

We pray for those suffering from the inhumanity of other people. We pray for those whose lives are broken by war and strife. We pray for those whose lives are damaged by prejudice and discrimination. We pray for those who haven't enough food because others destroy their farms.

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

We pray for our own country. We pray for the government, and for the local authorities who have to make decisions about the way we live our lives. We pray that they may make choices in the interests of all, so that we may be able to overcome the effects of the pandemic.

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

We pray for your church. We realise that there are many problems we have to face, especially at the present. Help all of us involved with your church to make the best choices and decisions.

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

We pray for ourselves. Help us as we try to carry out your commandments. Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us. Help us to understand the things you want us to do. And may we feel your blessing.

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

The Lord's Prayer.

If you are able, please set aside your gift for the work of God

Hymn [StF 546 / H&P 788](#) **Behold the servant of the Lord**

Blessing

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

Our worship sheet this week was created by John Kidd, Local Preacher.

Darlington District Worship at Home **Sunday 25th October 2020**

*Our worship sheet this week is offered to the District
by Castle Eden Circuit*

Praise the Lord, praise God in his sanctuary, praise him in the highest heavens. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Hymn [StF334 / H&P231](#) **Praise to the Holiest in the height**

Prayer

Almighty God, Father of all, we bring you our prayers of praise and thanksgiving. We praise you for the greatness of your creation, for sun and moon and stars and planets.

We praise you for this earth with all its beauty, its magnificence, its life.

Yours is a creative power which knows no bounds.

Father of all, **Receive our praise.**

We give you our thanks for what you provide for us; for food and clothing, for friendship and fellowship, for all the things which help us to live in our world. Most of all we thank you for our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension. We thank you for your Holy Spirit who guides us and directs us, helping us to become the people you would have us be. Father of all, **Receive our thanks**

Father, we ask you to forgive us for our failings. We know that sometimes we aren't the people you want us to be. We are sometimes greedy and selfish; we sometimes put ourselves before you and before other people. Forgive us as we forgive other people, and may we know the certainty of your love in that forgiveness.

Father of all, **forgive us.**

Reading [Matthew 22:34-46](#)

Reflection

One of the things about Jesus which I have always admired is his ability to outwit those who tried to trip him up with questions which they thought he would be unable to answer without leaving himself open to criticism or complaint. The Pharisees and Sadducees, people regarded as experts in the Jewish faith constantly tried to show him up, but they never succeeded. In this incident it was the Pharisees, experts in their knowledge of the Law, who tried. "Which is the greatest commandment?" they asked. And Jesus told them that a comparatively trivial commandment, found in the book of Deuteronomy was the greatest. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." And then Jesus went further. From Leviticus he quoted, "Love your neighbour as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." What a response! The whole secret of the Jewish Faith depended on two minor commandments, two commandments which demanded love.

Now that's something which has come to be absolutely central to our Christian faith and our understanding of Jesus and his work. There is no demand that we should not do this or not do that, as there is in the Ten Commandments, but that we should apply a basic principle, that of love. And love is a positive. For many years the church was negative. I remember my parents telling me that in their childhood, over a century ago, life consisted largely of what they weren't allowed to do, especially on Sunday. My dad was only allowed to read the Bible, a hymn book or Pilgrim's Progress, while my mam's dad wouldn't cut vegetables from the garden on Sunday. This was a response to the commandment to keep the Sabbath day holy. And this attitude wasn't uncommon. Christians were often seen as people who didn't do certain things.

But Jesus demands that we be positive. Love God, love other people – these are about things to do, to be practical. In Luke's account of this incident, the follow-up was a question about who

our neighbour is, to which Jesus' response was the parable of the Good Samaritan. As followers of Jesus we can't just sit back and do nothing, we've got to demonstrate love. For Jesus, love was about doing things. He preached, he taught, he healed, all to demonstrate his love. And he demands of us that we do the same.

That, of course is very demanding. We have to make decisions for ourselves. We have to look at situations, assess them, and respond to them. It's our responsibility, not someone else's. And sometimes that's difficult. I'm sure that you, like me, see adverts on television and in newspapers and receive mail telling me of the hardships experienced by all sorts of people in all sorts of places, and all asking me to respond with a donation. I once calculated that if I gave £50 per year to every charity that I encountered in these ways, I would have to become one of those charities myself! We have to make choices, and we might just find ourselves very confused and frustrated as to what we should do, because there seems to be so much need around our world. My understanding of love is that we do what we can for what seems to us to be right. And if we do that to the best of our ability, then we will receive the ultimate commendation – "Well done, good and faithful servant."

And just as a footnote to the story, Jesus asked the Pharisees a question they couldn't answer, and they stopped asking him trick questions. Good for him!

Hymn [StF 256](#) **When I needed a neighbour were you there?**

Prayers for other People

Father, we ask your help in what is going on in our world.

We pray for those people who are suffering from the effects of corona virus and covid 19. We pray for them and their families. We pray for those who are trying to help them through medical care.

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