



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 2 JUNE 2024 - TRINITY 1

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 81

- 1 Sing merrily to God our strength, ♦
shout for joy to the God of Jacob.
- 2 Take up the song and sound the timbrel, ♦
the tuneful lyre with the harp.
- 3 Blow the trumpet at the new moon, ♦
as at the full moon, upon our solemn feast day.
- 4 For this is a statute for Israel, ♦
a law of the God of Jacob,
- 5 The charge he laid on the people of Joseph, ♦
when they came out of the land of Egypt.
- 6 I heard a voice I did not know, that said: ♦
'I eased their shoulder from the burden; their hands were set free from bearing the load.
- 7 'You called upon me in trouble and I delivered you; ♦
I answered you from the secret place of thunder and proved you at the waters of Meribah.
- 8 'Hear, O my people, and I will admonish you: ♦
O Israel, if you would but listen to me!
- 9 'There shall be no strange god among you; ♦
you shall not worship a foreign god.
- 10 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; ♦
open your mouth wide and I shall fill it.'

A reading from Deuteronomy, chapter 5, verses 12 to 15

Observe the sabbath day and keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. ¹³For six days you shall labour and do all your work. ¹⁴But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. ¹⁵Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.

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 2, verse 23 to chapter 3, verse 6.

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.**

Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening: you have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark, chapter 2, verse 23 to Chapter 3, verse 6.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Mark 2.23-3.6

One sabbath Jesus was going through the cornfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, 'Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?' And he said to them, 'Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions.' Then he said to them, 'The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath.'

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, 'Come forward.' Then he said to them, 'Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?' But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

A Reflection from Peter...

Back in ordinary time, we pick up where we left off – in the Gospel of Mark. It's only chapter two, but Jesus' ministry is in full swing. Immediately we find ourselves in the kind of scene that suggests a lads holiday, or a group of youngsters testing the boundaries... Here are the disciples plucking grain as they wander through the cornfields – on the Sabbath! It all feels slightly naughty. And, in just the way that youngsters can sometimes be oblivious to the presence of watchful adults, so here there is a huddle of Pharisees strategically placed to see what is going on. How do the Pharisees react? Whereas we might have been inclined to chase the disciples out of the cornfield like an indignant farmer, these watchers address Jesus: "What's all this? And on the Sabbath! It's not right."

Now it all seems simple. This is a straightforward question of what is right and what is wrong. It was all set up for us in the first reading from Deuteronomy. There we heard an expansion of the fourth commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy..." This is all about knowing the rules and keeping them, isn't it?

Simple, until Jesus responds. You can feel the tension as Jesus says quietly to the Pharisees, "Don't you remember what David did? When he and his companions were hungry they went into the house of God and made a picnic lunch of the bread of the Presence, - and you know that was only for the priests to eat." You imagine that the Pharisees are feeling a bit uncomfortable at this point, but they're still not prepared for Jesus' punch-line: "The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."

Jesus in Mark's Gospel is so often Jesus the disruptor. He upsets peoples' expectations and makes complicated things simple and simple things many-layered. In this little episode Jesus establishes two important principles that we, his followers, dare not forget. First, rules and regulations are there to help, but they are secondary. Sometimes the rules need to give way in the face of human need. And secondly, God's sovereignty trumps even the best rules. This means we can never simply settle for doing that the rules tell us. We have always to go on listening to the voice of the Spirit, because "the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."