

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 17 July 2022- 5th after Trinity

COLLECT

Almighty God,
send down upon your Church
the riches of your Spirit,
and kindle in all who minister the gospel
your countless gifts of grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 15

- 1 Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? ♦
Who may rest upon your holy hill?
- 2 Whoever leads an uncorrupt life ♦
and does the thing that is right;
- 3 Who speaks the truth from the heart ♦
and bears no deceit on the tongue;
- 4 Who does no evil to a friend ♦
and pours no scorn on a neighbour;
- 5 In whose sight the wicked are not esteemed, ♦
but who honours those who fear the Lord.
- 6 Whoever has sworn to a neighbour ♦
and never goes back on that word;
- 7 Who does not lend money in hope of gain, ♦
nor takes a bribe against the innocent;
- 8 Whoever does these things ♦
shall never fall.

Colossians 1.15-28

The Supremacy of Christ

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ¹⁶ for in[□] him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He himself is before all things, and in[□] him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

²¹ And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²² he has now reconciled[□] in his fleshly body[□] through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him— ²³ provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

Paul's Interest in the Colossians

²⁴ I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. ²⁵ I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶ the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. ²⁷ To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸ It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

*Alleluia, **Alleluia.***

Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home in you; through him give thanks to God the Father.

Alleluia.

*Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to **Luke, Chapter 10, verses 38-42.***

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

³⁸ Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹ She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' ⁴¹ But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; ⁴² there is need of only one thing.^[a] Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

A Reflection from Hannah...

Well, St Paul puts Jesus in his place in this week's reading! His opening lines leave us in no doubt:

'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.'

If we want to know what God looks like, all we need do is look at Christ- who is himself the visible image of the invisible God. And if we want to know what to expect when encountering Christ, Paul tells us that all things hold together in him. So where we break down, divide, categorise; Jesus brings wholeness, reconciliation, unity.

These are lofty, heavy and beautiful words. Their majesty echoes that of the most lyrical of scripture- a dazzling description of the power of God in Christ and it's reach, which spans the cosmos. But how does this glorious reality manifest in our daily lives, here and now?

Well, when we look to our Gospel reading we discover Christ-with-us is quiet company in the everyday business of domestic life, drawing us into his presence and drawing us back to ourselves. In the home of Martha and Mary, as Mary sits and listens to her Lord, Jesus notices that something is fractured. Martha (the one I relate to!) is busying herself in the background, doing job after job after job. Her motives are good, and it's not that what she is doing isn't a good thing; it's just that it's not the best thing. As she works, Martha is getting increasingly irritated with Mary's inactivity, and she is aware that she's missing out on time with Jesus.

In calling to her, with that double naming- 'Martha, Martha', Christ calls her back to the thing that matters, and into oneness. All she really needs is his company, his presence, the inner stillness that he brings and blesses her with. In Christ's presence, as we discover over and over again, is life in all its fullness.

So, in our tendencies to be distracted, busy, irritated and divided, may we be drawn into the presence of the one who is the visible image of the invisible God, who is always making whole that which was broken. And as we imagine that scene in a humble home in First Century Palestine, may we look for the presence of Christ in others in quiet places; and be ready to let Christ live in us and be a blessing through us. Amen.