

First Sunday after Trinity

Prayers, Readings, Reflection and Song.

“Welcome to another short act of worship for the Parish Church of St Martin. For those who are able to follow it as written or listen in, I hope it offers some comfort, encouragement and a sense of being together despite the distance between us.” Rev Jonny



*Be still, and draw yourself closer to the God who rests beside you,
before you and within you.*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

The Lord be with you

All **And also with you**

God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit.

Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness,
all slander and malice,
and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

Father, you come to meet us when we return to you:
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus, you died on the cross for our sins:
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Spirit, you give us life and peace:
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

May the Father forgive *you* by the death of his Son and strengthen you to live in the power of the Spirit all *your* days.

All **Amen**

The Collect for the day

O God,
the strength of all those who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in the keeping of your commandments
we may please you both in will and deed;
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.

All **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Reading, Romans 5: 1-8

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

This is the Word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God**

Reflection

I wanted to share with you this week an article I read by the American pastor Ed Stetzer. Pastor Ed is not someone who is on my usual reading list, but he is one of many Christian leaders in America who have made statements in the past week about the way their President has used the faith and the Bible to prop up his use of violence and extreme rhetoric against largely peaceful protests in the wake of the killing of George Floyd.

This article is not about those current events, but instead reflects on the theology of suffering, endurance and hope that we read about in Paul's letter to the Romans, much of which is relevant to the circumstances we find ourselves in today. I share it with you here unedited.

“Why?” is the question many of us ask of the Lord when something tragic happens in our lives or in the life of someone we know. There's story after story of suffering in the Bible, but very seldom do we know why the people suffered. On this topic Paul wrote:

we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Romans 5:3-5

Rejoicing in the midst of suffering focuses our attention on the knowledge of what the Spirit produces in us through that suffering. The result is threefold: suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

Suffering Unleashes Endurance

Endurance in the Bible means steadfast adherence to a course of action in spite of difficulties and testing. As we go through trials, we develop greater perseverance to deal with increased challenges. Consider James's words on the subject:

Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing. Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without criticizing, and it will be given to him.

James 1:2-5

Endurance Unleashes Character

As God produces in us greater fortitude and capacity to deal with more hardship, He brings out character. Character is the image of Christ that's present in us being made clearer. In essence, character means to expose the quality of what's being tested.

In the heat of suffering, God gives grace for us to endure. A goldsmith uses heat under a smelting pot to bring the impurities to the top, which are skimmed off, leaving only the pure gold behind. In the same way, God uses our suffering to bring out the impurities in our lives and remove them. Peter alluded to this concept:

You rejoice in this, though now for a short time you have had to struggle in various trials so that the genuineness of your faith – more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory, and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:6-7

The smelter knows the gold is ready to come off the heat when he sees his face in the melted metal. There are no impurities left to obscure his reflection. When the goldsmith sees his reflection, he knows the precious metal is now ready to be moulded into what he desires. This is a picture of the way God brings out our character through suffering.

Character Unleashes Hope

Character that's sanctified by the gospel becomes progressively more stable and is therefore able to focus more effectively on the things of the Lord. Character unleashes hope in suffering. Hope is the joyful expectation of what the Lord has promised. Paul wrote:

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in Him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

As disciples of Jesus, we must use hard times to harness who we really are in Christ. Until the earthen vessel is broken, the treasure within it can't be seen. Likewise, as our brokenness is exposed, Jesus is seen. It's glorious to know that a Christian's suffering in this life isn't a denial of who Christ is but an affirmation. As we experience hardship, every test of the living God finds us transformed into pure gold for His glory.

Song

**Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.**

**'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.**

**Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.**

**The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.**

**When we've been there a thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.**

Prayers of Intercession

*Pray for one another – those in our church community
Pray for the Parish, the Island and the World
Pray for the sick, the isolated, the anxious and depressed
Pray for the dying, and those who mourn
Pray for yourselves, and for your own needs*

Lord in your mercy
All Hear our prayer

The Intercessions may end as follows

Merciful Father
**All Accept these prayers
for the sake of your son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

The Peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.
Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.
Peace from the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.
The peace of the triune God be always with you

All **and also with you.**

Let us pray with confidence, as our Saviour taught us
All **Our Father**
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from
evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
For ever and ever. Amen.

The Blessing.

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side,
and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All **In the name of Christ. Amen.**