

# God's story in our communion prayers

Autumn sermon series 2023



## Welcome to our Autumn sermon series!

This guide is to give you an idea of where we are going and how it all fits together. You don't have to read it all the way through - or even at all. But if you want to think more about what you've heard or what's coming up, we hope it will help.

### What's in this guide?

In this guide, you'll find 4 main sections:

1. **Why we're doing this sermon series** - the reasons and what we hope for
2. **How it all fits to together** - an overview of the whole series on one page
3. **God's story** - a short summary of the bible's big story
4. **Week by week** - a short description of the main idea we'll be considering each week

There are also some resources at the end - including some very good videos you can watch for free which help understand the bigger picture.

*"Blessed are you, Lord God, our light and our salvation; to you be  
glory and praise for ever."*

## 1. Why we're doing this sermon series.

We share Holy Communion twice a month. The Communion Prayer that we use each time we share Communion tells the story of God and humanity.

We are going to break down the Prayer into its 7 main parts. We will be slowing down to take in each part of the story.

the **creation** of the world

*"From the beginning you have created all things and all your works echo the silent music of your praise."*

the **fall** of humanity

*"When they turned away and rebelled your love remained steadfast."*

God's **promise** to put things right

*"As a mother tenderly gathers her children, you embraced a people as your own."*

the Chosen One (**Christ**)

*"From them you raised up Jesus our Saviour, born of Mary, to be the living bread, in whom all our hungers are satisfied."*

Christ's offer of **forgiveness**

*"He offered his life for sinners, and with a love stronger than death he opened wide his arms on the cross."*

the life of **redemption**

*"As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence, form us in the likeness of Christ, and build us into a living temple to your glory."*

the wonderful **renewal**

*"Bring us at the last with all the saints to the vision of that eternal splendour for which you have created us."*








There are many reasons for re-telling the story of salvation in this way. Here are some:

- **Importance** - this story answers every big question in life giving us hope, meaning and purpose
- **Assurance** - to grow our confidence that God has done all we need
- **Bible** - to see that the whole bible tells one big story
- **Communion** - to fill the sacrament of communion with all its meaning
- **Discipleship** - to strengthen us to follow Jesus wholeheartedly
- **Witness** - to give us words to share our hope with friends and neighbours

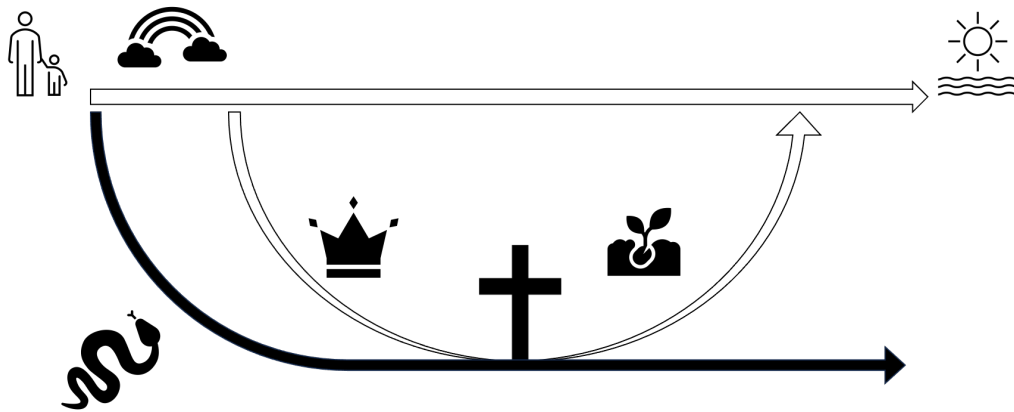
## 2. How it all fits together

We will be working through this sermon series all term. We will spend 2 weeks on most parts of the story - one Holy Communion (HC) week and one All Age (AA) week.

The bible passage we read and the sermon we hear will help us understand one part of the story and the Communion Prayer. Here are the weekly readings and themes:

| Date                    | Passage           | Part of the story |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sept 10 (HC)            | Acts 17:22-28     | creation 1        |    |
| Sept 17 (AA)            | Genesis 5:21-24   | creation 2        |                                                                                       |
| Sept 24 (HC)            | Genesis 3:1-7     | fall 1            |   |
| Oct 1 (AA Harvest)      | Genesis 4:1-12    | fall 2            |                                                                                       |
| Oct 8 (HC)              | Genesis 12:1-6    | promise 1         |  |
| Oct 15 (AA)             | Ezekiel 36:24-27  | promise 2         |                                                                                       |
| Oct 22 (HC)             | Matthew 1:1-17    | Christ 1          |  |
| Oct 29 (AA Brunch)      | Luke 2:22-32      | Christ 2          |                                                                                       |
| Nov 5 (AA)              | Mark 10:45        | forgiveness 1     |  |
| Nov 12 (HC Remembrance) | Isaiah 53:1-6     | forgiveness 2     |                                                                                       |
| Nov 19 (AA)             | Mark 8:34-38      | redemption        |  |
| Nov 26 (HC)             | Revelation 21:1-4 | renewal           |  |

### 3. God's story



Some people who don't read the bible much think it's confusing or even inconsistent. But if you take the time to read it carefully all the way through you will discover it tells a single clear story from beginning to end. We will be looking at some of the most important parts of that story.



#### Fatherly love

The story begins and ends with a beautiful scene. God walks freely with human beings in a garden - the best of fathers with children who adore and trust him. This is how things were made to be.



#### A terrible fall from grace

But that's not the world we know. The darkness and disappointment and death we see around us now are *not* how things were made to be. And the heart of the problem is the problem of the human heart. Each of us has believed the lie that we're better gods for ourselves than God.

That makes us self-centred, self-sufficient, and self-righteous. The fallout spoils everything good. So much so that God decided every human life must end in death to limit the damage we can do.



#### A promise

Again, and again God promises to put everything right in his creation. He makes this promise to Adam and Eve, to Abraham and his descendants (the people of Israel), to David - King of Israel, and through his prophets, to anyone who will listen. The promises point to a Chosen One (Christ). But throughout Israel's history (the Old Testament), even the best prophets, priests and kings fail as leaders

because they have the same human hearts as the rest of us.



### A King

Jesus is just a carpenter's son from Nazareth. But he is from the family line of King David, of Abraham, and of Adam. His parents have angel visits before he's born. Christ-seekers recognise him before he's old enough to talk. God sends his cousin to announce his arrival to the world. And when Jesus begins to speak and act it's clear he is no ordinary man. He does things only God can do. He claims loud & clear to be the promised Christ and the Son of God. But how can even he possibly heal the human heart?



### Forgiveness

How Jesus keeps God's promise is the greatest surprise in the Universe. He uses none of his divine power - only his human weakness. He allows proud men to accuse him of their worst sin - rejecting God - and to execute him for it. And his death is no accident. Prophets predicted it and Jesus repeatedly warned his friends about it.

And that is because Jesus' death has the power to save even the worst human being who ever lived. He offers to change

places with anyone who asks. He will carry all our wrongs to the grave with him. In return we receive his perfect record as ours. We could never deserve it. It's pure gift - God's mercy and grace.



### Redemption

And that isn't all. Jesus' death broke the rules that give death its power. And he proved it by walking out of his grave - the first man to step into a renewed and unbreakable life. And he promises that anyone who follows him through this life will also follow him into that renewed life.

But it's not automatic. It begins now. You can say yes to the Holy Spirit of Jesus today. You must leave one way of life and start a completely new one trusting Jesus. This is 'repentance and faith'. It's a complete change of heart. It's the very thing we've always needed but couldn't do for ourselves!



### Renewal

Jesus doesn't just bring personal faith. The day is coming when he will return to bring justice and put right everything that is wrong in the world. On that day, everyone who has ever lived will see God the Son in his full power and glory. It will be an agonising day of regret for everyone

who has rejected Jesus. But for everyone who has known and followed him in this life it will be the day we make it home.

## 4. Week by week details



### Creation

Blessed are you, Lord God, our light and our salvation; to you be glory and praise for ever.

From the beginning you have created all things and all your works echo the silent music of your praise. In the fullness of time you made us in your image, the crown of all creation.

You give us breath and speech, that with angels and archangels and all the powers of heaven we may find a voice to sing your praise: *Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.*

Sept 10 Acts 17:22-28 Paul said, 'God created the world so that people would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him. We are his children'. (See Ps 19:1-4). **Creation is how God says I'm your father.**

Sept 17 Genesis 5:21-24 Enoch walked with God, so God took him away. We are made to walk with God in love and trust. **If we could trust God, we would see him face-to-face.** (See Matt 11:27).



Fall and



promise

How wonderful the work of your hands, O Lord. As a mother tenderly gathers her children, you embraced a people as your own. When they turned away and rebelled your love remained steadfast.

Sept 24 Genesis 3:1-7 The serpent said, 'God knows you could be like Him'. The lie says God doesn't want your best and you'd be better doing it your way. **Humans have believed the father of all lies.** (See John 8:44).

- Oct 1 Genesis 4:1-12 God said to Cain, 'Sin is crouching at your door; it wants to have you'. Cain couldn't resist sin, and he committed the first murder. **Sin is a cold killer we can't resist.** (See Eph 2:1-3).
- Oct 8 Genesis 12:1-6 God said to Abram, 'All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you'. He repeated it often. **God has promised a man to put the world to rights.** (See Gal 3:16 & Heb 6:13-16).
- Oct 15 Ezekiel 36:24-27 God said through Ezekiel, 'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you'. His chosen people weren't blessing anyone. **God knows we need a heart transplant.** (See Eph 2:4-5).



### Christ

From them you raised up Jesus our Saviour, born of Mary, to be the living bread, in whom all our hungers are satisfied.

- Oct 22 Matthew 1:1-17 The genealogy of Jesus, the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. The story behind each name now makes sense. **Every road in the bible leads to Jesus.** (See John 5:39)
- Oct 29 Luke 2:22-32 Simeon took Jesus and said, 'My eyes have seen your salvation'. Promise-believers are waiting for God to put things right. **All God's promises are yes in Jesus.** (See 2 Cor 1:20).



### Forgiveness

He offered his life for sinners, and with a love stronger than death he opened wide his arms on the cross.

On the night before he died, he came to supper with his friends and, taking bread, he gave you thanks. He broke it and gave it to them, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine, he gave you thanks, and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus: *Dying you destroyed our death, rising you restored our life: Lord Jesus, come in glory.*

Nov Mark Jesus said, 'the Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many'.  
5 10:45 Sin imprisons us far away from God. **Jesus died to set us free from sin.**  
(See Col 1:19-22).

Nov Isaiah Isaiah prophesied about Jesus, 'The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of  
12 53:1-6 us all'. Jesus was sacrificed for us. **Sinless Jesus became a sinner on  
the cross.** (See 1 Peter 2:24 & 2 Cor 5:21).



## Redemption

Father, we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross; we remember his dying and rising in glory, and we rejoice that he intercedes for us at your right hand.

Pour out your Holy Spirit as we bring before you these gifts of your creation; may they be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence, form us in the likeness of Christ, and build us into a living temple to your glory.

Nov Mark Jesus said, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and  
19 8:34-38 take up their cross and follow me'. **Jesus says live for me, like me, and  
with me.** (See Phil 1:21)





## Renewal

Bring us at the last with all the saints to the vision of that eternal splendour for which you have created us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, by whom, with whom, and in whom, with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

*Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.*

Nov    Revelation    John's angel messenger said, 'You will be God's people, and He will  
26    21:1-4    be with you and be your God'. Following Jesus can be hard, but  
only for a little while. **Jesus leads you all the way home.**

## Helpful videos

### Creation

- The story of the bible <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/genesis-1/>
- The image of God <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/image-of-god/>

### God's promise

- Covenants <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/covenants/>

### Christ

- The Messiah <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/messiah/>

### Redemption

- Sacrifice & Atonement <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/sacrifice-and-atonement/>

### Repentance & faith

- The Holy Spirit <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/holy-spirit/>

### Renewed creation

- Eternal life <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/eternal-life/>