**Ninth Sunday after Trinity, Sunday August 14th**

In the quiet of our homes and in the presence of our loving Creator, we look over the last week or so, the highs, the lows and the level ground. Can we see where the Lord has been present? We thank Him for those moments and ask for His Presence with us now.

**A moments silence before God, a candle may be lit**



Painting: Jean Francois Millet – In the Vineyard

**Preparation**

We gather once again to offer You praise and thanksgiving for Your unfailing love and faithfulness, shown most clearly through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Grant us grace to worship You in spirit and in truth. Open our eyes to recognize You here among us and give us courage to step out in faith to meet You, and confidence to follow where You lead. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

God’s merciful arms are open, even before we repent and turn to him. Let us pray.

**God, You call us to step out in faith,  
to place our lives in Your hands,  
and to wholeheartedly commit to following You.**

**We confess that we find this difficult to do.  
It is not always easy to follow where You lead -  
to turn away from our own personal wants and desires,  
to let go of our safety nets  
and trust that You will provide for us in all things.**

**Forgive us when we doubt You, God. Increase our faith.**

**Open our eyes to see past our own interests and concerns,  
to Your broader vision for us and for our world.**

**In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.**

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw us to Himself, and cleanse us from all our

sins that we may behold the glory of His Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**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.**

**Collect for Ninth Sunday after Trinity**

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the**life and light of your Church:  open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace;** 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. **Amen.**

**The Liturgy of the Word**

**First Reading: Hebrews 11.29-12.2**

By faith the people of Israel passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace. And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets – who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Gospel Reading: Luke 12.49-56**

**Alleluia, alleluia. Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life. Alleluia.**

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.’ He also said to the crowds, ‘When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, “It is going to rain”; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, “There will be scorching heat”; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

**This is the Gospel of Christ**

**Reflection** **from Brian**

**God’s Promises**

A little while ago a Christian friend asked God for a much-needed lawnmower and received one! Admittedly it was a second-hand one, but a machine designed to do the job and provided free. Although I was not outraged at what I then considered the misuse of the power of prayer, it has set me thinking ever since that minor event about the use of God’s power

There have been many times in the history of the Church when it has claimed the sort of power which God never promised it. Such power has been used to make and unmake kings, fought questionable battles, and demanded treasures of gold and silver; in fact, to act with the power of royalty rather than as a servant of Jesus. God’s power is consistent with his promises – what he promises he will do. He never promised the People of God with earthly success or prestige, and when the Church took that power it succumbed to earthly forces for living beyond the promises of God. In our western world today, we are living the opposite. We fail to live up to God’s promises and now lack the nerve to use our God-given power. So, it is not surprising that we appear to be a demoralized organisation conforming to the norms of society and beholden to it.

Towards the beginning of the Old Testament, God’s promises were embodied in a mutual contract between him and his people. Then there came a momentous change when God renewed his promises, not in a contract or code of law but in a person – Jesus Christ. Jesus had (and has) God’s authority to offer everyone those promises of God and *the power to carry them out!*

St Paul wrote, **For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes’ in Christ.”**

I believe that what the writers of the New Testament are saying is that God honours every promise Jesus made to us, and that he will provide the power. You can rely on those promises, you can live up to the limit of them – *but not beyond.* Therefore, it is a waste of time making absurd demands on God which do not conform to the teaching of Jesus. To ask for a lawn mower in the service of God’s purposes may be one thing, to ask for the beauty of an actress or to change your tired hatchback car into a Rolls Royce has more to do with personal gratification or selfish advantage. God wouldn’t do it for Jesus, and he won’t do it for you.

On the other hand, to ask for a moments happiness when total fulfilment can be yours; to plead for security when the kingdom of heaven is yours; to ask God to reform you when He is prepared to re-create you, falls very short of the full promises of God. It’s like craving for a lump of coal when you can have a diamond.

Jesus showed us that God’s power is consistent with his promises, and those Christians who have faithfully followed have made the same discovery.

Remember, God keeps His promises. That is enough for anyone.

**Creed**

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,**

**from whom every family in heaven and on Earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,**

**Who lives in our hearts through faith and fills us with His love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,**

**Who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God,**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession**

Let us still ourselves in our Father’s presence and tell him what is in our thoughts and hearts.

Father, help us all in your Church to understand what it really means to love and serve you.

At the times of testing, strengthen us. At unexpected or undeserved suffering, support us. At the end of our energy, revive us. And teach us through it all, the inexplicable peace and joy that comes from doing your will.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer.**

Holy God, may all that encourages people in goodness, honesty and compassion be blessed and grow; May all that encourages self-seeking and cruelty, prejudice and deceit wither and be exposed as the unsatisfying rubbish it is! May we learn from one another’s cultures and respect one another’s differences – as has been clearly demonstrated by delegates at the recent Lambeth Conference for the whole Anglican Communion.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Holy God, at this time of high summer, with the heat, glorious sunshine and the risks to health in elderly and vulnerable people, may we always be aware of the needs of others and offer encouragement and support to those we know and care for.

In our constantly changing world, with its shifting values and fragile ecological balance,

Root us in your unchanging nature of mercy, goodness, faithfulness, and love

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Holy God, we thank you for the joy of human love, and pray for all those among whom we live and work. We pray particularly for loved ones who worry us with their health, or circumstances, or life direction. We pray for those among our friends and families who do not know you, or whose faith has been shaken

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Holy God, we pray for all whose backgrounds make belief in a loving God laughable or terrifying. We pray for all who suffer mental or emotional anguish, and those who despair.

We pray for those facing another day of pain, another day of hunger, another day of fear.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Holy God, gather into your eternal kingdom all who have come to the end of their earthly life, and now rejoice to see you as you really are.

We remember all whom we love but can no longer see,

And thank you for your enduring love and continuous faithfulness to us

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

**In the silence of our own hearts we prayer to our heavenly Father for own particular concerns**

Holy God, we remember with gratitude all who gave up so much to bring the good news to our country, And pray that with us it may continue to spread until the whole earth knows of your truth and love.

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

**Conclusion**

**Hymn – Be Thou my vision**

[Be Thou My Vision - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxvXGgSlRcs)

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Be all else but naught to me, save that Thou art.  
Be thou my best Thought, in the day and the night,  
Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my Wisdom, be thou my true Word;  
Be thou ever with me and I with thee Lord;  
Be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;  
Be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;  
Be thou my whole armour, be thou my true Might,  
Be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong Tower:  
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

High King of Heaven, thou Heaven’s bright sun,  
O grant me its joys, after victory is won  
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
Still be thou my Vision, O Ruler of all.

**Final Prayers**

God of our pilgrimage, you have led us to the living water: refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our journey. Go before us in all we do with your most gracious favour, and guide us with your continual help that in all your works begun, continued and ended in You, we may glorify Your name. Help us all to grow ever deeper into our relationship with you. And, armed with that renewed faith, grant us the confidence to look forward with hope. **Amen**

May the Lord bless us and watch over us, the Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious to us, the Lord look kindly on us and give us peace; and may God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us and all those we love and serve and pray for, today and always. **Amen**