



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 23 JUNE 2024- TRINITY 4**

COLLECT

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with
you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Psalm 107.1-3,

- 1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is gracious, ♦
for his steadfast love endures for ever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say this, ♦
those he redeemed from the hand of the enemy,
- 3 And gathered out of the lands
from the east and from the west, ♦
from the north and from the south.
- 23 Those who go down to the sea in ships ♦
and ply their trade in great waters,
- 24 These have seen the works of the Lord ♦
and his wonders in the deep.
- 25 For at his word the stormy wind arose ♦
and lifted up the waves of the sea.
- 26 They were carried up to the heavens
and down again to the deep; ♦
their soul melted away in their peril.
- 27 They reeled and staggered like a drunkard ♦
and were at their wits' end.
- 28 Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, ♦
and he brought them out of their distress.
- 29 He made the storm be still ♦
and the waves of the sea were calmed.
- 30 Then were they glad because they were at rest, ♦
and he brought them to the haven they desired.
- 31 Let them give thanks to the Lord for his goodness ♦
and the wonders he does for his children.
- 32 Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people ♦
and praise him in the council of the elders.

Job 38.1-11

The LORD Answers Job

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind:

‘Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

Gird up your loins like a man,

I will question you, and you shall declare to me.

‘Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

On what were its bases sunk,

or who laid its cornerstone

when the morning stars sang together

and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?

‘Or who shut in the sea with doors

when it burst out from the womb?—

when I made the clouds its garment,

and thick darkness its swaddling band,

and prescribed bounds for it,

and set bars and doors,

and said, “Thus far shall you come, and no farther,

and here shall your proud waves be stopped”?

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 4, verses 35-41.

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 4, verses 35-41.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Mark 4.35-41

Jesus Stills a Storm

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

A Reflection from Hannah...

I am in that season of life where I'm looking back at my teenage years with a renewed sense of humility! I can understand the frustration of my parents back then, because it's now my turn. You may have been there too... I find myself delivering that smug lecture in which I list all the things I have done to contribute to the running of the household, in an attempt to make the point that it is in a different league altogether, and others who live here need to pull their socks up and do a bit more! You know how it goes (with a sarcastic tone, of course):

'Oh, *you* hung the washing out and you think that means you've done all you need to? Well, *I've* cleaned the bathroom, washed-up, hoovered, got tea, cleared the stairs, put away *your* coat and shoes, cleared up the dog-poo in the garden, ordered *your* things online, walked the dogs, wiped the sideboards, cleared the table, puffed the cushions, straightened the furniture...'

Can you tell I've enjoyed writing that?! And the funny thing is that it gets progressively desperate as the rant goes on- is puffing cushions *really* a job?! Debatable. The point of these moments though, is to say this is who I am; this is who you are. They are not the same.

That same message is the punchline of both our readings this week, and in the case of God and us, it is absolutely not debatable. The ancient book of Job is wonderful, challenging and takes a wry look at human nature. The basic premise is that life has gone as wrong as it possibly could for Job- he has lost everything. Three well-meaning friends come and sit with him to muse over why this might be the case. They make lots of unhelpful suggestions- 37 chapters of unhelpful suggestions. And then, after it has all run dry and no answer is forthcoming, God speaks:

'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?'

Whoa! This is indeed in another league. The voice of God doesn't 'explain' Job's troubles; the voice of God simply notices that God is God, and we are not. No matter how we might try and project our better selves onto our understanding of the divine, no matter how much we might think we know why bad things happen to good people, we can never sit where God does, and take that perspective on human experience.

It's a simple point, but so, so humbling. The amazing poetry with which God speaks sings out again and again the difference between the human and the divine. God is the creator- all that is, exists at the will of God. We... well, we simply have to sit with the mystery and the unknowing, as well as with the undeniable, unceasing love in which we live and move and have our being.

Fast-forward to our Gospel reading, and with the words of God in the book of Job ringing in our ears, we hear new notes to that question the disciples ask in the wake of Jesus having calmed the storm:

'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

Who indeed. The one who created them, is the implicit answer. In the calming of the storm, Christ shows us that he is God incarnate... and we are not. He shows us that every mighty act of God and every shred of the entire cosmos is held within his being. What a huge source of comfort and peace to remember that one who is in utter solidarity with us, but who very definitely is *not* us, is our companion through thick and thin, commands the wind and the waves, and can calm the storms of our lives.