

Service for Week 23rd – 29th June 2025

By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Gracious God, we pray for the victims of war. For those across the world, the injured, maimed and mentally distressed. We pray for those left homeless, those who have lost their livelihoods and security.

Lord of all, grant that the time will come when divisions will be overcome, a day when people everywhere will live in harmony and enjoy lasting peace. We ask that all are inspired to work towards that goal, in the name of Christ. **Amen**

Prayer inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name.....

Amen

Bible Reading 2Kings 2:1-2, 9-11

When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. When they had crossed, (the river Jordan) Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. "You have asked a difficult thing."

As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

2nd Bible Reading Luke 9:51-62

As the time approached for him to be

taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem.

When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" But Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they went to another village.

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

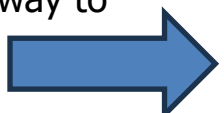
Thanks be to God.

Reflection

In the book of Kings, we have an account of king Ahaziah and the prophet Elijah. King Ahaziah is badly injured and has sent messengers to consult with his pagan god Baal-Zebub to ask if he will survive.

The prophet Elijah goes to meet these messengers. He asks why are they trying to contact a false god and not the Lord God Almighty ("Jehovah"), and tells them that because of Ahaziah's wickedness he will die. Ahaziah is incensed by this message and sends his soldiers to find and capture Elijah. But before this can happen Elijah calls for God's help and the soldiers die in a fire.

This account from the early scriptures is referred to in our reading from Luke's gospel. Jesus is on his way to



Jerusalem and is travelling through a Samaritan village. The Samaritans, although believing in the same God, held that Mount Gerizim was the most holy place not Jerusalem so did not welcome Jesus. The disciples James and John then make the terrible suggestion that they call upon God to destroy the village by fire, as what happened with Elijah in the scriptures. Jesus we are told rebuked them and they moved on to a different village.

Why did Luke choose to include this account in his gospel, and what is its message for us today? The disciples had witnessed many things that Jesus had done. Not only his healing but in being able to command nature such as calming the wind and the waves. They knew that nothing was impossible for Jesus, and being so cross with the villagers for not welcoming Jesus they made the terrible suggestion that God should destroy them.

There are those who may believe in and worship the same one God as us, but have different ways of connecting with God – like the Samaritans who thought God was only to be found on Mount Gerizim and not in Jerusalem. Different faiths have different beliefs and traditions, but if they worship the God of love as revealed by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ then they are worshipping the same one God. This is true even if they do not recognise Jesus as being the Son of God and of

God but have come to the same understanding of the nature of God and how God wants us to live through their own prophets and teachers.

If their way of living is good but just different from ours, we should not condemn them or try to change them to our way of thinking. When Jesus first sends the disciples out, in Mathew's gospel, he says 'If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.' That is what he does when he was with James and John in Samaria, they move on to another village where perhaps they will be welcomed.

As the prophet Elijah left Elisha with his God given spirit, so Jesus' physical presence left us not only with his teachings but with the Spirit of God to continue his mission. Our message about God's love and forgiveness and how we should live in peace with one another will not be welcomed by all. But in the troubled times we live in across the world it is a vital message for all of different faiths and those with no faith.

Amen

Closing Prayer.

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love,
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
and where there's doubt true faith in you. **Amen.**

From the hymn by Sebastian Temple based on the prayer of St Francis ©1967 OCP Publications.