homily

Today's homily has been written by the Revd Valerie Kilner, Permission To Officiate (Retired), Somersham

We eavesdrop on a conversation between an expert in the Jewish law and Jesus. The lawyer has a question: what must he do to inherit eternal life. Did he feel something was missing on his life – or was he testing Jesus? We don't know.

Jesus asks him a question in return, one that is related to the lawyer's own field of expertise. He asks him what the law has to say on the matter and the lawyer quotes words from Deuteronomy known to every Jew - the Shema - love God with the whole of your being - and adds words from Leviticus about loving one's neighbour as oneself. And Jesus tells him that he has answered his own question – that will lead to eternal life.

Perhaps the lawyer feels he should have thought more about this before asking so he seeks clarification on a point. Who is included in that word 'neighbour'? Jesus directs his thinking by means of a story which, for some of us, has become very familiar – that parable we know as the Good Samaritan. And Jesus chooses the setting and the characters in his story to have the greatest impact.

It was well known that travelling alone down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was to put oneself at risk. The road had steep inclines - it descended 3,900 feet in about 18 miles and had narrow and rocky passages and winding turns, all making it a prime hideout for bandits.

The lawyer may well think that the man in the story was unwise to say the least. But it is interesting that Jesus just refers to 'a man'. We must assume this could have been just anyone who, predictably, was laying themselves open to being assaulted by robbers.

A number of personnel from the Temple in Jerusalem lived in Jericho and they would use this road when the time came for their days on duty. So, yes, a priest might well be making his way to Jerusalem. And it might be expected that he would be the first to have helped the injured man, but he doesn't even stop. He tries to get as far away from him as possible as he passes. He may think the man was dead and that, as the law said, any contact with a dead body would make him unclean so he would not be able to carry out his duties in the Temple.

A temple servant, a Levite, does at least take a look at the man but offers no help. But a Samaritan does. It is well known that Jews and Samaritans do not get on – but he is the one

who stops. He is not interested in who the man is but in helping him in his need. He is the one who cares - for an enemy! And it is he, the lawyer recognises, who acts as a neighbour to the injured man. So, the lawyer has answered his own question about his neighbour.

Jesus then takes the lawyer back to his original question - what must he do to inherit eternal life? He should have compassion on or show mercy to others even if they have acted foolishly or find themselves in worrying circumstances or belong to a group he is at odds with! He neighbours are those in need.

How had that neighbourliness been demonstrated? By showing mercy, pity, compassion or acting kindly – depending on which translation is being read.

What we know as the Old Testament scriptures, which would have been known to the lawyer, are full of references to God being full of loving-kindness, compassion and mercy. The lawyer – and all who hear the parable – are to live God-like lives.

We can see that Jesus' life, death and resurrection are full of loving-kindness, compassion and mercy. Living like him - full of self-giving love - is godly living.

But we can find it so difficult to be full of such self-giving love like Jesus. I read something along these lines which I found really helpful:

If I have never been loved I will find it hard to love myself. Am I loveable?

If I can't love myself, I will find it hard to love my neighbour.

Jesus knew that he was fully loved by his Father.

He knew he was loveable, so he was able to love himself.

And then he was able to love his neighbour as himself.

Without love of self, there can be no love of neighbour.

We can be certain we are loved. We can remind ourselves of Jesus' words: For God so loved the world – all that he has created - that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. We are loveable because God loves us and because of his love we should love ourselves. We are called to love others, our neighbours, as he God them. And we are empowered by the greatest gift of the Holy Spirit that has been given to all believers since that first day of Pentecost - self-giving love.

Let us pray that we will allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, to change us. May we have that confidence that we are so loved by God that we able to love ourselves. In loving ourselves may we the more give ourselves in love to God and to those we meet or know of who need to be loved with his kindness, compassion, and mercy, whoever or wherever they are and whatever they have done or has been done to them. Amen.

Ways to Engage all Generations

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder whether you have been or are being helped by someone you might call a 'Good Samaritan'.
- I wonder whether you have ever been able to be a 'Good Samaritan'.
- I wonder how we can learn to love people from any groups that we do not easily relate to.

Suggested intercessions *Based on a prayer from Sacredise*

We thank you, Lord, for your self-giving love, your mercy, your compassion.
As the body of Christ on earth today you call us to be like you.

If we're honest, Lord, self-giving love, mercy and compassion do not come easily to us.
We see others who struggle -
those without homes or food,
those dying from curable diseases simply because they can't get access to the medicine they need;
those who have lost loved ones through death or circumstance and long for human companionship;
those who are persecuted and judged because of their difference;
those who are facing the awful consequences of bad choices they have made;
and those who must live with the consequences of choices that others make that impact their lives.
It all feels like it's too much and that there's nothing we can do.

But, we know that's not true – we know that self-giving love, mercy, and compassion can begin to meet needs;
that when we truly love, you will empower us to do what we can
and that this will make a difference.

And so, we pray first for ourselves:
that you would soften our hearts,
and still our fears,
that we may not hold back from those acts of self-giving love, mercy, and compassion that we are capable of doing.

And then we pray for all those whose lives could be changed
through small, simple acts of care;
that you would disturb us, and others like us,
until we finally step up and play our part in the sharing of your love for your world.
May enough of us answer your call,
so that the needs of the hurting ones may begin to be met.

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

Suggested hymns/songs

God is love! Let heaven adore him
Brother, sister, let me serve you
May the mind of Christ my Saviour
In Christ there is no east or west
Christ's is the world in which we move
Make me channel of your peace

Activities to accompany the service

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>
(weekly@ lectionary resource)