



Readings and Reflection – St Luke, Oct 18, 2020

COLLECT

Almighty God,
you called Luke the physician,
whose praise is in the gospel,
to be an evangelist and physician of the soul:
by the grace of the Spirit
and through the wholesome medicine of the gospel,
give your Church the same love and power to heal;
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.

Psalm 147 vs 1-7

- 1 Alleluia.
How good it is to make music for our God, ♦
how joyful to honour him with praise.
- 2 The Lord builds up Jerusalem ♦
and gathers together the outcasts of Israel.
- 3 He heals the brokenhearted ♦
and binds up all their wounds.
- 4 He counts the number of the stars ♦
and calls them all by their names.
- 5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; ♦
his wisdom is beyond all telling.
- 6 The Lord lifts up the poor, ♦
but casts down the wicked to the ground.
- 7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; ♦
make music to our God upon the lyre;

Isaiah 35.3-6

³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.
⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
'Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.'
⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

Luke 10.1-9

10 After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

Reflection – this week from Peter

Tradition has it that the evangelist Luke was a doctor: St Paul calls him "Luke, the beloved physician". We can't know for certain, but, in his writings he does show a careful concern for people in every kind of need – and specially for those suffering illness and disability. He is also a gifted communicator. He writes Greek with an ease that suggests he is practised in getting things across through the written

word. And, of all the New Testament writers, he shows a consistent empathy with women – taking them as seriously as men in a way that was unusual (and sadly is not universal even now). His Gospel has also left us a rich treasury quite unlike the other Gospels: it is St Luke who put the Benedictus, “Blessed be the God of Israel...” on the lips of Zechariah at the birth of John the Baptist; Luke who has Mary sing Magnificat “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord...” at the birth of Jesus; and Simeon is given the Nunc Dimittis, “Lord, now you let your servant go in peace...” when Mary and Joseph bring the child Jesus to the temple. And it is also Luke who gives us some of the best loved parables: the Prodigal Son, Dives and Lazarus, and the Good Samaritan among them.

From all this some strong themes emerge. There is a gentleness about St Luke’s presentation of the Gospel, a real sensitivity to what human beings are about – and an unshakeable conviction that we are made for wholeness, life and love. Here the passion of the doctor is so evident: Luke is not only concerned with physical healing, not just concerned that we have the right medicine for a headache, but equally concerned with social healing, with justice, and with psychological and spiritual wholeness. So the three great Gospel canticles frame this passion for a day when all will be healed and whole. In the Benedictus, Zechariah celebrates the God who comes near to us in Jesus: Blessed be the God of Israel, who has come to his people and set them free!”; in the Magnificat Mary sings of the new order that raises the poor from poverty and feeds the hungry; and Simeon, in quiet joy, celebrates the truth revealed in Jesus that God has done all that is needed, “My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people.” It is with this in his heart that Luke tells us of Jesus sending out the seventy disciples as missionaries, “cure the sick who are there,” he says (and we know that he means every kind of sickness, distortion and disability, “and say to them, “The Kingdom of God has come near to you.”