

## Reflection for 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity

Choices, choices!

Both the Old Testament and the Gospel readings consider the consequences of choosing to live God's way, either by the Israelites keeping the Law given through Moses or by becoming Jesus's disciple. And those consequences are stark: 'Life and death, blessings and curses' are the options facing the people of Israel as they wait to enter the Promised Land, and Jesus suggests (demands, even) that we need to give up everything we own and hate our families to truly follow him. Does any of that sound like your experience of the Christian faith?

There are many countries today, as in the past, where being, and particularly becoming, a Christian leads to being ostracized by family and friends, losing your job, possibly being arrested and sometimes even killed. We can give thanks that we are spared such persecution (and we should pray for those who do face it). I can't be sure that my faith would survive in such a situation, though I hope that with God's help it would. How do you think such extreme opposition would affect how you publicly express your faith in Jesus?

It is easy to present the choice to follow Jesus (and God's Law) in negative terms: the Ten Commandments have lots of 'Thou shalt not...' statements, and Jesus's demand that we should give up all our possessions seems to remove many sources of enjoyment in our lives. But this is a false impression: the Israelites are told that to follow God's Law is to 'choose life' (and prosperity), and Jesus promises (Mark 10:29,30) that those who give up a lot will receive back 100 times as much, even in this life. Do we show discipleship in such a positive way in our lives?

*Ian Totterdell, churchwarden*

**Codes for Zoom** No further Zoom services planned at the moment.

**Meeting ID:**

**Passcode:**

**Telephone numbers:** 0203 481 5237,  
0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

**NEXT SUNDAY 11.09.2022 Trinity 13**

**SERVICES:** 10.30am in Church

**READINGS:** OT Exodus 32: 7-14  
NT 1 Timothy 1: 12-17  
GOSPEL Luke 15: 1-10



### CONTACT US

**Fr David Nixon** 01392 667192. Day off: Mondays  
rev.dave@virgin.net

**Revd Sarah Cumming** Curate 07543604115  
rev.sarahcumming@gmail.com

**Revd Alison Whiting** Associate Priest  
rev.alisonwhiting@gmail.com

**Phil Baker**, Reader 07970 216740  
lionelbaker@outlook.com

**Revd Terry Litherland** 07594633195  
tlitherland36@gmail.com

**Ian Totterdell** Church Warden 01392 848674  
07536459096 ian.totterdell@cantab.net

**Judith Southam** Church Warden  
judithsoutham5@gmail.com

**Email:** parishoffice@stthomaschurchexeter.co.uk

**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/sttexeter

**Website:** www.stthomaschurchexeter.co.uk

**Twitter:** @sttexeter

**Office Tel:** 01392 437486 Messages at any time.



# St Thomas, Exeter

**4th September 2022**

**Trinity 12**

**10.30am in Church**

### Today

**10.30am** Sung Eucharist.

Hymns:

372 O Jesus, I have promised

465 Take up thy cross, the Saviour said

560 Will you come and follow me

### Wednesday 7th September

**10am** Holy Communion (BCP)

### Thursday 8th September

**9.30—11am** St Thomas Tots.

**10.30am** Knit & Natter. See notices.

### Friday 9th September

**9.30am** Morning Prayer.

**10am** Staff Meeting.

### Saturday 10th September

**9am** Men's Breakfast in the Sawyers.



## Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of 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**

## Deuteronomy 30.15–20

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

## Philemon 1–21

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith towards the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of

your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother. For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

## Luke 14.25–33

Now large crowds were travelling with him; and he turned and said to them, 'Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was

not able to finish." Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

## Post Communion

God of all mercy, in this eucharist you have set aside our sins and given us your healing: grant that we who are made whole in Christ may bring that healing to this broken world, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**

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## NOTICES

For our services in Church, **mask wearing** is not now compulsory but we would still advise it while infection numbers remain high. If you are coming to coffee, we also recommend wearing a mask until you are seated in the Hall.

**Knit and Natter.** On September 8th & 22nd we will meet in St Thomas Pleasure Ground or at 19 Maple Road according to the weather, from 10.30am to midday. On the 15th & 29th we will meet at different places. Please keep an eye on the notices. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

**Community Larder** is receiving donations on Tuesdays from 10-11am. On future Sundays there will also be an opportunity to bring donations to the 10.30 service.

**Back to Church Sunday September 18th.** Please invite people who have not been to Church recently to join us.

