



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 20 JULY 2025 – Trinity 5

COLLECT

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 15

1 Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? ♦
Who may rest upon your holy hill?
2 Whoever leads an uncorrupt life ♦
and does the thing that is right;
3 Who speaks the truth from the heart ♦
and bears no deceit on the tongue;
4 Who does no evil to a friend ♦
and pours no scorn on a neighbour;
5 In whose sight the wicked are not esteemed, ♦
but who honours those who fear the Lord.
6 Whoever has sworn to a neighbour ♦
and never goes back on that word;
7 Who does not lend money in hope of gain, ♦
nor takes a bribe against the innocent;
8 Whoever does these things ♦
shall never fall.

A reading from the letter to the Colossians, chapter 1, verses 15-28.

Colossians 1. 15-28

The Supremacy of Christ

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him— provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

Paul's Interest in the Colossians

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

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 10, verses 38-end.

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.**

I am the light of the world, says the Lord. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, chapter 10, verses 38-end.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Luke 10. 38-end

Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

A Reflection from Dave...

You have probably noticed this before, but where there are siblings, often there will be division, squabbles, and arguments! Sometimes it's the simple, even trivial, things that can impact people deeply, personally and painfully, because it comes from someone so close. The Bible is acutely aware that siblings don't always get along. The earliest Bible stories in Genesis document how jealousy between Cain and Abel leads to murder, mockery of Isaac by Ishmael leads to banishment, and how trickery by Jacob robbed Esau of his birthright. Even small things within a family can have big consequences.

The story in Luke's gospel of two sisters, Martha and Mary, might seem trivial in comparison, but the issues must have felt just as real, and the bitterness it illustrates had the potential to become destructive. We have Martha doing "many tasks" - which were likely all the things that a good hostess does to provide for such an honoured guest as Jesus. However, she becomes "distracted" from the good she is doing by the bitterness she has towards her sister Mary, who was instead just sat, listening to Jesus. We know little else of their relationship, but experience tells us that where bitterness flares up quickly all too often previous annoyances lie behind it, queuing up to prove how this is yet more evidence in a long line of examples of how the other person is in the wrong. Bitterness leads Martha to expect Jesus to side with her efforts as opposed to her sister's "laziness," as she asks him to chastise Mary, perhaps as Martha had done so often before.

But for Jesus, Martha's "many things" are not greater than the many things Mary failed to do. Instead, he highlights the one thing that Mary did perfectly. By sitting at Jesus's feet she had taken the traditional position of a disciple, a position which in that culture was so often reserved exclusively for godly men. To Jesus, it matters little what anyone has or hasn't done, or what issues still remain. Martha's bitterness was blinding her to the fact that even the person who seems to us least likely, and most annoying, can be a model of what it means to pick the better way - to stop and listen to Jesus.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, Christians cannot escape the ups and downs of sibling relationships, whether on a personal, community, and even global level. This spiritual family connection can bring comfort and joy, whilst remaining a breeding ground for jealousy, bitterness, and hurt. Those Christians on the other side of the world might deeply annoy you. The person sitting next to you might be profoundly bitter. But we are family, both those we find easy, and those we struggle against. Whether the things between us seem trivial or weighty, they should not be ignored if they lead us to be distracted from the purpose of our family connection - to be those that together listen for the voice of Jesus throughout the hustle and bustle of daily life, and seek to encourage that for those around us as well - even when they annoy us!