

# Clement

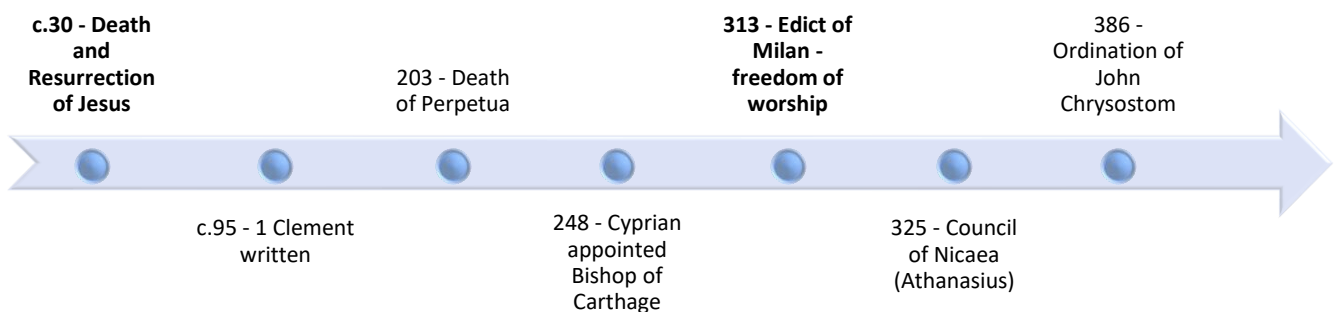
## *Living Together*

*Why should we study Christian figures of the past?*

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us. (Hebrews 12:1)

‘None of us can fully escape this blindness, but we shall certainly increase it, and weaken our guard against it, if we read only modern books. Where they are true they will give us truths which we half knew already. Where they are false they will aggravate the error with which we are already dangerously ill. The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books. Not, of course, that there is any magic about the past. People were no cleverer then than they are now; they made as many mistakes as we. But not the *same* mistakes. They will not flatter us in the errors we are already committing; and their own errors, being now open and palpable, will not endanger us. Two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go wrong in the same direction.’ (C.S. Lewis, Introduction to Athanasius’ *On the Incarnation*)

### Overview of the Early Church:



*In what ways do we see the church today, nationally or locally, failing to live the counter-cultural life we are called to in Christ?*

### 1 Clement Introduction:

- One of the earliest Christian texts outside the New Testament.
- Written from the ‘church of God in Rome’ to the ‘church of God in Corinth’.
- Addresses division in Corinthian church in order to restore peace.
- In Clement’s view, the divisions are the result of jealousy.

## 1 Clement Key Themes

*What are Clement's solutions to the problems in Corinth, how does he persuade them to change?*

We write these things [biblical and other examples of jealousy], dear friends, not only to admonish you, but also to remind ourselves. For we are in the same arena, and the same contest awaits us. Therefore let us abandon empty and futile thoughts, and let us conform to the glorious and holy rule of our tradition; indeed, let us note what is good and what is pleasing and what is acceptable in the sight of the one who made us. Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ and understand how precious it is to his Father, because, being poured out for our salvation, it won for the whole world the grace of repentance. (7.1-4)

Why is there strife and angry outbursts and dissension and schisms and conflict among you? Do we not have one God and one Christ and one Spirit of grace that was poured out upon us? And is there not one calling in Christ? Why do we tear and rip apart the members of Christ, and rebel against our own body, and reach such a level of insanity that we forget that we are members of one another? Remember the words of Jesus our Lord, for he said: 'Woe to that person! Rather than cause one of my elect to sin, it would have been good for that one not to have been born. It would have been better for that person to have been tied to a millstone and cast into the sea, rather than pervert one of my elect.' Your schism has perverted many; it has brought many to despair, plunged many into doubt, and caused all of us to sorrow. And yet your rebellion continues! (46.5-9)

Let the one who has love in Christ fulfil the commandments of Christ. Who can describe the bond of God's love? Who is able to explain the majesty of its beauty? The height to which love leads is indescribable. Love unites us with God; love covers a multitude of sins; love endures all things, is patient in all things. There is nothing coarse, nothing arrogant in love. Love knows nothing of schisms, love leads no rebellions, love does everything in harmony. In love all the elect of God were made perfect; without love nothing is pleasing to God. In love the Master received us. Because of the love that he has for us, Jesus Christ our Lord, in accordance with God's will, gave his blood for us, and his flesh for our flesh, and his life for our lives. (49)

This is the way, dear friends, in which we found our salvation, namely Jesus Christ, the high priest of our offerings, the benefactor and helper of our weakness. Through him we look steadily into the heights of heaven; through him we see as in a mirror his faultless and transcendent face; through him the eyes of our hearts have been opened; through him our foolish and darkened mind springs up into light; through him the Master has willed that we should taste immortal knowledge, for he, being the radiance of his majesty, is as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent. ... So let us serve as soldiers, brothers, with all seriousness under his faultless orders. Let us consider the soldiers who serve under our commanders – how precisely, how readily, how obediently they execute orders. (36.1-37.2)

## Questions for discussion

- What lessons do you take away from 1 Clement?
- Why do you think jealousy and covetousness are so insidious?
- How could we at St Andrew's live a life more shaped by the Gospel?