

21<sup>st</sup> June, 2026

The paper-version Service



**To Begin:** Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

**Opening Prayer:** Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Hymn:**

Who, oh Lord, could save themselves  
Their own soul could heal?  
Our shame was deeper than the sea  
Your grace is deeper still.

You alone can rescue, You alone can save  
You alone can lift us from the grave  
You came down to find us, led us out of death  
To You alone belongs the highest praise.

You, oh Lord, have made a way  
The great divide You heal  
For when our hearts were far away  
Your love went further still  
Yes, your love goes further still.

You alone can rescue, You alone can save  
You alone can lift us from the grave

You came down to find us, led us out of death  
To You alone belongs the highest praise.

You alone can rescue, You alone can save  
You alone can lift us from the grave  
You came down to find us, led us out of death  
To You alone belongs the highest praise

We lift up our eyes, lift up our eyes  
You're the Giver of Life  
You alone can rescue, You alone can save  
You alone can lift us from the grave  
You came down to find us, led us out of death  
To You alone belongs the highest praise.  
To You alone!

## **The Sermon by Matt Senior**

### **Read James 4:1-12 Matthew, 7:7-12 – Contented Living**

Our series on James is entitled Wisdom for Living. ‘Wisdom’ gets 4 mentions in the book of James, with three of them from last week’s reading. The rest of the book is arguably about what wisdom looks like. We’ve covered how to endure trials; making sure that we do what the word says – not just listen; not showing favouritism; the importance of our deeds in living out our faith; keeping control of our tongue – recognising the damage it can do; and understanding that earthly wisdom is completely at odds with heavenly wisdom.

James is known for being quite direct in his writing, and we see that in our reading where he calls his audience ‘adulterous people.’ He is writing to the early church, scattered among the nations. The church is in its infancy, small in number. James would know that division and individualism could be catastrophic for the future of the church.

James wants us unified, like a family. In chapter 3, James warned us about the potential damage that we can do with our tongues. In chapter 4 he turns to the subject of quarrels and fights and he addresses the root cause – ‘desires that battle within us.’

According to James, the root of our quarrels come from our desires; what we covet, what we think we deserve or are entitled to. If we allow these desires to grow and consume us, we put ourselves in trouble.

We will all have different desires. These may include godly ones, but many of us allow the world’s desires to work their way in as well. What do we devote our time and effort to: a work promotion, home improvements, growing our collection of stuff, increasing our standing – these aren’t necessarily wrong things, but our motivation makes all the difference. Are we in danger of being the adulterous people that James is talking about? Do we say we want to give our lives to Christ and serve him alone but keep finding ourselves getting caught up in the earthly wisdom that tells us to push on and get ahead.

Part of our tendency to quarrel and fight, James says, is our pride. To get over this we have to reset our priorities. This may be daily. Choosing to make the most important thing the most important thing. We have to keep coming back to him, repenting and choosing again to give our lives to him. In doing this, worldly desires will diminish and fade away, and we’ll have a peace that chasing worldly wisdom doesn’t bring.

We also have to be at peace with each other. Quarrels and arguments will wreak havoc and destruction, especially among ourselves - the family of God.

Proverbs 17:14: 'Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam' – once we cross that line, it becomes very difficult to claw our way back.

Instead of quarrelling we must disagree with love for each other. Proverbs 27:17 "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." This isn't a case of going up to someone that you think is behaving poorly and telling them so. That is judgement, and James tells us that this is for the 'Lawgiver and Judge...who is able to save and destroy.'

So for us, iron sharpening iron, it will need to be in sharing life together, having discussion, allowing some mutually beneficial friction to occur, so that we can be refined, improved and sharpened. This is something that we should do with people we know and trust– a prayer triplet or small group perhaps. To do this well, we should look to the wisdom that comes from heaven, that we heard about last week. This wisdom is 'first of all pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.' Imagine if all our interactions had those qualities!

And we will continue to want things. We just need to want the right things for the right reasons. And the wonderful thing is that God wants to give to us.

On this Father's Day we can reflect on our God, the perfect Father, who is willing to give us what we ask for. It's interesting, the passage in Matthew, because we have to ask. In asking, we remind ourselves who it all belongs to in the first place. Those of us who have been around churches for a long time may remember the words often repeated following the offering, 'Lord all things come from you, and of your own do we give you.'

Everything comes from God And when we recognise that, quarrelling about what we desire, what we have or don't have seems absurd. And knowing that it all belongs to God allows us to live in peace, with ourselves and with each other.

**3rd Sunday after Trinity:** Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; through 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.**

***The Lord's Prayer:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

**Blessing** to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

**At the Church of the Good Shepherd:**

- Tea and Chat and Bowls: July 15<sup>th</sup> at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: June 24<sup>th</sup> and July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

**For Further information:**

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.pariahofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>