

[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

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.
Matthew 21.42

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Let us pray.
Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse 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

Almighty God,
your Son Jesus was the stone rejected by the builders,
and, by your doing,
he has been made the chief cornerstone:
grant that, by the power of his Spirit working in us,
we may become living stones
built up into your dwelling place,
a temple holy and acceptable to you;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

PLEASE PAUSE THE VIDEO – PRESS THE SPACEBAR TO PAUSE

PART 2 — AN ALL AGE VIDEO SERIES ON THE 4 GOSPELS, THE FIRST BEING ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK, AS IT WAS THE EARLIEST WRITTEN GOSPEL, AND DOWNLOADABLE MATERIAL FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN [HERE](#)

PART 3 — LOOK UP AND READ THROUGH THE READINGS, LISTEN TO THE [SERMON PODCAST WHICH INCLUDES THE JOB READING](#) (READ ALONG IF YOU WISH) BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE, AND PRAY THE INTERCESSIONS, TODAY BY LIBBY PATERSON.

READINGS

Dialogue between Bildad and Job selected from Job 8-26 (*The Message*) – the First Reading, read by Andrew and Stewart, can be found at the beginning of the Sermon Podcast.

Bildad

How can you keep on talking like this? You're talking nonsense, and noisy nonsense at that. Does God mess up? Does God Almighty ever get things backwards?
It's plain that your children sinned against him—otherwise, why would God have punished them?
Here's what you must do—and don't put it off any longer: get down on your knees before God Almighty. If you're as innocent and upright as you say, it's not too late—he'll come running; he'll set everything right again, reestablish your fortunes.
Even though you're not much right now, you'll end up better than ever.
There's no way that God will reject a good person, and there is no way he'll help a bad one.
[Job 8:1-7,20]

Job

“So how could I ever argue with him, construct a defense that would influence God?
Even though I'm innocent I could never prove it; I can only throw myself on the Judge's mercy.
If I called on God and he himself answered me, then, and only then, would I believe that he'd heard me.
As it is, he knocks me about from pillar to post, beating me up, black and blue, for no good reason.
He won't even let me catch my breath, piles bitterness upon bitterness.
If it's a question of who's stronger, he wins, hands down!
If it's a question of justice, who'll serve him the subpoena?
Even though innocent, anything I say incriminates me;
blameless as I am, my defense just makes me sound worse.

Here's what I want to say: Don't, God, bring in a verdict of guilty without letting me know the charges you're bringing.
How does this fit into what you once called "good"—giving me a hard time, spurning me, a life you shaped by your very own hands, and then blessing the plots of the wicked?
You don't look at things the way we mortals do. You're not taken in by appearances, are you?
Unlike us, you're not working against a deadline. You have all eternity to work things out.
So what's this all about, anyway—this compulsion to dig up some dirt, to find some skeleton in my closet?
You know good and well I'm not guilty. You also know no one can help me.
[Job 9:14-20; 10:2-7]

Bildad

Here's the rule: The light of the wicked is put out. Their flame dies down and is extinguished.
Their house goes dark—every lamp in the place goes out.
[Job 18:5]

Job

God threw a barricade across my path—I'm stymied; he turned out all the lights—I'm stuck in the dark. He destroyed my reputation, robbed me of all self-respect. He tore me apart piece by piece—I'm ruined! Then he yanked out hope by the roots.
He's angry with me—oh, how he's angry! He treats me like his worst enemy.
He has launched a major campaign against me, using every weapon he can think of, coming at me from all sides at once.
God alienated my family from me; everyone who knows me avoids me. My relatives and friends have all left; houseguests forget I ever existed.
Still, I know that God lives—the One who gives me back my life—and eventually he'll take his stand on earth.
And I'll see him—even though I get skinned alive!—see God myself, with my very own eyes.
Oh, how I long for that day!
[Job 19:19-22, 24-27]

Bildad

God is sovereign, God is fearsome—everything in the cosmos fits and works in his plan.
Can anyone count his angel armies? Is there any place where his light doesn't shine?
How can a mere mortal presume to stand up to God? How can an ordinary person pretend to be guiltless?
Why, even the moon has its flaws, even the stars aren't perfect in God's eyes, so how much less, plain men and women—slugs and maggots by comparison!
[Job 25:1-6]

Job

Well, you've certainly been a great help to a helpless man! You came to the rescue just in the nick of time!
What wonderful advice you've given to a mixed-up man! What amazing insights you've provided! Where in the world did you learn all this? How did you become so inspired?
[Job 26:1-4]

Psalm 80:7-15

Matthew 21:33-46

SERMON BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE

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...

SERMON 'JOB AND BILDAD'

Let us pray:

Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Word and as we think on the matters raised, open our hearts and our minds to hear you. Amen.

Spiritual graphs

Drawing a spiritual graph is a common exercise done in spiritual reflection. I have done them many times.

One draws a graph of the highs and lows in life and then one looks at the graph and decides where God features.

Is God there at the high points?

Or is it at the low points where God was met?

We can of course draw the graph in different ways, according to when we felt close to God, and when we felt God was absent, or when we ourselves felt far from God.

Where is God?

That's a profound question that comes from our very core.

Feeling the presence of God is an enormous comfort to many people.

God's presence ties up with our well-being.

But what about when all things are not well?

When we feel the presence of God is being denied to us?

What does that mean?

Bildad

Job's friend Bildad has a simple answer for that.

Job's children have died, cut off in their prime;

it is the classic picture of the fate of the wicked:

"It's plain your children sinned against him, otherwise, why would God have punished them?

Abandoned them to their guilt? (8:4)

That's pretty tough.

No deliberations here, guilty!

According to Bildad, the very fact that Job still lives is proof that he is no gross sinner, like his children.

Yet, Bildad is convinced of the doctrine of retribution.

Job has sinned, no doubt about it,

but the beauty of the doctrine of strict retribution is that there is nothing arbitrary about it so Job will suffer not a moment longer than he deserves to.

The doctrine also works to a person's advantage as well as one's hurt so amending one's ways inevitably leads to blessing.

Rather like instant karma.

Last week I talked about what we know technically, and yet do not really believe.
That was about God being aloof from our suffering.
Another technicality is whether God causes our suffering.
Technically we believe not, God is a God of love and does not *will* suffering.
Yet when something bad happens to us, we tend to feel we are being punished.
Even being the victim of the tall poppy syndrome – by God.

The rule of retribution never gets thrown away.
If it's not still lurking around here in this life, it is pushed further onto the afterlife.
Heaven and hell have been over emphasized as the place
where the bad get it and the good will have it made up to them.
Just like karma catches up with you in your next reincarnated life.
Either way, you don't escape paying for what you've done wrong,
or you will have your losses made up to you and be better off next time round.

Job's spiritual graph

Job protests.

Is not his suffering in this case like the verdict of guilty already?

Where is God?

Job wants an account from God as to what is going on.

He will not take the nos of his friends for an answer.

As Job's protests get stronger, he prepares to battle God, to charge God, to take him to court –
and yet, he admits, God has an unfair advantage, and Job is helpless.

If we were to look at Job's emotional graph at this time,

we would see it swing up and down between hope, despair and bitterness.

Job is afraid God is indeed cutting him off, but he knows in his gut,
it is God who can restore his life, his well-being.

Is God up there in happy land?

In the time I suffered post-natal depression, the worst feeling was that God disliked me.

This time coincided with offering myself for ordination and being turned down.

I felt cut down, despised for thinking so much of myself.

Who was I that God would want me to serve him in his church?

And yet I hoped, a small hope, that God did have a love for me.

That hope was barely alight, but I still went along to church, unable to sing, but needing to be
there.

So where was God?

Someone sent me a message to say that when they felt down,

they sang praise songs to God and felt so much better, and perhaps I could do the same?

If this message was meant to be of encouragement or comfort, it misfired.

Sing praises to God when I felt so wretched and forsaken?

Bildad in his last speech breaks into praise of God.

But it's so warped.

God is praised at the expense of humanity.

God is sovereign, God is fearsome.

How can a mere mortal presume to stand up to God?

How can an ordinary person pretend to be guiltless?

Why, even the moon has its flaws,

*even the stars aren't perfect in God's eyes,
So how much less, plain men and women—
slugs and maggots by comparison!"*

I remember seeing this cartoon, possibly by Leunig,
of someone putting another on a pedestal
by digging himself into a hole
while the other stood on the pile of dirt!

or is God found in lower places?
Where is God at these low points of life?
Well, perhaps a lot closer than we ever dream.

*Job prays:
God, how does this fit in with what you once called good?
Unlike us, you're not working against a deadline.
You have all eternity to work things out.
You know good and well that I am not guilty.
You also know that no one can help me. (Job 10:2-7)*

Job knows he is no match for God, he cannot twist his arm, but he knows God is right somehow,
he doesn't understand how at this time, but he's willing to wait.
To wait in that space of non-answer.
That's the space in which God creates faith.
Job's counselors are not willing to be in that space with no answer or conclusions.
For them faith equates with religious answers, or having the answers.
Job's faith takes him to a place where he is learning to live without them,
to learn security in what feels an insecure place.

St Paul in his personal testimony in 2 Corinthians 12:9, found that in God's grace, he was sufficient.
He heard God saying to him after he pleaded for an affliction to be removed,
"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."

Bildad is trying to get Job to save himself by admitting his guilt.
It's like telling your torturers what they want to hear so they'll stop torturing you.

That is not what God wants.
This is not how God operates.
God is not unable to be present,
or unable to work through us because of our weakness or brokenness.
Paradoxically, it seems the very opposite.
Maybe when we are most empty, is when we are most able to be filled with God's grace.

The disciples whom Jesus called to follow him were not full of religious answers and certitude.
Indeed, Luke's gospel tells us that Peter asked Jesus to go away from him
because he was a sinful man,
perhaps he had that feeling I spoke of earlier, *why would God want anything to do with me?*

But God, as Jesus demonstrated, did want to have something to do with Peter, the other disciples,
with you and with me.
Even when we may feel the absence of God, and especially then,
is the time to have faith that God is near.
We may not understand what is going on, but we can trust ... trust ...

God is with us and will bring us through our time of suffering.

Let us pray:

O Lord,

When evil darkens our world, give us light.

When despair numbs our souls, give us hope.

When we stumble and fall, lift us up.

When doubts assail us, give us faith.

When nothing seems sure, give us trust.

When ideals fade, give us vision.

When we lose our way, be our guide!

*That we may find serenity in Your presence, and purpose in doing Your will.**

Amen.

*Written by John D. Rayner,

<https://gracecathedral.org/prayers-difficult-times/>

INTERCESSIONS BY LIBBY PATERSON

Merciful God: we come before you with hearts of mixed emotion during this pandemic; with hearts that continue to praise and worship you, but hearts that are saddened and grieve for so much that we experience and see occurring around us.

We pray for the many people who have contacted the coronavirus in this country and in other parts of the world. Bring comfort to those grieving families who have lost loved ones in times of physical isolation and emotional pain.

We pray for all those risking their own lives and futures whilst caring for sick patients. May all hospital workers be given adequate protective equipment to care for Co-vid patients and perform their complex tasks and caring without fear for their own lives.

Lord, help us all to be responsible in the things we do in our lives to prevent any spread of the illness by taking heed of recommended precautions which may put others at risk. May we not become complacent in our daily activities as the “lockdown” regulations ease.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Creator God: We hear of so much unrest throughout the *world*. From refugees who continue to flee from crises throughout the world, and over half of them are children. From Syria to Greece, from Northern Africa to Italy and now across the English Channel. People putting their lives at risk to achieve freedom and escape poverty. Protect and enable the Aid organisations to perform their important work without harassment, obstruction or intimidation from others. Give these Aid workers the encouragement to continue their invaluable contribution of love and care for those people rebuilding their lives after man made or natural disasters.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father God: we pray for the folk “on the land” in this country; for those who have known drought, fire and flooding rain and difficult times through natural disasters. We pray that there will be many people who will be willing to go to the country areas and work with the farmers, orchardists and sheep graziers who supply food and abundance to this country. This is a land of plenty, and Lord God, we thank you for Your generosity, and its creation.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father God: We pray for your church, for bishops, priests and deacons, for Lay ministers, for church wardens and Parish Council. That all who have an organisational responsibility, may have a clear vision of the church for the road ahead during these times of worship wilderness, when we

cannot come together in the traditional manner. May their decisions and planning be courageous and present new opportunities to reflect You and engage in community in new and creative ways. We give thanks for Jennie and Sam and their diligent service to their ministries during this difficult period, and we ask that you strengthen and bless them and their families now and the days ahead. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving God, we pray for abundant life for anyone who has been given bad news about their health or the health of a loved one. Lord, give us wisdom, help us to know what to say and when to speak. May we be ready to give practical help, whenever we can, and to ensure that those on their own are able to manage and cope with the day to day life. May we ever be like the Good Samaritan and readily give a "helping hand".

Holy God, as we prepare for the week to come, help us to know Christ and reflect on and in Him, during our times of joy and laughter, uncertainties and struggles. Amen.

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 BY PRESSING THE SPACEBAR

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.

All thanks and praise, glory and honour,
be yours at all times, in every place,
holy and loving Father, true and living God.

We praise you that through your eternal Word
you brought the universe into being
and made us in your own image.

You have given us this earth to care for and delight in,
and with its bounty you preserve our life.
We thank you that you bound yourself to the human race
with the promises of a gracious covenant
and called us to serve you in love and peace.

Above all, we give you thanks for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ:
born as one of us, he lived our common life
and offered his life to you in perfect obedience and trust.

By his death he delivered us from sin, brought us new life,
and reconciled us to you and to one another.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
with apostles, and prophets,
with holy men and women of every age,
we proclaim your great and glorious name:

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

Holy God, we thank you
for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine,
and we pray that we who eat and drink them
in obedience to our Saviour Christ,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
may be partakers of his body and blood,
and be made one with him and with each other
in peace and love.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;
and when he had given you thanks
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup,
and again giving you thanks
he gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant

shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

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

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:
proclaiming his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross,
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming again,
we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world.

As we eat and drink this holy sacrament,
renew us by your Spirit
that we may be united in the body of your Son
and serve you as a royal priesthood
in the joy of your eternal kingdom.

Receive our praises, Father,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom and in whom,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
we worship you in songs of never-ending praise:

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

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH
We believe in one God,
who made and loves all that is.
We believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was born, lived, died and rose again,
and is coming to call all to account.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who calls, equips and sends out God's people,
and brings all things to their true end.

This is our faith, the faith of the Church:
We believe in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Living God,
in this holy meal you fill us with new hope.
May the power of your love,
which we have known in word and sacrament,
continue your saving work among us,
give us courage for our pilgrimage,
and bring us to the joys you promise.

Most loving God,
you send us into the world you love.
Give us grace to go thankfully and with courage
in the power of your Spirit.

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.

Liturgy from A Prayer Book for Australia © Broughton Publishing 1995