



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 6 JUNE 2021 – 1st Sunday after Trinity

COLLECT

O God,
the strength of all those who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in the keeping of your commandments
we may please you both in will and deed;
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 138: 1-8

- 1 I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; ♦
before the gods will I sing praise to you.
- 2 I will bow down towards your holy temple and praise your name,
because of your love and faithfulness; ♦
for you have glorified your name
and your word above all things.
- 3 In the day that I called to you, you answered me; ♦
you put new strength in my soul.
- 4 All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, ♦
for they have heard the words of your mouth.
- 5 They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, ♦
that great is the glory of the Lord.
- 6 Though the Lord be high, he watches over the lowly; ♦
as for the proud, he regards them from afar.
- 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you will preserve me; ♦
you will stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;
your right hand will save me.
- 8 The Lord shall make good his purpose for me; ♦
your loving-kindness, O Lord, endures for ever;
forsake not the work of your hands.

2 Corinthians 4: 13- 5:1

¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

⁵ For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Mark 3:20-35

Jesus Accused by His Family and by Teachers of the Law

²⁰ Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family^[a] heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

²² And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."

²³ So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷ In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin."

³⁰ He said this because they were saying, "He has an impure spirit."

³¹ Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."

³³ "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Reflection from Peter Mark 3.20-35

Today, after all the excitements of Eastertide, Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity, we settle into the long stretch of green Sundays 'after Trinity' - what the liturgical calendar calls Ordinary Time... After a lot of stimulus, there is something to be said for a return to the familiar, even dull routines of the ordinary. Yet, somehow, finding our way back to a more ordinary kind of life in the pandemic context is itself quite stressful. Of course its wonderful to have a bit more freedom to see family and friends, but we find that we had become used to a more isolated way of life, with few commitments in the diary and more things that we could decide without needing to think "When can I fit that in?" Though we are relieved that the worst is perhaps behind us, we still feel uncertain and a bit anxious.

The passage from St Mark's Gospel that we hear today has something of the same tensions within it. Jesus is beginning to cause a stir in the neighbourhood. The things he is doing - especially his healings of those suffering from physical and mental distress - are dividing the people. Those who are healed are wildly enthusiastic, but the authorities and some in the crowd much less so: they fear trouble. Now you know the way that, in a crowd, things can build up very quickly and easily get out of hand; and so, understandably, Jesus' family come out to try and protect him. Then, after Jesus has shown no sign of backing down, but rather confronted the authorities and argued with them, the text says, "his mother and his brothers came and called him." When Jesus is told, he replies "Who are my mother and my brothers?"

Interestingly, our immediate response is to think 'what a harsh thing to say!' - and we feel for his mother and brothers. But think how those around him felt when he said, "Here are my mother and brothers!" Jesus is not rejecting or belittling his mother. He is extending that same embrace of love to all who respond to God's call. Of course, if we said the same thing, it wouldn't work. We just don't have the capacity to love everyone equally. But for today it is enough that God can and God does. Do you remember the moment when the little lion in C S Lewis' "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" realises that Aslan has just said "Us lions..." and understands that he too is included; he matters, he is loved and cared for? Today our anxieties and concerns fall away as we realise that God has included us, wrapped us in love and called us to life.