

Service for Week 20th -26th October

2025 By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Loving God, you invite us to talk to you in prayer but instead we often talk *at* you. You invite us to seek your will but we attempt rather to impose our own. You tell us that you know all our needs, yet we present you with a list of demands and requests.

Forgive us the way we misunderstand your most precious gift of prayer. Teach us not only to speak but to listen, not just to seek but also to find. We ask this in Jesus' name.

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 them 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

Bible Reading Luke 18: 9-14

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the

temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

This week the American actress Diane Keaton died aged 79. She is best remembered for her role as Annie Hall in the film of the same name made in 1977. In her will she left millions of dollars for the care of her dog but also unbeknown to the public was her past financial support for victims of domestic violence and those experiencing homelessness. Which is something that her legacy will be able to continue.

It is fortunate that there are people today that are extremely wealthy who use their wealth to benefit others and don't publicise the fact or use it as a way to gain prestige or advantage. The



rock star Ozzy Osbourne who also died recently supported a wide range of causes, he donated all profits from his final Black Sabbath concert to Acorns Children's Hospice, Birmingham Children's Hospital, and Cure Parkinson's.

Our news reports are keen to tell us how much some people are worth financially -which is always so much more than us! They regularly print tables to tell us who the wealthiest people are in the world.

But having great wealth has over the years enabled some people to fund charities and to start and support social initiatives. Initiatives, such as helping to find a cure for diseases like malaria, helping the poor and homeless or helping criminals who have served their time to find employment. All initiatives which are not generally known about but which are funded with millions of pounds.

Following on from last week's reading about prayer Jesus in his story talks about two men going to the temple to pray. One of which was a Pharisee. This was at that time a prominent Jewish religious sect who were known for their strict adherence to Jewish law. The Pharisee in his prayers thanks God that he is not like other men who he describes as robbers, evildoers and adulterers. He says he strictly adheres to the law by giving away a tenth of what he earns and he distances

himself from another man, a Tax Collector, who is also there praying in the temple.

In contrast to what the Pharisee is praying the Tax Collector has a completely different approach in his prayers to God. 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner' were his words after first hitting his own chest as a sign of penance for his wrongdoing.

The point that Jesus is making by telling this story is that those people who go around making a big deal out of who they are and what they have done for others or for charity, looking for praise or recognition will not find it from God or from others. We have a term for that today which is- 'virtue signaling'.

Jesus reminds us that the prayers of people, like the Tax Collector, who recognize and admit their mistakes and shortcomings to God and askes for God's forgiveness is the right way to pray and the right way to be. As Jesus said 'For everyone who praises themselves will be humbled, and those who humbles themselves will be praised.'

Closing Prayer

Living God, teach me to seek what you will and to be open to your guidance. Remind me that there is a time for words and a time to keep silent, and help me to make room for both.**Amen.**

Prayers inspired by 'Prayerfully Yours' by Nick Fawcett.