

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 30 JULY 2023 - TRINITY 10

COLLECT

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;
and that they may obtain their petitions
make them to ask such things as shall please you;
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.

Psalms 85.6-13

- 8 I will listen to what the Lord God will say, ♦
for he shall speak peace to his people and to the faithful,
that they turn not again to folly.
- 9 Truly, his salvation is near to those who fear him, ♦
that his glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Mercy and truth are met together, ♦
righteousness and peace have kissed each other;
- 11 Truth shall spring up from the earth ♦
and righteousness look down from heaven.
- 12 The Lord will indeed give all that is good, ♦
and our land will yield its increase.
- 13 Righteousness shall go before him ♦
and direct his steps in the way.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans, chapter 10:6-15

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that 'the person who does these things will live by them.' 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) 'or "Who will descend into the abyss?" ' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 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); 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. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, 'No one who believes in him will be put to shame.' 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. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

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? 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!'

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Harden not your hearts today; listen to the voice of the Lord.

Alleluia!

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew, chapter 14, verses 22 to 33

Glory to you, O Lord

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

A Reflection from Peter...

Today presents us with a marked contrast: St Paul writing to the Christians in Rome exudes confidence – “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.” But that was followed swiftly by today’s Gospel reading. The disciples, alone in the boat in stormy winds, see a figure walking towards them on the water and think it must be a ghost and they cry out in fear. Even when it is clear that it is Jesus and Peter’s fear has subsided enough for him to have a go at walking to meet Jesus, he is once again overcome with fear and begins to sink into the water. This time Jesus catches him and saves him.

Now today’s Gospel comes from Matthew 14, immediately following chapter 13 that we have been hearing with those many parables of the kingdom. This passage comes like a sudden shock of the real. We’re not yet in the kingdom; we’re still wrestling with the uncertainties and confusions of life in the world. Fine words like St Paul’s “if you confess with your lips and believe in your heart ... you will be saved” seems just that, words without substance.

What is the truth? Is it a matter of coping with the game of snakes and ladders that life seems to be for so many? Or is St Paul right in a simple and straightforward way and we can brush aside life’s challenges, walk through closed doors, walk on water, jump off mountains...? Or is there a third option? As we reflect on the story of our faith journey, we can perhaps see that the gift of faith has not saved us from the perils and dangers of this world, but it has opened the door of the kingdom to us. In Christ we see with a new kind of binocular vision: we see the fragilities and tragedies of this world, but we also see the hope and the joy of the kingdom and we grow in confidence that God’s love continues to draw all creation to Godself.