



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

**Sunday 22nd November 2020 – Christ the King
(Altar Colour (White/Gold))**

Readings: Ezekiel 34: 11-16, 20-24, Psalm 95: 1-7, Ephesians 1: 15 – end, Matthew 25: 31-end

Collect: Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King: keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Ezekiel 34:11-16(ESV) - *The Lord God Will Seek Them Out*

“For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.

“Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you push with side and shoulder, and thrust at all the weak with your horns, till you have scattered them abroad, I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer be a prey. And I will judge between sheep and sheep. And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. I am the LORD; I have spoken.

Ephesians 1:15-23 (ESV) - *Thanksgiving and Prayer*

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he

raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

COMMENT: It is doubtful that Paul was the author of Ephesians, and probably one of his followers penned the letter. Never-the-less, it is one of the great treasures of the New Testament. It may not have begun as a letter at all, but as a prayer followed by a sermon admonishing the faithful to live a life worthy of the faith they have espoused in the unity of the Spirit under the sovereignty of Christ. The opening three chapters follow the pattern of a typical Jewish liturgical prayer known as a berakah. Not only does it exhibit poetic characteristics, its tone of wonder and solemnity evoke a mood of contemplative worship with the repeated phrase “to the praise of his glory.” Though thoroughly Christian in character, this type of blessing recalls the prayers of Jewish worship in the synagogues out of which many of the early Ephesian Christians came. This excerpt, on the other hand, includes certain elements which were typical of Paul’s letters. In verses 15-16, for instance, he recalls the faith and the love of the Ephesians and gives thanks for them as he prays for them. He then returns to his earlier theme of what God has done through the resurrection of Jesus Christ: the dead have been made alive and the alienated have been reconciled. We may conclude that the author is speaking of a spiritual experience and there is an intellectual component to it as well. His prayer is that God may give them “a spirit of wisdom and revelation” as they come to know Christ (verse 17). The following unusual phrase, “with the eyes of your heart enlightened,” (verse 18) ties together both knowledge of truth and the revelation which only faith can perceive. That knowledge is intended to be an integral part of faith is reiterated in the several soaring clauses of verses 18-21. They are “to know” the hope to which they are called, the riches of their inheritance among the saints, and the working of God’s power derived from Christ’s resurrection and ascension to the place of total sovereignty. “The fullness of him who fills all in all” (verse 23) might be said to refer to the faith that Christ is “the essential content of the church”; but it would be better to take the phrase to mean that the relationship between Christ and the church is complementary. Christ and the church together form an organic unity. Thus, we are dealing with an eschatological vision of the church, not as it existed in Paul’s time, or as it has been throughout the past two millennia, or as it is today. The scandal of our disunity that leads to prejudice, rivalry, hostility, condemnation and even open warfare is sufficient evidence of that. Paul and those who followed him, and were fully under his teaching saw the church as “the microcosm of what all existence will finally be”.

Matthew 25:31-46 (ESV) - The Final Judgment

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers you did it to me.’ “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

COMMENT: This parable tells us that the reign of Christ will begin with a final judgment. But it is a parable, a story told to persuade people on how to live as they prepare for that inevitable experience, not a description of what the event will be like. The story has an eschatological and a messianic emphasis set in place by its very first clause, “When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all his angels with him” In verses 31 and 32 there are two images of the judgment. The first envisages a typical a royal court where the monarch is surrounded by courtiers and the whole populace is gathered before the throne waiting for a critical decision. The second describes the much humbler scene of a shepherd at the end of a day separating sheep from goats as they enter the fold for the night. The task was an easy one, for in the Middle East sheep are generally white and goats black. The monarch’s task might not be so easy, for the character of human beings is much more complex. The story does simplify the basis on which the judgment is made. It has to do with how each person responds to everyday opportunities to help others in need. The length and detail with which this poignant emphasis is described assures even the hasty reader that this is what the story means. The reign of Christ and God’s eternal judgment are going on right now with each decision and action we take. How we live today has eternal consequences. We are to witness to the reign of Christ in the way we serve him in faithfulness, kindness and love to our neighbours in need. Yet this parable is not a simple story offering polite moral counsel seeking for ethical behaviour to create a kinder, gentler, self-satisfied society. Coming as it does immediately before the Passion story, this parable connects our time in history and the time of Jesus as an historical person with the reality of eschatological judgment at the end of time. The way this parable describes how the faithful are to live is the way Jesus lived “as one that served.” As he turned to the all-important conclusion of his gospel, Matthew was saying that in Jesus the Messiah the divine judgment which Israel has anticipated for so long had arrived. The gospel speaks across the millennia with the same clarion call of judgment: the crucified and risen Jesus, the ever present ‘God with us,’ is now deciding who will have a part in the eternal reign of love fulfilled in God’s creation.

Short Preface 1: And now we give you thanks because you anointed Jesus Christ, your only Son, as priest and King. Crowned with thorns, he offered his life upon the cross, that he might draw all people into that kingdom where he now reigns in glory.

Short Preface 2: And now we give you thanks because you anointed Jesus Christ, your only Son, as the eternal priest and King of all. As a priest he offered up his life on the cross, that by his one sacrifice he might present to you an eternal kingdom; a kingdom of truth and life; a kingdom of justice, love and peace.

Post Communion: Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Blessing: Christ our King make you faithful and strong to do his will, that you may reign with him in glory; 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 list.



- Please pray for those who are suffering from poor health, those recovering from hospital treatment or surgery, for the grieving and lonely; including: Ann Lambert, Geoff Harris, Robin Dibble, June Kellaway, Robin Saunders, Anna Thomas, Bernard & David.
- Please pray for our friends, family and neighbours, for those that we are unable to spend time with.
- For those in care homes including: Roger Gray (Dorchester) and June Smith (Warminster).

Any additions or amendments to the prayer list, please email the Rector.

Benefice Notices



Public Worship & Live Streaming

- Public Worship has been suspended under the Government lockdown 2.
- Churches will continue to be opened for Private Prayer. (See separate timetable)
- Daily live streaming of the offices will continue.
- 6pm Daily Prayer for the nation during lockdown have been recorded for automated streaming.
- Live Streamed Sunday Services - 9.30am Communion and 6pm Evening Prayer.

Facebook to access livestream:

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

YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0ru_v3_1MZyzx72ka63g4A

Food Bank: Please leave donations in church or at the Vicarage, Piddletrenthide. We have received donations from Cheselbourne this week, thank you.

Rector - Fr. Roger J. Butcher SSC KSJ

The Vicarage, Church Lane, Piddletrenthide. DT2 7QY. Tel. 01300 348211 / 07502 118210

Email. rector.piddlevalleybenefice@gmail.com



Facebook: @piddlevalley



Website: <https://piddlevalleybenefice.com>