



The Benefice of the Piddle Valley, Hilton & Ansty, Cheselbourne and Melcombe Horsey

Sunday 23rd June 2019

1st Sunday after Trinity / Proper 7

Altar Colour – Green

[Please take this pew sheet home.](#)

Readings: Isa. 65: 1-9, Psalm 22: 19-28, Gal. 3: 23-end, Luke 8: 26-39

Collect: O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in the keeping of your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; 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**

Galatians 3:23-29 (ESV) - *The Law and the Promise*

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

COMMENT: One of Paul's most decisive statements declares that faith in Jesus Christ has removed all barriers to a relationship with God for all who believe. He claims that the law given to Moses was like a schoolteacher disciplining us until Jesus came to make us all God's children and heirs with Christ. Now, we are all children of Abraham and heirs of all God's promises to Israel. V. 28 is often misused as if there is no difference between male and female. Many versions mistranslate the third couplet as 'there is neither male nor female' – in the ESV, it is correctly translated. Such unity does not imply political equality in the church or society. Creation provides a distinction between men and women. Genesis 1:27; "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Even in the Genesis text, male and female are one in the image of God, and yet are precisely that; 'male and female'. Paul's text echoes that of the

Genesis passage. Yet the equality espoused by Paul in Galatians 3 is an equality of being one in Christ and heirs of Abraham, via faith and Baptism (v. 28 & 29). Much the same message is found in contemporary letters by Paul; see 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, and Romans 10:11-13. Also an Epistle written some 40 years later in discussing Christian relationships also stresses the oneness and equality in Christ for various groupings – See Colossians 3:11.

Luke 8:26-39 (ESV) - *Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon*

Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

COMMENT: Jesus has entered a region that had some Jews living there but was primarily a Gentile area. The fact that this was a Gentile region is further evidenced by the herd of swine. Jews saw pigs as an unclean animal according to the law of Moses and neither ate, handled, or kept such animals in their midst. The story of the Gerasene demoniac is thoroughly shaped by Jewish norms. This becomes apparent in the description of Gerasa as opposite Galilee. It is the place of demons and uncleanness. It is a place where pigs need to rush down the hill and be drowned in the sea. Almost immediately Jesus was met by a demon-possessed man that was living like an animal among the tombs of the death. In the

Jewish mind this would have made him unclean on almost every level possible as even stepping on a tomb made one unclean (between demons, tombs, and pigs, you would have a difficult time inventing a more unclean scene for a Jew than this one). Many are confused about why the demons would ask to be sent into a herd of pigs and why Jesus would possibly grant such a request. Pigs were the classic symbol of unclean animals and unclean animals were an Old Testament symbol of sin. So Jesus sent the ultimate in evil forces into the ultimate symbol of sin. He then showed his authority over both as the herd of pigs immediately ran into the Sea of Galilee (Lake Gennesaret) and died. The unclean spirits were engaged in destruction. At its core, this is a scene of resurrection and new life for this young man. He had been completely dehumanized and was truly among the dead, cut off from society in every way and separated from God. He is, in many respects, a picture of our own selves dead in sin and separated from God. But after encountering Jesus, we see him as the perfect picture of restoration. As an aside, “sitting at the feet” (verse 35 – see Luke 10:35) is not necessarily a term of discipleship (and is not here) but a well understood act of deference.

Post Communion: Eternal Father, we thank you for nourishing us with these heavenly gifts: may our communion strengthen us in faith, build us up in hope, and make us grow in love; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing: God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Benefice Prayer Requests:

- Please continue to pray for those who are suffering: Colin Webb, Anna Webb, June Kellaway, Ann Lambert, Fay Lord and Terry Jeanes, Marion Trainer
- Please pray for our Benefice Schools; their staff, governors, children and parents/carers - at Cheselbourne Community School and Piddle Valley 1st School
- We pray for Quenton & Alice who were married at St Andrew’s Melcombe Horsey on Saturday and for our couples preparing for Holy Matrimony during August.

Requiescant in pace

Victor Patterson - Wyke Regis Weymouth.





What's going on around the Benefice!

Thursday 27th June: Morning prayer: at Piddlehinton, with Alan Neades at 9.30am.

Food Bank: As a benefice we will continue to collect a packet/tin a week to support those in the wider Dorchester community who are in need - Thank you.

Sunday 30th June

8.30am Holy Communion at Piddletrenthide

10.30am Combined Benefice Eucharist Service at Milton Abbey

Combined Choir led by Angela D'Silva
Supported by organist Andrew Millington

BYO Picnic with opportunity to play
rounders or cricket in the Abbey grounds.



Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 2nd July - Stepping Stones Home Group Meet twice a month on a Tuesday evening at 7.30pm, at Orchard Cottage, Melcombe Bingham. (Richard and Julie Saunders on 01258 880585.) **All Welcome**

Tuesday 2nd July Tiddlers: Piddle Valley Tiddlers: at Piddle Valley School. Please spread the word! For information contact:
Alicia Eysenck Tel: 01305 251841 or Mob: 07990 740339

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