



**READINGS, COLLECT AND REFLECTION FOR  
SUNDAY 9 AUGUST 2020 – THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

**Collect**

Almighty God,  
who sent your Holy Spirit  
to be the life and light of your Church:  
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,  
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit  
in love and joy and peace;  
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.

**Psalm 105.1-10**

- 1 O give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name; ♦  
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- 2 Sing to him, sing praises, ♦  
and tell of all his marvellous works.
- 3 Rejoice in the praise of his holy name; ♦  
let the hearts of them rejoice who seek the Lord.
- 4 Seek the Lord and his strength; ♦  
seek his face continually.
- 5 Remember the marvels he has done, ♦  
his wonders and the judgements of his mouth,
- 6 O seed of Abraham his servant, ♦  
O children of Jacob his chosen.
- 7 He is the Lord our God; ♦  
his judgements are in all the earth.
- 8 He has always been mindful of his covenant, ♦  
the promise that he made for a thousand generations:
- 9 The covenant he made with Abraham, ♦  
the oath that he swore to Isaac,
- 10 Which he established as a statute for Jacob, ♦  
an everlasting covenant for Israel.

**Romans 10.5-15**

5 Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.” 6 But the righteousness that comes from faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say?

“The word is near you,  
on your lips and in your heart”

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. 11 The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. 13 For, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

14 But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? 15 And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

### **Matthew 14.22-33**

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them.

25 And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

28 Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.”

29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, “Lord, save me!” 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

## Reflection - this week, from Mary-Lou

What a dramatic account that reading is! A storm raging all around them, the terrified disciples huddle together in the boat – then across the wild waves appears a ghostly figure walking towards them, shimmering in the darkness and the midst of their fear. And Peter – what on earth was he thinking??! Peter, stepping out of the safety of the boat and onto the water, walking towards Jesus and then ... starting to sink. I am SO glad Jesus chose Peter to be one of his disciples, because it seems it's always impetuous Peter who helps us, and his experiences of seeking to follow his Lord, ring very true to our own Christian experience.

Remember, these were professional fishermen – they knew the Sea of Galilee like the back of their hands. They knew its moodiness and sudden storms, as well as its beauty and the sun glistening on its quiet waters. But now, in the blink of an eye, none of their professional skill or knowledge can help them, as the uncontrollable natural world threatens their very lives. And let's not forget, they know Jesus now, they trust him and they have learned to pray as he taught them, but it's not helping! Anxiety and fear overwhelm them. That has strong echoes for me of life now – for all our modern human medical knowledge, this new virus has turned life upside down; it threatens, it destroys. Fear has been a prevailing companion, and for Christians, just like anyone else, that sense of danger and being swept away by a power we can't control, has been very real.

In the life of faith, even when we want to be faithful and strong, we can still find ourselves suddenly like Peter, sinking below the waves of some storm that hits us out of the blue, crying out to Jesus to rescue us – or someone we love. There is nothing we can do to achieve security in our own strength. Did Peter think Jesus's power was magic and that because he was his friend it would work for him too? Did he try and get close to God's power just by force of his own will? He certainly discovered how wrong he was that night on Galilee. The waves respond to Jesus because they are responding to their Maker and in the end, after Peter is rescued, when Jesus steps into the boat with him the disciples finally respond in the same way, worshipping him – *Truly you are the Son of God.*

Being a Christian is no guarantee of an easy, safe life. We can suddenly find ourselves in an uncontrollable storm, feeling overwhelmed by a situation we can't get ourselves out of, in danger of sinking. What we are called to do – and this is both so simple and so very, very hard – is to keep our eyes on Jesus, and our hearts open to hear his voice. Rescue is there; we can never achieve it on our own, but only by the grace of God, and when we turn to him the hand of Jesus will pull us out of the waters. As Paul reminds us in Romans chapter 8, *the Lord is always near us, on our lips and in our hearts* – as close to us as life and breath itself.

*Lord, save me!*