



Parish of
St Peter Woking
St Peter's · St Mark's · All Souls'



Sunday 26th July 2020

Morning Worship

Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

All and also with you.

Welcome and introduction

Hymn **307 I will enter His gates**

I will enter His gates with thanksgiving in my heart
I will enter His courts with praise
I will say this is the day that the Lord has made
I will rejoice for He has made me glad

*He has made me glad, He has made me glad
I will rejoice for he has made me glad
He has made me glad, He has made me glad
I will rejoice for he has made me glad*

Opening activity ~ Urban myth

Confession

**All Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore to us the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Absolution

**Leader May the Father of all mercies cleanse you from your sins,
and restore you in his image to the praise and glory of his
name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Collect (7th Sunday after Trinity)

Leader Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow: Though our faith is as small as a mustard seed, make it grow to your glory and the flourishing of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

This time @home ~ Allison McFarlane

Song **Giants of Faith**

We all come in different shapes and sizes

And life is full of many surprises

But one thing stays the same

Jesus is on my side

I don't need to be afraid

I don't need to run and hide

When I open my bible it's clear as can be

The God that I read about's with me

And I'm going to be a giant of faith

Like Moses (Moses)

And Joseph (Joseph)

Daniel, Esther, Rahab and Ruth

No denying the truth

They're giants of faith

Like David (David)

Elijah (Elijah)

Noah and the rest of the team

I'm gonna be a giant of faith

I'm gonna be a giant of faith

Every day, we always stick together

Hand in hand, through every adventure

If I'm playing with my friends

Or when I go to sleep

I know you are always there

And angels are watching me

When I open my bible it's clear as can be

The God that I read about's with me

And I'm going to be a giant of faith

By faith I can do anything

By faith I can do anything

By faith I can do anything through Christ

Bible readings;

Matthew 5.1-12 Helen Maguire, *St Peter's*

¹Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ²and he began to teach them saying:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Acts 15.22-33 Rosemary McCrum, *St Mark's*

²²Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. ²³With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,
To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

²⁴We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul -- ²⁶men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

³⁰The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. ³¹The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. ³²Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. ³³After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them.

Sermon Judas & Silas ~ Jonathan Thomas

I have a vague recollection when I was 6 or 7 of my teacher having to pop out of class for a few minutes whilst we were doing spellings and telling the rest of the class to come to me if they had any problems because I was a top speller! Not sure if it is true, or a distorted childhood memory, but I recall being proud to be trusted with this task. Trusted by a

teacher to help my classmates which made me feel important, clever and grown-up.

As we think about the two characters from Acts we will be looking at today, Judas and Silas, I'm going to coin a new phrase that is applicable to both me in school at 7, Judas & Silas and I hope us – a Trustmate. It's not a real word in any dictionary, though it is a product name for a few things such as an anti-money laundering solution and a fungicide! If Shakespeare could invent words like bandit, critic, dwindled and swagger, then why can't I invent one, though I appreciate it may not get into the dictionary or be widely used any time soon.

But the term Trustmate came to me when I was thinking about Judas and Silas. Before I explain why and what my definition is, let me give you some background to our reading from Acts 15:22-33.

We are still in the very early days of the church. Paul and Barnabas were ministering to the church in Antioch (southern Turkey today) made up primarily of gentiles. But false teachers there were insisting that gentile converts to faith in Jesus needed to be circumcised as Jews. This caused heated debate and disagreement, so the church in Antioch decided to send Paul and Barnabas to get an official position from the church in Jerusalem, where Peter and the apostles were, which was the headquarters of the new Christian faith and was made up of mostly Jews rather than gentiles.



When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem, they told the apostles how gentiles were being converted in Antioch and elsewhere and the miracles they saw God do amongst them. Some of the church in Jerusalem were Pharisees, they had come to faith in Jesus, but couldn't let go of the Old Testament law and felt new believers needed to be circumcised, that it was a sign of their new faith as Jews who believed in Jesus. But Peter reminded them that God was giving gentile believers the Holy Spirit, a sure sign of his presence, without being circumcised and reminded them that it is by grace they have been saved, not through law or works which was the old way that Jesus had come to free people from.

The apostles made a ruling that circumcision was not necessary for converts to the Christian faith and gave a list of only a few key things they felt were important for new believers. But they knew this was a contentious ruling and that the false teachers in the church in Antioch may not believe Paul and Barnabas when they returned with this ruling, even with a letter from the apostles which I suppose could be forged. So they decided to send two neutral people who the church in Antioch could trust to confirm by word of mouth what was put in writing by HQ in Jerusalem. And this is where they chose Judas and Silas, our two characters for today, to be these trusted envoys.

We don't know much about them, it is the first time they appear in the bible, apart from the fact they were on the leadership team of the church and were prophets. Judas Barsabbas only appears here, nowhere else in the bible, though there are other Judases and Judes. He is possibly the brother of Joseph Barsabbas nominated in Acts 1 to take the role of the twelfth apostle after Judas Iscariot killed himself.

Silas we hear a bit more about after this event because Paul later chooses him to be his companion on his missionary journeys after Paul falls out with Barnabas. So he is clearly a reliable person, strong in faith who Paul trusted to support his missionary work which involved great personal risk.

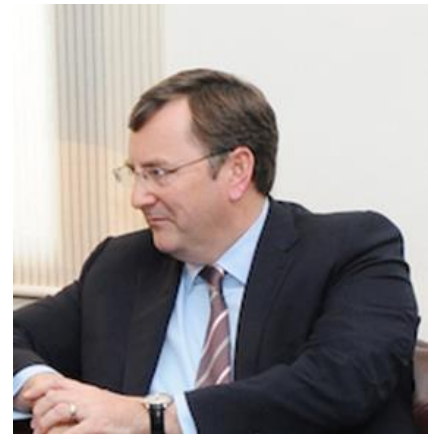
We don't know enough about Judas and Silas to know why they were chosen for this role, but clearly they were men of great character who the apostles in the Jerusalem church could trust and knew the Antioch church could also trust to impartially confirm the church's edict and if necessary explain it. This was a crucial role, because if the Antioch church, pressured by the false teachers, didn't believe the edict to be true or decided to ignore it the church in its very early days could have split and the Antioch church fizzled out becoming all about law and works rather than grace.

As it turns out the church in Antioch received the apostles' edict in the letter Judas and Silas carried with great gladness at its encouraging message. But Judas and Silas didn't just stop at their "Postman Pat" role, they spent time talking and ministering to the church in Antioch, strengthening and encouraging them, no doubt part of the reason they

were entrusted with this role. They had a servant heart and a desire to spread the gospel and disciple new believers.

I've called Judas and Silas "Trustmates" because I think this new word captures what they were about. They were trusted people who the apostles knew would not let them down for this vital role, they were utterly dependable. To have become a trustmate they would have been given small roles that they had done well in the past, then probably bigger roles and proven themselves to be reliable and in tune with the apostles' values. Whilst it wasn't a career path as such, they undoubtedly would have built up trust over time.

It reminds me of businessman Philip Clarke, shown here, who is probably not known by you. But he started off his career stacking shelves in Tesco's as a teenager, went on the graduate training programme and worked his way up to be a director and the eventually became CEO before leaving in 2014. Not only was he loyal, but being someone who worked in the same company for so long he clearly became someone who could be trusted, who they had seen do the ordinary jobs well and had grown in stature and favour as Judas and Silas would have done.



So what makes a trustmate, someone who can be trusted implicitly? There are some key values here. They need to be honest, reliable, dependable and loyal. And a key word here is integrity. What you see is what you get. They don't hide things from people, they don't bluff their way trying to impress, they are not all sweetness and light to someone's face whilst gossiping or badmouthing them behind their back.

But I think a key thing about a trustmate is that they have these values whether dealing with large or small things. In the parable of the talents in Matthew 25 the master tells those who have doubled the money he gave them to look after, "Well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things." If we are honest with small amounts of money, reliable with menial tasks, loyal when it's not that important, then we build up trust. If we say to ourselves "It doesn't matter if I fiddle my expenses a little I

would never defraud the company of millions” we are deceiving ourselves, but it will affect our attitude and others will notice.

The final key to being a trustmate is to be rooted in Jesus. Because if he is central to our lives, our attitudes, our view of ourselves and others, and above all our values, then we don’t have to work too hard at being a trustmate, it’s an integral part of our lives faith. And if he is central to our lives then we will constantly be looking to him as our example, the ultimate trustmate.

Are we trustmates? Not just with our friends and family, but people everyone can rely on, because we are not partisan or choosy for whom we behave with integrity. If not then the first step is to be honest with ourselves, identify those areas we need to change, maybe talk with a trustmate of your own about your weaknesses, ask God for forgiveness and then seek the help of the Holy Spirit daily to live out those values.

Judas and Silas, however trustworthy they were, would have not fulfilled their role of being trustmates if they had said to the apostles “It’s a bit far to Antioch, I’m not good on long journeys” or “I don’t think I would have the right words if the church in Antioch challenged this edict.” I remember when I was in my early 30s and my team leader in the consultancy where I worked left. I assumed that the company would advertise for a new team leader, so was surprised when they asked me to take on that role. I didn’t feel qualified or experienced enough to take it on. I wanted an easy life rather than the stresses of team management. But on reflecting with Sarah and praying about it I realised that my company, where I had been for 5 or 6 years, knew me, trusted me, believed in me and that maybe this was part of God’s plan for me. Little did I know that this experience of team management was foundational in preparing me for my calling to be a vicar.

Often other people trust us more than we trust ourselves, so we need to listen to them and prayerfully consider their views when considering a position of trust, rather than doubting ourselves. Maybe there are people in our sphere of influence – children, grandchildren, employees, friends who we can develop, encourage, give trusted roles to so that they can become trustmates like Judas and Silas who don’t just have Christ-like character, but are ready to respond to his call wherever that may take them. Amen

Hymn **1008 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want**

The Lord's my shepherd,
I'll not want.

He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still
waters,

His goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in You alone,
And I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in
righteousness,

And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on His pure delights.

And I will trust . . .

And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod
and staff

Are the comfort I need to know.

And I will trust . . .

Creed

**I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth,
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was
buried; he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

Prayers ~ Patrick Phillipps

Loving Father, over the last few weeks, we have all been living in a world of unprecedented change. As we come together today to worship, some of us may feel that we face yet more change as we meet on-line or at St. Mark's or All Souls. Help each one of us whatever our feelings may be towards online services, zoom meetings or virtual events to know that we remain as one Parish, one Church with one purpose to worship one unchanging God who knows each one of us better than we know ourselves and loves us more than we can ever deserve

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen**

Merciful Father, most of us during the lockdown have experienced times of very mixed emotions including doubt, anger, fear, grief and even despair as we struggle to make sense of the seemingly unreal circumstances around us. Some of us may even have questioned Your purposes in allowing this situation to develop.

We are sorry that in doing so, we have perhaps ceased to put our faith in your unfailing care for each and every one of us. Father forgive us.

We thank you that whatever our faults we can still take comfort in knowing that following Your Son's supreme sacrifice on our behalf You remain open and willing to welcome us back when we turn to You in true repentance.

We give You now the honour and glory which is so rightfully yours and humbly pray that in the coming weeks you will continue to strengthen and encourage us. Help us to find that peace of mind which comes only when we truly put our trust in you.

We ask this in the name of our Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Heavenly Father, we lay before you at this time of great turmoil all those in so many areas of our world who are facing the dangers and hardships arising from the spread of the current pandemic. We think especially of those already devastated countries in Africa, Asia and South America where many helpless and vulnerable people are in desperate need and there are very limited health, medical and other resources available. Be with them all wherever they may be. Bring hope to the hopeless and comfort to the isolated and forgotten

We ask for your protection and blessing on all those who are endeavouring, sometimes at considerable risk to themselves, to bring the support and other relief which is so desperately needed, We pray for skill and co-operation amongst all those engaged in the urgent research for possible vaccines and treatments for those suffering both in mind and body.

We pray for the leaders of all countries rich and poor that they may put aside their differences and come together in a spirit of concern for all to find ways and means to ease the suffering of so many and to bring peace and growing prosperity for all nations

We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen**

Dear God, as we in this country begin once again to look with hope and some caution to the future, we thank you for the many blessings which, despite the hardships, You have shown us over this period of

uncertainty. As members of this Parish we remember the fellowship and support for one another which is so evident amongst us and the willingness of so many to step out of their comfort zones to do things whether large or small to help grow our Church. We think especially of the positive ways that services and events have developed to meet the changing needs of the Parish and the members of our church family. We pray that this sense of unity throughout the Parish will continue to grow and inspire us all to look for yet more ways to spread your message of hope amongst those who as yet may feel themselves outsiders in our Parish.

More particularly we give you thanks for the unstinting efforts of our whole team of leaders in keeping and encouraging all of us to stay, work and worship together in a period of real and difficult change and to bring comfort and reassurance to us all.

Lord God be with them and all of us as we move forward together.

In Jesus' name we pray

In a moment of quiet and as members of our church family let us remember those among us who face particular challenges not least those with health problems including Mary and Bob Baker, Eileen and Peter Bliss, Trevor Lloyd, Mary McAvoy, Joy Storkey and John Hunter. Let us also not forget those who continue to mourn the loss of loved ones and not least the families and friends of Pat Moorse, Joan Deacon, Richard Summers, Malcolm Hunt and others who may be known privately to each or any of us

Be with them all in their suffering and their pain

In Jesus' name we pray

We conclude our prayers by saying together the prayer which Jesus himself taught us

**All Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed be Your name,
Your Kingdom come,
Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us,
And lead us not into temptation.
But deliver us from evil,
For Yours is the kingdom, The power and the glory for ever and
ever; AMEN**

Notices

Hymn **473 My hope is built on nothing less**

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and
righteousness;

I dare not trust the sweetest
frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

*On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.*

When darkness seems to veil His
face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.

On Christ, the solid rock....

His oath, His covenant, and blood
Support me in the whelming
flood:

When all around my soul gives
way,
He then is all my hope and stay.

On Christ, the solid rock....

When I shall launch in worlds
unseen

O may I then be found in Him,
Clothed in His righteousness
alone,

Faultless to stand before His
throne.

On Christ, the solid rock....

The Blessing

God grant you grace
to be good servants of Christ Jesus,
nourished on the words of the faith
and on the sound teaching that you have followed;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

Worshipping ▶ Loving ▶ Sharing ▶ Growing

