



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 16 MARCH 2025 – LENT 2

COLLECT

Almighty God,
you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,
that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted
into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things
that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 27

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear? ♦
The Lord is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?
2 When the wicked, even my enemies and my foes,
came upon me to eat up my flesh, ♦
they stumbled and fell.
3 Though a host encamp against me,
my heart shall not be afraid, ♦
and though there rise up war against me,
yet will I put my trust in him.
4 One thing have I asked of the Lord
and that alone I seek: ♦
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
5 To behold the fair beauty of the Lord ♦
and to seek his will in his temple.
6 For in the day of trouble
he shall hide me in his shelter; ♦
in the secret place of his dwelling shall he hide me
and set me high upon a rock.
7 And now shall he lift up my head ♦
above my enemies round about me;
8 Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation
with great gladness; ♦

I will sing and make music to the Lord.
9 Hear my voice, O Lord, when I call; ♦
have mercy upon me and answer me.
10 My heart tells of your word, 'Seek my face.' ♦
Your face, Lord, will I seek.
11 Hide not your face from me, ♦
nor cast your servant away in displeasure.
12 You have been my helper; ♦
leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.
13 Though my father and my mother forsake me, ♦
the Lord will take me up.
14 Teach me your way, O Lord; ♦
lead me on a level path,
because of those who lie in wait for me.
15 Deliver me not into the will of my adversaries, ♦
for false witnesses have risen up against me,
and those who breathe out violence.
16 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord ♦
in the land of the living.
17 Wait for the Lord;
be strong and he shall comfort your heart; ♦
wait patiently for the Lord.

A reading from the letter to Philippians, chapter 3, verses 17- 4.1.

Philippians 3.17 - 4.1

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation so that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

This is 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 Luke, chapter 13, verses 31-35.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

And then at the end:

I am the light of the world, says the Lord,
whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Luke 13.31-35

The Lament over Jerusalem

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.' He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox for me, "Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed away from Jerusalem." Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, "Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord." '

A Reflection from Hannah...

I wonder if any of us has had an experience that's felt a bit like herding bees? You know the sort of thing- people, creatures maybe, running in all directions when you want them to gather and stick with you?! Many years ago at a church weekend away, when I had two toddlers, I offered to look after some more so that their parents could go to some of the seminars. So, me, and six toddlers set off round the grounds at Quinta (you may know it). I thought I was doing so well- it was like herding bees, but we were managing until... quite some time in.... I realised there had been a substitution. Yes, I had six toddlers, but they weren't the six I'd started with!

Jesus uses an analogy in our reading today of a hen with her chicks. He bewails the fact that the people of Jerusalem will not gather to him like chicks- they are running in all directions, rejecting help. Jesus notes that they kill their prophets- those who are sent to speak truth and draw them back to God, he notices their desolation and yet their refusal to acknowledge, embrace their need for help.

It almost feels like a fairy-tale. I'm reminded of Chicken-Licken and the Fox and the Hen. Christ casts himself as the hen, the people- by extrapolation us- as the chicks, and Herod as the fox. The feeling of fire is there in Jesus' description of Jerusalem; 'your house is left to you', Jesus says. Some translations add the word 'desolate' - he is talking about destruction, and in those days, in these days too, things are destroyed by flames. I'm told though that in a barnyard fire- where hens and chicks are involved and the animals can't escape- people have found, afterwards, the burnt dead body of a hen, with live chicks sheltered under her wings:

'How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings.'

So Christ is the hen- sacrificing his life in order to protect his children. That terrible image of a burnt-out body sheltering the living chicks is an image of our salvation, of Christ's commitment to love us to and beyond his destruction.

Herod is the fox. Of course, the fox is a sly, wily threat to the hen, but the killer in the story is Jerusalem- a much bigger, broader thing. For Jerusalem, we might read 'all of us.' There is something in and of us all that cannot bear to look upon pure love and let it live. To gather the chicks under his wings; death so that we might have life.- that's what all the preparation in the wilderness led to- a willingness, a passion to see the flourishing of God's beloved, whatever the cost.