**Early Communion TWO B**

19 November 2023

**Greeting**

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all:  
**and also with you.**

**Collect for Purity**

**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.**

**Penitence.**

*The Beatitudes: page 223*  
Let us hear our Lord’s blessing on those who follow him:  
Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
**Jesus, remember me  
when you come into your kingdom.**  
Blessed are the meek,  
for they shall inherit the earth.  
**Jesus, remember me  
when you come into your kingdom.**  
Blessed are those who weep  
for they shall be consoled.  
**Jesus, remember me  
when you come into your kingdom.**  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice,  
for they shall be satisfied.  
**Jesus, remember me  
when you come into your kingdom.**  
Blessed are the merciful,  
for they shall obtain mercy.  
**Jesus, remember me  
when you come into your kingdom.**  
Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they shall see God.  
**Jesus, remember me  
when you come into your kingdom.**  
Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they shall be called the children of God.  
**Jesus, remember me  
when you come into your kingdom.**  
Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
**Jesus, remember me  
when you come into your kingdom.**

**Confession**

*Silence*  
Let us confess our sins

**Penitential Sentences**

Lord God, you sent your Son to reconcile us to yourself and to one another.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**  
Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division.  
Christ, have mercy.  
**Christ, have mercy.**  
Holy Spirit, through you we put to death the sins of the body – and live.  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

**Absolution**

*Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy on you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in eternal life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord*. **Amen.**

**Glory to God *page 203***

*Let us stand*

**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.**

**Collect of the Second Sunday before Advent**

Heavenly Father,   
whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Epistle 1 Thessalonians 5:1–11**

A reading from First Thessalonians chapter five beginning at verse 1  
Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5 You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10 He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.  
11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.  
This is the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

**Gospel Matthew 25:14–30**

Hear the Gospel of our Saviour Christ, according to Matthew chapter 25 beginning at verse 14  
**Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**  
14 “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. 19 “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’ 21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ 22 “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’ 23 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ 24 “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ 26 “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 28 “ ‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.  
30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

*and concludes with:*  
This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Sermon**

**Sobriety**

We do not often reflect in weekly sermons on the issue of drunkenness and sobriety.  
There is a variety of opinion on the matter whether or not to drink alcohol, but a more common agreement that we should avoid getting drunk.  
So why does Paul talk about this issue with his friends in Thessalonica?  
He seems to know a lot about life in the city, and it is all quite positive.  
But there is a hidden side, a side to the people among whom the christians live, which, like all pervasive culture, can infect even the most holy community.

1. These believers are children of the light but there others who belong to the night.

*when we get too close to others who do not share the faith, adopting habits that they think are perfectly good, then we risk imitating choices that will quench the Spirit in our thinking and actions.* Is the risk of losing our ethical standards the reason Paul wants us to sober?

1. Verse 7 speaks of those who get drunk at night, as opposed to sober people who live in full view of the public.

*as a clergyman, especially at an event when others can see me, people will be quick to notice if I take alcohol and how much of it I might drink. Even a wine glass with water in it may suggest to people that I knock back the booze, especially if it gets in a photo. if a church leader is seen to be comfortable drinking then they may send a message to vulnerable people, young or old, that you can-drink whatever you want.* Is that why Paul encourages sobriety?

1. Verse 10 says that whether we are awake or asleep Jesus died for us. So Paul, I think, is not writing believers off who occasionally fall off the path - whose values have dozed off - rather he is assuring us of Christ’s continuing desire for our good.

*a judgemental spirit is never a pretty sight, but a reckless lack of self control in church people is even worse. let’s recover Paul’s goal that we live our loves that whoever might se them would see a good reflection of Jesus in us.*

**Nicene Creed *page 205***

Let us affirm our Faith in God

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is,  
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God,  
Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures**;

**he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**Prayers of the People**

**…**

God of heaven and earth, through Jesus Christ you promise to hear us when we pray to you in faith with thanksgiving.

We pray for one another, for our families and friends, through whom we learn to love and to be loved. Thank you for all who care for us. Give us grace to serve Christ by serving our neighbours and our community, loving others as he loves us.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

We thank you for the unfailing love you hold out to everyone in Jesus Christ. Comfort and heal those in sorrow, need, sickness or any other trouble. Give them courage and hope in their distress, and bless those who minister to them.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

We remember with gratitude your many gifts to us in creation and the rich heritage of this island. Help us and people everywhere to share with justice and peace the resources of the earth. Give wisdom to those in authority among us and to all leaders of the nations.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

We pray for your Church throughout the world, thanking you for all who serve Christ and his kingdom. By your Spirit strengthen your people for their work and witness in the world. Unite us in your truth and love, that we who confess your name may also reflect your glory.  
Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer**

We remember with thanksgiving all who have died in Christ, and we rejoice at the faithful witness of your saints in every age, praying that we may enter with them into the unending joy of your heavenly kingdom.

Merciful Father,  
**accept these our prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**The Peace**

Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. We meet in his name and share his peace.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you**

**Taking the Bread & Wine**

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us  
**therefore let us celebrate the feast.**

**Great Thanksgiving (3) page 216**

The Lord is here.  
**His Spirit is with us.**  
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.**

Father, Lord of all creation, we praise you for your goodness and your love. When we turned away you did not reject us. You came to meet us in your Son, welcomed us as your children and prepared a table where we might feast with you.

In Christ you shared our life  
that we might live in him and he in us.  
**He opened wide his arms upon the cross  
and, with love stronger than death,  
he made the perfect sacrifice for sin.**

Lord Jesus Christ, our redeemer, on the night before you died you came to table with your friends. Taking bread, you gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them saying,

Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.  
**Lord Jesus, we bless you:  
you are the bread of life.**

At the end of supper you took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me.  
**Lord Jesus, we bless you:  
you are the true vine.**

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ:  
**dying, you destroyed our death,  
rising, you restored our life;  
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

Holy Spirit, giver of life, come upon us now; may this bread and wine be to us the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**As we eat and drink these holy gifts**  
**make us, who know our need of grace,  
one in Christ, our risen Lord.**

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Blessed Trinity: with your whole Church throughout the world we offer you this sacrifice of thanks and praise and lift our voice to join the song of heaven,

for ever praising you and saying:  
**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord,  
God of power and might.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Thanks be to you, our God, for your gift beyond words.  
**Amen. Amen. Amen.**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, so we 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.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

**Breaking Bread**

The bread which we break  
is a sharing in the body of Christ.  
**We being many are one body,  
for we all share in the one bread.**

**Invitation**

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God,  
who has taken away the sin of the world.  
Happy are those who are called to his supper.  
**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,  
But only say the word and I shall be healed.**

**Receiving Communion**

Please come forward to receive the Bread and Wine.

**Prayer after Communion**

Gracious Lord, in this holy sacrament you give substance to our hope. Bring us at the last to that pure life for which we long, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.**Amen.**

**Send us**

**Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the spiritual food  
of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work to your praise and glory. 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 with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**Dismissal**

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