



Connection

Sunday 11th July 2021
Sixth Sunday after Trinity



Collect

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Ephesians 1: 3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people to the praise of his glory.

Mark 6: 14-29

King Herod heard of the healings and other miracles, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, 'John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.' But others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.' But when Herod heard of it, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.' For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, 'Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.' And he solemnly swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.' She went out and said to her mother, 'What should I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the Baptist.' Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Post Communion Prayer

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Reflection



This week's reflection is by Canon John Green, Chair of the Morogoro Partnership Group. You can listen to the podcast at:

<https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/your-faith/prayer-worship/sermon-podcasts>

Well, today's Gospel reading tells the sad story of how the life of Saint John the Baptist came to an end because of the deep seated anger and resentment of someone whose behaviour he had challenged. Please do read it very carefully as it has much to teach us about the importance of how you might respond to the challenges and critique of others. None of us like being criticised, but the way in which you respond can sometimes lead to more pain and heartache for others as well as for yourself.

The story is a sad and sorrowful one. John has spoken out against Herod for marrying his brother's wife Herodias. In many ways Herod was in awe of John, seeing him as a profoundly spiritual man, but he was rather weak and very much dominated by Herodias his wife and, as a result, Herod had imprisoned John. Notwithstanding the imprisonment of John, however, Herodias still continued to nurse a deep anger at John and waited for an opportunity to have him killed which, as we know, was at last provided by the brash promise of Herod to the girl who danced for him at his birthday celebration.

This rather challenging Gospel story may bring to mind moments in your own life when, perhaps, you feel that you have been criticised unfairly. Perhaps you have gone away and brooded over it feeling sore and hurt. Maybe you have thought about how you might get back at the person who has hurt you? However, another possibility undergirding your response might just be that being criticised has brought you face to face with an aspect of your life and personality which you have not accepted or have been running from.

Could these difficult moments in our own lives be the beginning of prayer? If you are like me you may find the way into prayer very challenging and rather daunting. How do you begin to talk with God? How do you begin to open your heart to the One who is the source of all life? Perhaps our hurt and anger about being challenged by another can be a surprising and unexpected window into the fathomless love of God.

Yes, surprising though it may be, you will find new peace and healing for your lives as you take your hurt and grievance to God in prayer. Start by finding a peaceful place, sit down and, in the silence, recall to mind a passage of scripture that has deep meaning for you. As you open your heart and mind to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ pray, also, for the one who has hurt you. Draw close to them and ask for the wisdom to see the issue that is causing you sorrow from their perspective. Reflect on any insight that you have gained and then ask for grace and wisdom to move on with your life.

From time to time all of us are criticised or challenged and it is such a shame if we react like Herodias with such bitterness and anger that it spoils our own lives and wrecks our relationships with others. How tragic that Herodias was not willing to face up to and live with the truth in John's critique of her.

Perhaps you are living with frustration and bitterness caused by someone and, just maybe, it could turn out to be a window into prayer and the healing, unconditional love of God. As you pray the moment of conflict you may become aware that the truth is greater than your limited understandings of it and that you need to look to Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life to bring true wholeness and healing to your life.



Requests for Prayers

We pray for all those who are sick everywhere and for those who have asked for our prayers and

for their carers: Roy and Margaret Putnam, Edward Bunn, Brian Bolam, Wendy Dufty, Yvonne Seward, Andy Caddell, Gayle Richards, Laurence Alexander

We continue to pray for: Percy and Sharon Blizzard, Jackie Pickford, Clive Hunt.

We pray for those who are in residential care: Sheila Bigland-Gibbons, Barbara Milton, Rita Sheppy and David Wilkinson.

We pray for those who have died everywhere: For Pat Farey and Jane Rogers and their families. And also for those whose anniversary of death falls at this time.



Church Services

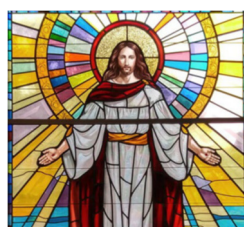
The church services this week will be at:

10.30am St John the Baptist, Beckford – Rev Allison Davies

10.30am St Giles, Bredon – Rev Catherine Lack

The Rota for July 2021

Date	Church	Time	Minister
18 th July	St James, Defford	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
	St Michael's Bricklehampton	10.30am	Canon Roger Spiller
25 th July	Chapel of Ease, Bredon's Norton	9.00am	Reverend Catherine Lack
	St Faith's, Overbury Family Service including the baptism of James Prior	10.30am	Reverend Allison Davies
	Holy Trinity, Eckington Baptism of Montgomery Mustin	12.30pm	Reverend Allison Davies
	Licensing of Reverend Katryn, St Mary's, Elmley Castle	4.00pm	Bishop Martin Gorick



News from the Diocese

Prayers and diocesan news can be found at

www.cofe-worcester.org.uk

Don't forget that Wheels for the World - a charity which provides life-changing mobility along with the hope of the Gospel to people impacted by disability around the world – will be featured on **BBC Songs of Praise on Sunday 18th July**. Colin Reeves, who used to live in Pershore but has recently moved to Eckington, used to chair Wheels for the World and it was also a previous Pershore Lenten Project.



Reverend Allison Davies

Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group