



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

Sunday 20th September 2020
Trinity 15 / Proper 20 (Altar colour green)

Readings: Jonah 3:10 – 4:-End, Psalm 145: 1-8, Phil. 1: 21-End, Matt. 20: 1-16

Collect: God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit upon your Church in the burning fire of your love: grant that your people may be fervent in the fellowship of the gospel that, always abiding in you, they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service; 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**

Jonah 3:10-4:11(ESV)

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Jonah's Anger and the LORD's Compassion

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?" Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labour, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

Phil. 1: 21-27 (ESV)

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again. (Continued over page)

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Matthew 20:1-16 (ESV) - Labourers in the Vineyard

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the labourers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ So the last will be first, and the first last.”

COMMENT: This can be a very troublesome parable. It seems so grossly unfair that the last group of labourers were paid the same amount as the first even though they had worked only one hour, not the whole day long, even though the Master had reached an agreement with all concerned. The parable itself highlights this sense of injustice. It can be read in equal comfort by the Communist and the Capitalist. One because perhaps all needed the day’s pay to survive, and the other because the Employer is free to do with money as he sees fit. Again it can be read as a landowner who was mean and that the early workers suffered a gross injustice because a wealthy man tried to get as much work by as few workers as a possible before having to employ more, or, that the landowner was concerned about giving as much work to as many as possible, hence continually going to the market place. This says something about us and where our concerns are – yet the parable is about the Kingdom of Heaven. This is how Jesus introduces it to us. It tells about the absolute sovereignty of God’s love. The currency of the kingdom is grace and eternal life, not coinage. Grace comes to us as the gift of God totally unmerited in spite of all our worthy efforts. That those who come to faith late in the day can receive God’s grace perhaps doesn’t bother us in the same way as what appears to be an injustice in terms of wages. The parable is open ended, as were many others of Jesus’ parables. They were designed to elicit discussion, not to give pat answers about how things work in this world and how ungenerous the wealthy are.

Benefice Notices

Foodbank: Please remember your foodbank donations when you come to church. Collection boxes in church; alternatively, donations can be left at Orchard Cottage - Melcombe Bingham (thank you Richard and Julie) or The Vicarage - Piddletrenthide.

THE
WEEK
AHEAD

Returning to worship: As a benefice we are able to provide a 'Covid Safe Space' for worship and to receive communion.

- Please do travel to attend a service in one of the 6 benefice churches and follow the safety protocols set out in each church.
- The pre-covid rota is not manageable at this time. There are 2 communion and 1 evening prayer service available each Sunday.
- If you wish to read the lesson during a service, this is permit-able from your pew. Please volunteer before the service starts.
- The only singing will be by a cantor/s or a dedicated choir.
- Music choices are restricted to pieces that are 'free to use in the public domain' and free from copyright.

Live Streaming:

Sunday Services will continue to be live streamed and the 9.30am service will be uploaded to YouTube. All communion services follow the "Ordinary Time Pandemic Order of Service" available on the benefice website.

Sunday 9.30am Communion Service is uploaded to YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0ru_v3_1MZyzyx72ka63g4A

Facebook to access livestream:

https://www.facebook.com/piddlevalley/?eid=ARAxjQNj5mPHQUQD2hKEx_uzUyyf17basudX3D22bYJx4HsCh7ByYB8lltrMbHhsARvgwbTqvapn-Glq

Sunday 27th September Services – Trinity 16/Proper 21

Readings: Ezek. 18: 1-4, 25-end, Psalm 25: 1-8, Phil. 2: 1-13, Matt. 21: 23-32

9.30am Communion Service at Cheselbourne with Fr. Roger

11.00am Communion Service at Alton Pancras with Fr. Roger

6.00pm Evening Prayer at Hilton with Rev'd Helier

All services streamed live to Facebook. 9.30am Service will be uploaded to YouTube.

Rector - Fr. Roger J. Butcher SSC KSJ

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