



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 7 JULY 2024 - TRINITY 6**

COLLECT

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
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 123

- 1 To you I lift up my eyes, ♦
to you that are enthroned in the heavens.
- 2 As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, ♦
or the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
- 3 So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, ♦
until he have mercy upon us. [R]
- 4 Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, ♦
for we have had more than enough of contempt.
- 5 Our soul has had more than enough of the scorn of the arrogant, ♦
and of the contempt of the proud.

Ezekiel 2.1-5

The Vision of the Scroll

He said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God.' Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Mark, chapter 6, verses 1-13.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel and it is introduced with an Acclamation, as below:

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord. I know them, and they follow me.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark, chapter 6, verses 1-13.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Mark 6.1-13

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

The Mission of the Twelve

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.' So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

A Reflection from Hannah...

In our Gospel reading we encounter Jesus grappling with identity in his home town of Nazareth. He is not well received amongst those who have known him his whole life. You can almost hear the sneering tone. Jesus was teaching in the synagogue- we know Jesus' teaching, so we can well believe that the people were amazed. But, they are blinkered. All they see before them is one of their own- a member of their community who has no business being so wise, so radical. Jesus has stepped out of their expectations, flouted the social constraints of living in community-

'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?'

The local people ascribe to Jesus only one facet of his identity, and because of that they miss the truth of who he is. They are on holy ground, but they cannot see it, because they see only the carpenter, Mary's son, a villager like them, who had a place, a role, a function.

This passage is a salutary reminder not just to remember who Jesus is, but to remember who we all are- in our fullness. That day, a small, downtrodden community stood in the presence of God incarnate, and they didn't notice because they had a bias in the way they saw the man in question.

We know what they missed, but what might we miss, and where might our blind-spots lie in our encounters with each other? Do we sometimes only see only one facet of another person- for example (given that I'm writing on election day), how they vote?! Part of the Christian way is to challenge the idea that we are defined by the names other people speak over us. Jesus was not limited by the names spoken over him that day in Nazareth- carpenter, Mary's son, a brother... nothing special, nothing particular. It was the people to whom he spoke who were actually diminished by their own understanding of who he was.

We are all children of God- our identity begins there- everything else that we are, that people might choose to see or to call us- good or bad- is only a temporary and partial ascription- the eternal truth of who we really are comes from our Creator, is a gift of love, never changes and underpins it all.