



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 20 OCTOBER 2024 - TRINITY 21**

COLLECT

Grant, we beseech you, merciful Lord,
to your faithful people pardon and peace,
that they may be cleansed from all their sins
and serve you with a quiet mind;
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 91.9-16

9 Because you have made the Lord your refuge ♦
and the Most High your stronghold,
10 There shall no evil happen to you, ♦
neither shall any plague come near your tent.
11 For he shall give his angels charge over you, ♦
to keep you in all your ways.
12 They shall bear you in their hands, ♦
lest you dash your foot against a stone.
13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder; ♦
the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.
14 Because they have set their love upon me,
therefore will I deliver them; ♦
I will lift them up, because they know my name.
15 They will call upon me and I will answer them; ♦
I am with them in trouble,
I will deliver them and bring them to honour.
16 With long life will I satisfy them ♦
and show them my salvation.

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah, Chapter 53, verses 4-12.

Isaiah 53.4-12

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.
They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.
When you make his life an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.
Out of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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 10, verses 35-45.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

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

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark, Chapter 10, verses 35-45.

Glorify to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Mark 10.35-45

The Request of James and John

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.' But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' They replied, 'We are able.' Then Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.'

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

A Reflection from Hannah...

Pick me, pick me! Are you a pick me sort of person? Those of us who have been teachers know that when volunteers are sought in a classroom, the room immediately splits into two sorts of people- those who cower and try not to catch the teacher's eye, and those who boing about on their seat, stretch their arm up, pant a bit, and may start flapping their fingers going 'pick me, pick me!'

You will know which category you fell into, indeed which one you may still fall into!

Well, a couple of 'pick me(s)' approach Jesus in this week's reading from Mark's Gospel. James and John- brothers and close friends of Christ- ask him a question. They are polite and don't launch straight in, but their request is clear 'Let one of us sit at your right, and the other at your left, in your glory.' To our ears, this is an outrageously grabby request. But Jesus' answer is interesting, and there is a lot it can teach us about the pattern of discipleship to which we are called.

Jesus' initial reaction is kind and thoughtful- rather than tell them off for being so rude, he tells them that they don't know what they are saying and then asks for clarification. He asks them particularly if they can drink his cup and be baptised with his baptism. Hmm. By this point, the disciples have been told that Christ must die and will die soon. Whether they believe him is another matter, but the statement has been made. In Jewish culture the idea of 'drinking my cup' referred to sharing in the fate of somebody else- so Jesus is asking them whether they are able to walk in his shoes, to take the path he will take, to allow the pattern he will allow. It's a big question.

But, there is more. Jesus goes on to say that he doesn't know a complete answer to James and John's question- he doesn't know who will sit at his right and his left in glory, that is not for him to decide.

That question of what Jesus *doesn't* know is intriguing. What were James and John imagining when they wanted to be at his right and left side in glory? Perhaps they were fantasising about some kind of throne room, grand and important, with Christ bejewelled in the middle and two velvet-covered chairs either side?

But, there is a different kind of glory that Jesus might have been thinking of in that moment. A kind of glory that the world thinks of as shame and defeat and humiliation. In its original form, Mark's gospel ended at the death of Jesus, and this theme of glory is revisited throughout- as though it's heading somewhere. It may well be that when Jesus is crucified, that is the moment that he is 'in glory', as far as Mark is concerned. That despicable, inhumane, torturous and humiliating moment is the moment we are invited to look upon as God's glory in all its fullness.

The God who chose to give up all worldly understandings of power, hung on a cross, in that moment was in true glory. Christians live in the pattern of Christ- who carried a cross, who subverted the understanding of power that was endemic in the Roman Empire- that is endemic in our society today- who was prepared to give up everything, and who was the servant of all. Can we 'drink that cup'?