**Sermon for St Bartholomew’s Day**

St John’s, Rogerstone
Trinity 10 Yr C Sunday, 24th August 2025

# Opening Prayer

Almighty God, as we remember today your servant St Bartholomew,
we give thanks for his witness and faith.
Open our ears to hear your Word, our hearts to receive your love,
and our lives to reflect your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

# Sermon

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of St Bartholomew the Apostle.

Bartholomew is one of the more hidden disciples. His name appears in the lists of the Twelve, but little more is said. Many believe he is the same man as Nathanael—the one Philip called from under the fig tree, the one of whom Jesus said: “Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

From that moment, he walked with Christ. He witnessed the teaching, the miracles, the crucifixion, the resurrection and ascension and was in the upper room when the Holy Spirit fell ([Acts 1:13](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%201%3A13/), [Acts 2](https://www.esv.org/verses/Acts%202/)). And afterwards, like the other apostles, he took the gospel into the world. Tradition says to India, Armenia, possibly parts of Africa. Stories of his martyrdom are vivid and brutal. But what we know for sure is this: Bartholomew gave his life to Christ, and he gave his life for Christ.

And as I reflect on Bartholomew, I’m struck by his humility, and how he did NOT live to make himself known. He lived to make Christ known. He wasn’t concerned about leaving behind his own reputation. His concern was that the name of Jesus would be remembered, and that the love of God would be shared with every generation.

Throughout history, and especially as the Church became established, that humility is something the Church has always needed to remember.

Paul’s letter to the Corinthians shows just how easily we can forget. The Corinthians had become proud, arrogant, puffed up about their status as Spiritual leaders. And Paul responds with words that are sharp—brutal even, in an ironic comparison of the Apostles and the leadership of the church in Corinth.

In The Message translation he says:

“It seems to me that God has put us who bear his Message on stage in a theater in which no one wants to buy a ticket. We’re something everyone stares at, like an accident in the street. We’re the Messiah’s misfits. You might be sure of yourselves, but we live in the midst of frailties and uncertainties.”

It made me think of the words Paul might write to us today—in the Anglican Communion, the Church in Wales, or even our own Tredegar Park Ministry Area.

- Would he see us sometimes thinking more of ourselves than of the community around us?
- Would he see us putting ourselves on pedestals, rather than bending down in service?
- Would he warn us—as he warned them—not to confuse confidence in Christ with arrogance in ourselves?

In John’s gospel we hear, Jesus himself giving the church the clearest command of all: “A new commandment I give you: that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

That is the heart of discipleship. Love that serves. Love that humbles itself. Love that is a witness, that points not to us, but to Christ.

And this is where Bartholomew’s life speaks so powerfully. He left no great writings, like Paul. He preached no famous sermons, like Peter. He recorded no soaring visions, like John. Instead, his legacy is simple, but profound: he lived and died bearing witness to Christ. He allowed his whole life to be a signpost pointing away from himself, and towards the love of God.

Friends, that is what we are called to as well.
Not to pride of place, but to humility.
Not to superiority, but to service.
Not to making ourselves known, but to making Christ known.

Like Bartholomew, we may not be remembered by name in centuries to come. But if Christ is remembered, if Christ is known, if Christ is loved—then our mission will have been fulfilled.

So may we love one another as Christ has loved us.
May we bear witness to God’s love in the world.
And may we be known—not for ourselves—but as disciples of Jesus. Amen.

# Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you called your apostles to love one another
and to bear witness to the ends of the earth.
Strengthen us to follow in their steps: to serve with humility, to love as you have loved us, and to make you known in our community and our world.
For your glory’s sake. Amen.