



Sunday 15th November

PREPARATION

Welcome and Prayer

Leader God is good
All All the time.
 All the time
All God is good.
 The Lord is with us
All Let us praise his name together.

Hymn **920 Praise the Lord! Ye heavens, adore Him**

Praise the Lord!
 ye heav'ns, adore him;
 Praise him angels, in the height;
 Sun and moon, rejoice before him;
 Praise him, all ye stars of light.
 Praise the Lord! for he has spoken;
 Worlds his mighty voice obeyed;
 Laws which never shall be broken
 For their guidance he has made.

 Praise the Lord! for he is glorious;
 Never shall his promise fail;
 God has made his saints victorious;
 Sin and death shall not prevail.

Praise the God of our salvation!
 Hosts on high his pow'r proclaim;
 Heav'n, and earth, and all creation,
 Laud and magnify his name.

 Worship, honour, glory, blessing,
 Lord, we offer unto thee;
 Young and old, thy praise
 expressing,
 In glad homage bend the knee.
 All the saints in heav'n adore thee,
 We would bow before thy throne;
 As thine angels serve before thee,
 So on earth thy will be done.

Opening activity ~ 'Obstacle course challenge'

Confession

Leader Jesus said,
 'Love the Lord your God with all
 your heart.'
 Lord God we are sorry when we do not follow you
 with all our heart.
All Lord, forgive us

 Jesus said,
 'Love the Lord your God with all your soul.'
 We are sorry when we do not obey you.
All Lord, forgive us



Jesus said,
'Love the Lord your God with all your mind.'
We are sorry when we think wrong thoughts.
All Lord, forgive us

Jesus said,
'Love the Lord your God with all your strength.'
We are sorry when we are half-hearted followers.
All Lord, forgive us

Help us to be people who love
and obey you in all things.
All Amen

Absolution

Leader May the God of love and power
forgive you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,
and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.
All Amen.

Collect (prayer on this day)

Leader 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; and 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, in
the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
All Amen

'A Christian response to suffering' – Mick Moorese

Song **Broken vessels**

All these pieces broken and
scattered
In mercy gathered mended and
whole
Empty handed but not forsaken
I've been set free I've been set free
*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now I am found
Was blind but now I see*

*Oh I can see You now
Oh I can see the love in Your eyes
Laying Yourself down
Raising up the broken to life
You take our failure
You take our weakness
You set Your treasure in jars of clay
So take this heart Lord
I'll be Your vessel
The world to see Your life in me
Amazing grace . . .*

Bible readings

2 Corinthians 11.16-33 ~ Pauline Wilde, St Peter's

¹⁶ I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. ¹⁷ In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. ¹⁸ Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. ¹⁹ You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! ²⁰ In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face. ²¹ To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷ I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. ³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

Matthew 16.21-28 – Allen Taylor, St Peter's

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. ²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" ²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. ²⁸ "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Sermon Dean Pusey – **Suffer Fools Gladly?**
2 Corinthians 11:16–33

Come Holy Spirit and speak with your breath in our lives through this your holy life-giving Word. Point us to Jesus and our Father in heaven.
Amen

Good Morning!

'I am sorry that I cannot be with you face to face and long to see you all face to face as it has been a while and since you sent me on this journey of my vocation to become a priest since September 2019 and I too am becoming a more holy fool!'

This opening sounds a little like Paul's letters to the churches and our journey with his life these last few weeks. As we are now in our second version of lockdown due to Covid 19 – This passage has a resonance that I hope will connect to many of us wherever we are this morning at home and beyond. Here are a few thoughts that have been laid on my heart to share with today called 'Suffer Fools Gladly?'

The phrase is well known to many of us, perhaps. We often hear sayings but never sometimes know the origins of these – passed down through elders usually. However, it is from this passage of Paul's 2nd letter to Corinthians 11 that this phrase comes from in 'suffering fools gladly'. It is a dramatic and vivid chapter and a change in tone from the previous tone of the letter with passion and urgency. It brings us closer to the apostle Paul and his humanity in such a close and intimate way that brings us face to face with the sufferings and what would be called trauma which is mental and physical. His experience of his hallmarks of suffering is an exhaustive list. How he survived is in itself astonishing! Literally, for the grace of God, Paul went.

We all know people of whom it is said. 'They don't suffer fools gladly'. Those persons are seen as wise, experienced people to take note of and usually not get on the wrong side of! The experience for the recipient of this perceived wisdom is one that usually leaves the recipient to feel inferior or even ashamed, and at worst can suffer some emotional,

physical or mental anguish as a result. These encounters can happen in all walks of life – even in our Church. Could we be foolish not to think so? Whether we are on social media particularly Facebook or Twitter or in our homes or workplaces/spaces or friendship groups in Church or the wider community – this phrase will be present in the words and actions of someone whom we know.

The Apostle Paul, in this text his second letter to a challenging Corinthian Church is no different. He is a man of strong opinions and convictions when faced with a church that has several issues in how it chooses to live out being a Christian Community under a ruthless Roman Empire that puts the individual centre unless serving the appetite of Empire and all it stands for!

St Paul is trying his best as a leader to make sense to his followers what he has been asked to respond in how they are as a Christian Community. How do they live this Christ-life in the midst of an empire but also a world that is plural with many different competing voices? So journey with me as we look at these three words

Suffer

This is a big word in the journey of our humanity. Much has been spoken about this by people more eminent than myself. Many of us have endured suffering and loss during our lives to greater or lesser extents, some will and are currently experiencing this in life. It is part of our existence. During this time of the pandemic, our understanding of suffering in our world comes much closer than we could have ever imagined or wanted. In various ways we have suffered to greater or lesser degrees with absence of physical touch, social distancing—loss and grief in various ways, some not chosen perhaps chosen as we search to find meaning. Just as St Paul suffered, this was not taken away or hidden from the Corinthian Church or ourselves as readers. There were no special exemptions or vaccine for St Paul to go around the path of suffering. His suffering though outlined, was not one that stopped with him, or his experience but was modelled earlier by the One, Jesus Christ on a road to Damascus, when he was that person who did not 'suffer fools gladly' but caused great suffering in his zealotry. Here St Paul lays this out starkly to give the perspective of his reason and credentials with urgency. He was persecuted both by the Jewish community born and raised in and the Roman Empire he was also a citizen. The worst of the punishments of both centred on his human experience.

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods,

once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷ I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

We too do not have any special exemptions unfortunately to go through the suffering that this pandemic has brought upon many any other form of suffering.

The Archbishop of York, Rt Rev Stephen Cotterell in his address to a special general synod at the end of September said the and is worth repeating again if you haven't heard in its starkness and can be found on the internet –it is worth a read/watch. It is worth seeing our equivalent of suffering currently in this pandemic that the Archbishop shares.

Archbishop Stephen says

'I hate this Coronavirus. I hate it because not only so many have died, but because so many people have died alone, unable to hold the hand of a dear beloved. I hate it because our health service has been stretched to the limit. I hate it because so many are bereaved and could not sit next to a family member at a funeral or embrace each other. I hate it because weddings and baptisms and ordinations have been postponed or have gone ahead without the parties that have meant to be with them. I hate it because children's schooling has been disrupted. I hate it because so many people have been so ill, crying out in pain, so many isolated, lonely, fearful, depressed. I hate it because behind locked doors terrible things have happened. I hate it because the poor and the disadvantaged have been hit the hardest. I hate it because it has left so many people across the world feeling hopeless as if life itself has been taken from us.

I hate this Coronavirus and I reluctantly acknowledge that because of this Coronavirus we have learned some hard lessons about ourselves. We have learned that we belong to each other and my interest is tied up with your interest. We have learned again that death is real. We have learned that progress does not mean living in a pain-free world. We have learned that those jobs that we had thought of as menial or inconsequential are vital and essential.

And in the Church, even without the much grieved for assurance of sacrament and congregation and all the other happy familiarities of worship, we have learned that Christ is with us. With us, as He has always been, present in the midst of endeavour, suffering and ministry.'

Our suffering is not lost on God even when we are lost or facing a loss on our journeys of suffering. God is willing to guide and lead if we allow but does not allow a suffer free zone, but it is in the example of Jesus Christ whom we follow- who was a sufferer through life and reached out to fellow sufferers like ourselves.

Fools!

V16 'I repeat: let no one take me for a fool.

A **jester, court jester, or fool**, was historically an entertainer during the medieval and Renaissance eras who was a member of the household of a nobleman or a monarch employed to entertain guests. Jesters were also itinerant performers who entertained common folk at fairs and town markets. Jesters are also entertainers who perform at modern-day historically themed events.

Being called 'a fool' or 'foolish' is not something any of us would wish to be called or even look like one which causes further embarrassment. In Medieval times being a court jester was one that brought merriment to the Royal Court. A fool needed to be in the presence of the King for the amusement of the court. Without the King, the fool could not be a member of the royal household.

No one wants to be at the end of any form of foolishness! St Paul mentions this five times in this reading. Yet St Paul in how he plays on the word in one sense is in the court of the 'King of Fools' and being a fool for His sake in all his exploits. It is costly, and he is there defending his reputation and that of the Church with his credentials. It is the others around in this passage who are busy weighing up their wisdom with what Paul is presenting. The suffering if in vain and not put in its rightful place, to outsiders, will look incredibly foolish.

Why would anyone go through all of what St Paul had gone through for no reason? To go through this amount of suffering needs a reason for this to make sense not only within the Church at Corinth but the wider community. Sometimes what we do does not make sense to the broader community – Jesus is the King, who give fools their place in His court and his pleasure of being lost, in wonder, love and praise.

Being foolish for Christ is not about being other people's entertainment even when this may be our perception or even experience. As much as this seems to be a 21st Century pastime with the various social media posts and reality TV shows which can have disastrous consequences for well-being and the common good, we as Christians live for the pleasure of our 'King of Fools' Jesus for His sake!

Finally...

Gladly?

V30-31' If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying.'

Finally, St Paul brings us to a conclusion of this piece and the real focus, not us or him or us – but Jesus Christ. Boasting of weakness is something that does not make sense – only the strong survive, right? St Paul challenges this philosophy and brings it back to the very one who his journey is all about – Jesus Christ. It is in our worship, not just on a Sunday but a daily, ongoing experience through being connected and recentred, through Prayer, Praise, Reading of Scripture – meeting on-site – off-site, online – individually and corporately in King Jesus' household of faith. We say in our communion liturgy – 'It is right to give thanks and praise!'.

It is through praise and gratitude to God, the Father, in the human form of Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit present with us by invitation helping us to live life more fully and completely, that Jesus is the very answer to the question.

'Suffer Fools Gladly?'

Response/Challenge

How will you make Jesus Christ – 'King of Fools' as an individual or community today moving forward?

What step(s) might you wish to make? If this is you today, then please speak with Jonathan, Sam or the leadership team as soon as you can.

Invite the Holy Spirit now, listen to the nudges, pay attention to the 'King of Fools'. He is faithful until the end. We sing together the song 'Faithful One' allowing the Holy Spirit's breath upon and within.

Peace be with you all.

Amen.

Hymn 825 Faithful one

Faithful one, so unchanging
Ageless one, you're my rock of
peace
Lord of all I depend on you
I call out to you, again and again
I call out to you, again and again

You are my rock in times of
trouble
You lift me up when I fall down
All through the storm
Your love is, the anchor
My hope is in You alone

Creed

All 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 from the Holy Spirit and 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 ~ *Jacquie Still, St Peter's*

Lord, thank you for bringing us to this your Sabbath Day. Even as we find ourselves yet again in a period of lockdown, we can through various means and ways, meet as your family and connect with your wider church. Thank you for that comfort to worship together, pray and study together and even at times, symbolically break bread together. Help us now as we lift our prayers to you – in Jesus Name. **AMEN.**



Lord as we are reminded of the technologies that bring us together as your family, we lift before you our brothers and sisters of the persecuted church across the globe who are held against their will from loved one's as they are deemed subversive by the state; a minority faith group which threatens in its smallness the powers and authorities of the land. For those martyred who have paid with their earthly lives because they would not let you go. They have gone on believing despite the risks, they have placed all into your hands, trusting in your sure defence. Would that we had such courage in their shoes.

Father we ask for your help for the prisoner, alone in their cell – for your constant presence and peace to uphold them and for release from their captivity to be soon; for the spouse left alone with family to feed and answers to find – may you provide for their needs and protection from all threats and dangers. For the disappeared, whose families know not where they are. For the reassurance that they and their loved ones are never disappeared from your sight. For those that mourn. For the path that their loved one has taken is the same one you walked to Calvary. May they hold on in confidence to the Cross and know your deep love for them as they grieve. In Jesus Name, we pray – **AMEN**.

As we enter the second half of this second lockdown period, we pray for the many who are struggling whether financially, emotionally, through illness or fear of what the future holds. We know our times are in your hands Lord and we ask you would remind us of this daily as we hold on to you. We pray for the many who do not know the comfort your presence and peace bring. May this adverse time be an opportunity when your hope and love break through. Help us to take the different and difficult moments this pandemic brings to reach out with your love to our neighbours, family, and friends. **AMEN**

We pray for all governments as they cope with the pandemic in their countries, but especially for those in power on these isles. For wisdom on how to support all in need; for the building of a future as we learn to live with this pandemic for some time to come, even as the glimmer of hope in a vaccine draws near. For our changing relationship with European friends and for the many interactions, not just business, that this country has with them. May those in power be guided to action with integrity; may you give them servant hearts with leadership and courage in all situations. May you raise up men and women of faith within the corridors of power and enable them through your Holy Spirit to bring honour to your name. In Jesus Name – **AMEN**

We pray too for the strategic leadership within the health service as they seek to make the most of the resources they have with finance and equipment, with the additional support of the Nightingale Hospitals. We

pray for Care Homes and all working in the Carer field. For whilst kit and equipment can be manufactured, the most precious commodity to the caring profession is its staff. Thank you, Lord, for the hard working, highly trained and compassionate staff. We pray you would sustain all through this second wave; to cope with the continuing loss of patients; their own fatigue and wellbeing; their own family circumstances which are tested through long hours and the risks knowingly taken. Lord, our healer and strength, please hear our prayer – **AMEN**.

Lord, thank you for your constancy of presence and love for us. Thank you that you have inspired many within this parish during this period with creativity and flare, using their gifts of time and resource to your glory. We pray for the ministry team as they seek to be faithful in prayer, teaching, learning, and living – may you reveal yourself afresh to them and increase their vision of you. Thank you for the bond of being partners in the gospel for you. We remember too Dean, for your word through him today and for Tracey, Lily and Theo as they all journey in your will. May you guide them as Dean seeks to follow your call into his first Curacy. Grant him wisdom and discernment at this time; and peace for the whole family.

For our pastoral care and link folk who have connected with so many during this year; thank you for their pastoral hearts of faith. For the support, prayer, friendly voice, listening ear and comfort they have brought to many in the parish. May you enlarge their hearts of compassion and continually fill them with your grace.

We pause and remember before you, Lord, those whose journey is hard at present. For the family and friends of Barbara Young & Peter Wallace, for Eileen and Peter Bliss, John Hunter, Catherine McCormack, Olive Park and Joy Storkey and take a few moments to remember anyone else whose lives cross our own and whose path is difficult..... May they know your nearness today. **AMEN**.

So, drawing our prayers together, we say the words of our family prayer:

The Lord's Prayer

**All 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**

Notices *(See Notes & News)*

Hymn **1008 The Lord's my shepherd**

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 . . .

The dismissal

**All The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 And the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with us all evermore.
 Amen.**

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



Worshipping ▶ Loving ▶ Sharing ▶ Growing

