

OPENING PRAYERS AND HOLY COMMUNION ARE AVAILABLE AS A VIDEO [HERE](#)

PART 1 – OPENING PRAYERS

WELCOME

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

SENTENCE OF SCRIPTURE

The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; ask therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Matthew 9.37–38

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Let us pray.
Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleansing the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. Matthew 22.37–40, Mark 12.30–31

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

In penitence and faith,
let us confess our sins to Almighty God:

Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you
in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,
who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith:
pardon you and set you free from all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness
and keep you in eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord,
we beseech you to keep your family, the Church,
in continual godliness,
that through your protection
it may be free from all adversities,
and devoutly given to serve you in good works,
to the glory of your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PLEASE PAUSE THE VIDEO

PART 2 — AN ALL AGE VIDEO AND DOWNLOADABLE MATERIAL FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN [HERE](#)

PART 3 — LOOK UP AND READ THROUGH THE READINGS, LISTEN TO THE SERMON PODCAST (READ ALONG IF YOU WISH) BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE, AND PRAY THE INTERCESSIONS, TODAY BY KEL TAYLOR

READINGS

Romans 6:1-9

Psalm 100

Matthew 9:9-26

SERMON BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE - Matthew 9:9-26

[Available to listen online and/or download – access via Pentecost 2020 link and notice also a reasonable library of past sermons for you to listen to as you exercise or meditate...](#)

Let us pray:

Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Word; open our hearts and our minds to your Spirit as reflect and pray. Amen.

The circle of Jesus'

You get the notion in reading Matthew 9, that the different groups of the Scribes, or the Pharisees, or the disciples of John were interested in Jesus as a possible member or colleague. From the beginning of this chapter, it is one group after another coming to Jesus and making their observation, comment or criticism on what he is doing. They did not want to politely, or impolitely, ignore him. They needed to bring it to his attention, one way or another, that he hung out in the wrong places and with the wrong people.

In the scene with Matthew, the Pharisees spoke indirectly through the disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

This dinner party, occasioned by Matthew’s call to discipleship, is told slightly differently in this gospel. In Mark, the tax collector’s friends were invited, here they just show up and join in. The Pharisees take was if Jesus was going to be a Rabbi, he should be more selective about the pupils he took on.

Selection

As I ponder this, I think how hard it is to follow Jesus. How hard it is to follow his example, to do the sort of things he did - and I don’t mean miracles. I am thinking about the way we select our leaders, or people for committees, or people for certain ministries. We want to be selective, I guess we call it discernment, and in a way that is quite a right thing to do. And yet, Jesus looked at people no one else would.

When I applied to the Diocese to be ordained, you should have seen the number of forms I had to fill in. Three pages of medical history – which included a long list of ailments that you had to tick whether you suffered from any or not – you got the feeling you had to be superhuman to survive the ministry. (You didn’t realize how much hard work you all are did you?!) About ten pages of questions relating to ministry experience – it seemed they wanted to know that you had run a parish before they ordained you. More questions about your conversion to faith, your life journey, highlights or significant spiritual markers that had happened along the way.

I wonder that anybody gets ordained – or perhaps they found they had to put up with the likes of tax collectors and sinners after all!

And Jesus simply says to Matthew ‘follow me’. (We’ll do the paperwork later.) Hardly selective in the Pharisees’ view.

And in reply to their criticism, he says, *‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have come to call not the righteous, but sinners.’* Jesus looks at people no one else will look at.

Jesus looks and touches

Jesus looked at Matthew whom others regarded as a traitor. Jesus looked at a bleeding woman whom others were repelled from. Jesus looked at and touched a young dead girl that others would not come near. When Jesus walked around Galilee and Judea, pretty much 99% of them time he

was impure, unclean, for he shared meals with undesirable people, he touched sick, leprous and dead people. Not only once, he kept doing it. He touched and looked at people no one else would.

Chesed Mercy

Why? He gave a hint to the Pharisees, “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice’.” Mercy is a wonderful word.

Back in Hebrew class I learnt about God’s chesed, the word for mercy that means steadfast love and kindness. That has always stuck with me ‘steadfast love and kindness’, that is what God’s mercy is. It does not mean a letting off, a letting us get away with it type of thing. If you call that mercy, it is a turning away, an ignoring, a blind eye. Steadfast love and kindness kind of mercy doesn’t let people go or give up on them.

We celebrate this every week in our liturgy. For God has looked at me and looked at you and kept looking and reaching out and touching. This sort of mercy invites us into the circle, the Trinitarian circle of life. ***I desire mercy, not sacrifice.***

Did Jesus mean God desires to give mercy, or God desires us to give mercy? This mercy of steadfast love and kindness. Jesus takes his quote from the prophet Hosea which was originally about the people’s lack of justice and compassion.

God did prefer that they would exercise mercy as opposed to merely looking after their own necks. Their religious rituals, the burnt offerings, and sacrifices that ‘the righteous’ made were meaningless while they ignored the plight of the poor, the sick and the aliens around them. In his sermon on the mount, Jesus said those who call him “Lord, Lord!” will find that their words are meaningless unless they have done the will of God (7:21)

Later in the gospel (chapter 25) he will again speak about those who called him Lord and yet did not, or would not see him in the hungry, the thirsty, the despised, the sick and the naked – in other words the people they tried to avoid. And so, we come back to Jesus’ example again, he who did do the will of God. He who looked at people no one else would look at. The will of God is to show mercy, steadfast love, and kindness.

We cannot give mercy, unless we have received mercy

I learnt this saying from a mission team years ago, ***We cannot give what we have not received.*** It is not possible to give this full mercy if we have not felt it ourselves. It can take some time to not only believe in your head, but also in your my heart that God loves you.

God does not move forwards and backwards in like and dislike, or from delight to irritation, as we know in our own moods and relationships. We are in that divine circle of life and love. Really, truly. ***We cannot give what we have not received.***

Jesus said: ***I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.*** Interesting circle of friends God has, isn’t it?

Let us pray,

Most wonderful God, we come before you not because we are good people but because your name is Love, not because we have all the answers to life but because you are abundant life, not because we have a lot to offer you but because you offer us amazing love.

Be with each person in this church, brush our souls with your gentle but dynamic Spirit, infiltrate our thoughts with the truth which shuns all darkness, and uncap those deep springs from which true love overflows into worship. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!¹

¹ This prayer was written by Rev Bruce Prewer, a Uniting Church minister now deceased. <http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocA/39Sun10.htm>

INTERCESSIONS BY KEL TAYLOR

Heavenly Father, as Jesus demonstrated amazing power, love and compassion in healing the blind, the sick and the paralysed, we pray for those who are hurting today for whatever reason. Give comfort to those who are struggling with personal difficulties and do not know which way to turn. Show them that your love is dependable in the midst of their troubles and that you will always help those who look to you for guidance.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for the nations of the world: for your people who daily face conflict and oppression and for those who live in poverty and deprivation. We pray for the leaders of nations as they develop plans to restore their countries after the devastating effects of the coronavirus. We pray that the decisions they take may be effective and for the benefit of all the people and not a select minority.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for your worldwide church: for those in peril of persecution for their faith - in particular those in North Korea where believers face violence and extreme levels of pressure in all aspects of life; for those in Afghanistan where believers risk their freedoms, their families and their lives and in Somalia where there is no safe place and believers must practice their faith in secret. We pray for missionaries and all who seek to bring your Gospel to others, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances. We pray for our Parish here in Mount Eliza, for the building up of our church and for a continued increase in the faith of your people. We pray for your blessing and guidance on our Vicar Jennie, our lay ministers Sam and Libby and our Parish Council.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, you care tenderly for all your people: hear our prayers for the relief of those in need. We pray for your healing presence with all who are sick and suffering and in particular those of our friends in our Parish and others known to us who need your healing power.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, you offer us the gift of eternal life: hear our prayers for those who have died. We remember with thanksgiving the life and witness of Peter Clemence whose anniversary falls at this time. Heavenly Father help us to order our lives that in all our living we may give you the praise that is due and at our life's end we may come into your everlasting presence.

Lord, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ who taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

PLEASE RESUME THE VIDEO FOR HOLY COMMUNION

GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.
His Spirit is with us.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.
Blessed be God for ever.

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you,
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts;
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power,
for you created all things,
making us in your own image.

We praise you for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by his death on the cross
and rising to new life
offered the one true sacrifice for sin
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.
Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, saying,

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

And now we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine; may we who receive them, as Jesus said,
share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread and gave you thanks.
He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said,
'Take and eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup and gave you thanks.

He shared the cup with them and said,
'This is my blood poured out so that sins may be forgiven.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

You have gathered us together to feed on Christ and to remember all he has done for us:

Fill us with your Spirit that we may follow Jesus in all we do and say, working for justice and bringing your peace to this world that you have made.
Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing and honour and glory and power,
are yours forever and ever. Amen

THE BREAKING AND SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
We who are many are one body,
for we all share in the one bread.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Gracious God,
we thank you that in this sacrament
you assure us of your goodness and love.
Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving
and help us to grow in love and obedience
that we may serve you in the world
and finally be brought to that table
where all your saints feast with you for ever.

Father,
we offer ourselves to you
as a living sacrifice
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory.

THE GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

BLESSING

**The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.**

DISMISSAL

**Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.**